

CHAPTER II

ASSOCIATIVE SYNTHESSES, AFFECTIVITY, AND PRE-REFLECTIVE CONNECTIONS IN SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

4. General introduction to Husserl's account of associative connectivity

The most important conclusion of the first chapter consisted in claiming synthesis to be the central function of consciousness in its phenomenological understanding. Yet such a claim is certainly just the beginning of the phenomenological inquiry, which by now should be able to account for the several types of syntheses defining the subjective experience's modes of unification and formation. Husserl introduces a distinction between the temporal syntheses responsible for the formal connectivity of the conscious experience and the associative syntheses which operate essentially on the level of content. Both associative and temporal connections belong to the group of the so-called passive syntheses—a topic extensively investigated by Husserl himself during the so-called genetic phenomenology period.

The inner temporality of consciousness is undisputedly one of the topics which received the greatest and the most deserved attention in phenomenological philosophy. As Husserl himself puts it, in the *ABCs* of the transcendental constitution, time is the *A* (Husserl 2001a, 170). This amounts to saying that the synthesis accomplished by time-consciousness is always presupposed whenever the constitution of subjective experience is mentioned. Nothing conscious can be altogether atemporal. Nevertheless, Husserl does not restrict his analyses of passive syntheses only to this universal and formal element, and he emphasizes its incompleteness and abstract character. Somehow close to Kant's famous statement in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, "thoughts without con-

tent are empty; [and] intuitions without concepts are blind” (Kant 1996, B75), Husserl claims that temporal syntheses without associative connections would be meaningless and empty, and associations without temporality would not be experienced at all (Husserl 2001a, 170).

What is important to remark here is not simply that Husserl stressed the importance of content for the constitution of subjective experience, which would be no bigger achievement than a mere reminder about Aristoteles’ and Kant’s distinction. More importantly, Husserl’s claim states that on the level of content there are *other types of* connections at stake, that there are other transcendental rules, which should complement the formal analyses of time-consciousness. Those connections, which he calls associations or associative syntheses, are a distinct topic of the phenomenological investigation, known under the rubrics of “associations,” “affectivity,” and “genesis of subjectivity”⁵⁰ in the *Analyses Concerning Passive Synthesis, Experience and Judgment* as well as in some other related texts and manuscripts.

Unfortunately, these issues and Husserl’s sophisticated analyses of passive syntheses are often seen as belonging to a very specific area of phenomenological inquiry exclusively of interest for dedicated Husserl scholars. This clearly should not be the case, since the questions at stake here are the most fundamental ones and relevant for a wide range of related interdisciplinary issues. Therefore, it is important to see this topic not in isolation from the broader context of philosophical and psychological problems to which it belongs both historically and substantially.

The scope of the topic of associations encompasses several questions. The first one is already familiar to us and concerns the unity of consciousness, or more precisely, the principles of connection governing subjective experience. This issue has its historical roots in Hume’s deliberations about the connectivity of the human mind and leads, as we have seen in the first chapter, to Kant’s and Husserl’s transcendental philosophy of synthetic consciousness. The problem of unity is not restricted to the unity of one’s conscious life, but extends to closely related questions concerning unity formations on the objective level, such as, for example, the perceptual organization and the constitution of identical objects. In this regard, the problem of associative connectivity is part of the constitu-

⁵⁰ Strictly speaking, subjective genesis refers not only to associative but also to temporal connections.

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tive analyses—that is of the transcendental inquiry into the general conditions of any possible experience.

A second aspect, despite being historically related to the first, follows a somewhat different route. This concerns the so-called “associations of ideas” and is the hallmark of the tradition of the British empiricism. Here, association can be understood as, on the one hand, establishing potentially repeatable relations between distinct and otherwise separated objects or ideas (or even between reflexes or actions in the later behavioristic versions of associationism), or, on the other hand, as establishing complex wholes by associatively integrating simple parts. This view on association does not venture into the constitutive and hence transcendental inquiry, but rather operates on the already given empirical level. The main authors responsible for the introduction and development of this line of enquiry are John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, and David Hartley in the eighteenth century, and James Mill, his son John Stuart Mill, and Alexander Bain in the nineteenth century. From “associations of ideas” in their empirical understanding originated the associationist school of psychology. Its main focus dealt with the associative mechanisms of learning and memory. However influential it became for the newly born scientific psychology, associationism and its atomistic analyses were confronted with several theoretical problems and underwent serious questioning by the Gestalt psychology.

Where does the phenomenological conception of association fit in this story? Clearly, it belongs to the first line of development—namely, to the transcendental philosophy and its exploration of synthetic consciousness. As Husserl states: “In the broadest sense, association is nothing other than synthesis most broadly understood, the unity of the whole of the ego's consciousness [...]” (Husserl 2001a, 508). While writing about associations, Husserl repeatedly distanced himself from the psychological meaning of the term and especially from closely related presuppositions concerning the objective, psychophysical causality of psychic life (Husserl 2001a, 162). However, one could easily notice that he employs many terms that do not contradict traditional empiricists' accounts of associations. Husserl basically refers to the same principles of contiguity, similarity, and contrast which entered scientific vocabulary as early as in the philosophy of Aristotle (D. B. Klein 1970, 90–91) and which have been employed by most philosophical and psychological theories. Moreover, his phenomenology of perception, so ingeniously presented in the first part of the *Analyses*, very often appears to be com-

patible with psychological conceptions of perceptual grouping, perceptual constancy and gestalt principles of perceptual organization.

Indeed, many psychological and phenomenological problems are the same and specific topics resemble each other, whereas methodologies and basic theoretical assumptions differ rather considerably. Such distance and closeness are relevant to the very essence of the phenomenological project, which was meant to be as much philosophical as psychological. Concerning the specific topic of associative syntheses, this suggests that the psychological perspective and the relevant research can be kept close to phenomenological analyses. But before we start looking more closely into the meaning of associations and the related topic of affectivity in Husserl's phenomenology, it is important to specify the general theoretical context to which the problem of associations in both empirical and transcendental understandings belongs.

The aim of the present chapter is to present Husserl's phenomenology of association and affectivity. In order to do so few related issues should be preliminarily clarified, as to avoid the risk to overlook the bigger picture to which our topic belongs. First, I will present the general historical context and I will refer to the philosophical question the topic of association was supposed to answer (§ 5). Secondly, I will provide some methodological clarifications concerning eidetic phenomenology and its distinction from the methodology of psychological investigation (§ 6). Then, I will discuss some theoretical points involved in the dispute between associationist and Gestalt psychologies (§ 7.1) in order to clearly show, as a result, how Husserl's idea of associative syntheses should be distinguished from both (§ 7.2). After these general clarifications, whose aim is essentially to present the phenomenological approach to associative connectivity in the larger context of psychological and philosophical discussions of the time, I will focus on Husserl's transcendental doctrine of passive syntheses and discuss the topics of association and affection and their meaning for the phenomenological theory of synthetic consciousness and the genesis of subjectivity (the rest of § 7 & § 8).

5. Principles of association and inquiry into “the inherent lawfulness of mental life”

From the historical perspective, the increasing prominence of the topic of association coincides with an aspiration of modern philosophy to discover regularities and inner lawfulness in mental events. As a clear parallel to the natural sciences, which at this time achieved immense progress in discovering laws of nature, philosophers sought to uncover “essential and universal properties of human nature” (Hume 1825, 449) and moreover to formulate the principles which could account for the organization of the mental life. Those principles were supposed to do “for the mental realm what Newton’s law of gravitation had done for the physical realm” (D. B. Klein 1970, 563).

Such confidence in the existence of “the inherent lawfulness of mental life” (D. B. Klein 1970, 500), which, according to David B. Klein, can be thought of as the first serious step towards the establishment of psychology as a scientific discipline, was common to many philosophers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, regardless of their empirical or rationalistic inclinations. Although almost every distinguished philosopher in the modern era was interested in the task of discovering such mental laws and principles, there was no general agreement on what exactly these laws may be and on which ground should they be thematized. Immanuel Kant, from his side, expressed this idea as follows:

Everything in nature [...] takes place *according to rules*, although we do not always know these rules. [...] All nature, indeed, is nothing but a combination of phenomena which follow rules; and *nowhere* is there any *irregularity*. When we think we find any such, we can only say that the rules are unknown. The exercise of our own faculties takes place also according to rules, which we follow first *unconsciously*, until by a long-continued use of our faculties we attain the knowledge of them [...] like all our faculties, the *understanding*, in particular, is governed in its actions by rules which we can investigate (Kant 1963, 1-2).

As this quote illustrates, the general tendency was to distinguish and systematize the rules of mental life on the level of cognition most broadly understood. Since Descartes, cognition (*cogito*, or thinking) was to define a wide range of mental phenomena, including perception, memory, imag-

ination, judgment, will, and even feelings.⁵¹ As one would frame it in contemporary terminology, the view of human being as an essentially rational agent was scientifically dominating. This implied that the way we scientifically cognize the world and ourselves was supposed to be grounded upon a solid rational foundation. Thus, even though human nature was conceived as composed of different kinds of experiences, the universal rules and lawful regularities characteristic of mental life were still seen as products of reason.

At the end of the nineteenth and in the whole course of the twentieth centuries, the assumption of human rationality was quite significantly challenged. However, what was challenged was not the capacity for rational thinking or decision making *per se* and hence not the existence and validity of principles of rational cognition, but rather their independence and alleged purity. The idea that rational cognition should take into consideration not only its capacities but also its limits is not new and can be found in every systematic approach to human reason. Any system of logical rules assumes that they can be misused or even not used at all. And even a system of transcendental rules presumes that those principles can be misused by applying them beyond the realm of possible experience.⁵²

New scientific findings brought new challenges and set new limits on rational cognition. As previously, problems mainly resulted from illegitimate attempts to apply one set of rules to a domain where they had no validity or—which is relatively new—to disregard the fact that there may be some unexpectedly irrational rules which influence our rational thinking. This time, limits were found not outside but within the scope of the experience. The biggest challenge came from the discovery of unconscious mental processes. Whether one chooses to pay more attention to the psychoanalytical approach or rather to the progress in neurophysiological and psychological research, the evidence is compelling: a significant part of our mental life is outside conscious awareness, is automatic, follows its own rules and is out of our deliberate control.

Applications of this theoretical premise are quite significant and can be found on any level of human cognitive activity: from perception to moral reasoning. For instance, psychologists studying decision-making provided impressive amount of evidence on the fact that most people

⁵¹ “What is a thing which thinks? It is a thing which doubts, understands, [conceives], affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels” (Descartes 2013, 75).

⁵² See the paralogisms and antinomies of pure reason in Kant’s first critique as a major example.

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follow intuitive more than rational principles when faced with a choice, even if the choice in question clearly requires deliberative strategy of thinking. One of the most striking elements of these findings is of course not the fact that people make reasoning mistakes and thus simply disregard the rules. What is really important to notice here is that people do so because there are other rules or principles which come into play much quicker and with a greater ease than rational ones. In the psychology of decision-making and dual-process theories, those principles are called intuitive. They are immediate and effortless as opposed to reflective principles of deliberative rationality (Evans 2008, 2010).

To be fair to the tradition, however, we should not overestimate the primacy of rationality in modern philosophy. Some acknowledgement of the radical difference between two levels of subjective experience, or between intuitive and rational thinking, has always been present in philosophical accounts about human nature. Both “rationalists” and “empiricists” were concerned not only with the rules of rationality and rigorous scientific inquiry, but devoted no less attention to the hard problem of human passions and feelings. The relation between these two sides of human nature seems to have been a great issue for any system of philosophy and to have led to the systematic separation of moral and theoretical questions. As to illustrate the range of opinions, sometimes reaching perfect opposition, let me quote two famous claims by Spinoza and Hume respectively:

Without intelligence there is not rational life: and things are only good, in so far as they aid man in his enjoyment of the intellectual life, which is defined by intelligence. Contrariwise, whatsoever things hinder man’s perfecting of his reason, and capability to enjoy the rational life, are alone called evil (Spinoza 1677/2015, IV, 87)

Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them (Hume 2003, 295).

The realm of emotions or passions of the soul was not the only place where reason had to meet its limitations. The advocate of the passions from the previous quote, David Hume, can certainly be seen as the predecessor of the contemporary view that principles governing much of the intuitive thinking are those of associations. Both in the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*, he opposed the idea according to which our causal inferences are determined by reason, but insisted on associative principles as their true basis. Hume’s philosophy

in this regard can be seen as the first attempt to give a systematic view on principles of pre-cognitive connectivity.

Thus, it should be once more emphasized that the topic of associations belongs to the scientific aspiration to account for the universal rules and principles according to which human mental life is organized. While the general tendency in modern philosophy consisted in distinguishing such rules as essentially rational and logical, several findings suggested that the affective, or pre-cognitive, level of subjective experience may rely on different principles of mental organization. In phenomenological philosophy, this tendency corresponds to the inquiry into pre-reflective self-experience. Accordingly, the aim of the present chapter is to discuss the idea of associative syntheses as universal principles of consciousness determining the inner, implicit organization of subjective experience.

The accomplishment of this task relies on two different scientific domains, namely, the phenomenological research on perception and memory and its counterpart in scientific psychology. This approach calls for a methodological clarification. And since our main interest concerns the regularities and principles of experience, the following methodological remarks will mostly account for how such principles and regularities are achieved in the two respective disciplines.

6. Phenomenology vs. scientific psychology: Intuitive, statistical, and eidetic regularities

Phenomenological and psychological investigations often deal with the same problems, while nevertheless almost never agreeing on the method. The phenomenological approach takes subjective experience as its starting point and aims to describe its general and universal structures, as well as the universal laws of subjective constitution. Scientific psychology, mainly based on experimental methodology, attempts to precisely overcome the subjectivity or individuality of experience, while approaching mental phenomena as objectivities that are representative not only of particular individuals but also of larger groups. This implies that the methodology of psychological research has a strong tendency towards objective measurements and statistical analyses of data.

Phenomenology tends to regard this ideal of objectivity in experimental psychology as essentially missing out on the most important

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feature of the human mind—namely its capacity to *experience*, to live through whatever comes its way. Psychology, instead, does not trust anything that is merely “subjective” because of its inconclusive and potentially deceptive character. It should be stressed that both disciplines aim toward basic generalities concerning our mental life. However, how these generalities are achieved differ considerably. Generalities or universals operative in science are mainly those of categories and ensembles of data. This implies that individual cases are seen from the start as examples of groups of data, with clear preference given to larger and most representative samples. Phenomenology follows our path of experience more naturally; it moves from a particular experience to what is generalizable about it, or to what about the experience shows its essential structure and constitution. Multiplicity is not excluded from generalization; it is on the contrary enriching the original experience, potentially changing it. It can be argued, therefore, that phenomenology favors the natural historicity of subjective experience.

A legitimate doubt may now arise: can the phenomenological method provide us with any reliable generalities which are not merely introspective? The common answer is affirmative. From the very start, Husserl emphasized repeatedly that the phenomenological method is not the same as introspection, or the simple observation of one’s own mental life. As Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi point out: “like ordinary scientific method, [phenomenology] also aims to avoid biased and subjective accounts. Some people mistake phenomenology for a subjective account of experience; but a subjective account of experience should be distinguished from an account of subjective experience” (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008, 19). In other words, the phenomenological inquiry does start with a subjective experience, but the main focus is not on what is accidental or contingent about it, but on what is universal. Husserl called this step in his methodology the eidetic reduction. Hence, the phenomenological inquiry is interested in describing principles of genetic constitution and universal structures of subjective experience. But, unlike in the case of experimental psychology, these generalities or regularities are not statistical, but eidetic. This distinction demands an additional clarification. In what follows, I am going to delineate three types of regularities: (1) *intuitive* as derived from the common experience; (2) *statistical* as representing probabilities and ensembles of data and characteristic of the experimental scientific methodology; and (3) *eidetic* as representing the essential structures and properties of experiential phenomena and characteristic of the phenomenological methodology.

Intuitive regularities

Experience is the starting point for both phenomenological and psychological methodologies, hence they are both essentially empirical in what concerns their objects and area of interest. However, our experience is not a scientific achievement; it is a given—or pre-given in Husserl's terms—for the human condition in its being in the world. We do not need any specific experimental environment, laboratory equipment or even elaborate introspection in order to have an experience that would be interesting for psychology. This means that neither scientific psychology nor phenomenology start from scratch in their investigations. The everyday, most common and simple experience is already embedded in its pre-scientific understanding, as for instance, the implicit or explicit distinction between vision and hearing, imagining and remembering, feelings, desires, dynamics of relationships and meanings of behaviors, to name just a few. In the end, it amounts to folk psychology, which relies on a very elaborate system of common sense knowledge and accumulated interpretations. However significant and influential such common sense pre-scientific ideas may be, their origins are unclear and their objectivity is questionable. Their validity is derived from intuition, accumulated experience, language and cultural context. They are generalities formed in the process of social and individual development. They are, essentially, *intuitive generalities* about experience. This is not to say that such intuitively derived ideas are not valid or even important—quite the contrary—they constitute the indispensable basis for most of our cognition and behavior. The most common examples are familiar to anybody: recognizing familiar objects and people, identifying potential danger in a situation or sadness in a friend's voice. On the higher end of this experiential knowledge, there is so-called "expert intuition." This consists in the skillful and often immediate recognition of relevant patterns in an observed situation—patterns which would not be available for just a regular observer (Kahneman and Klein 2009).⁵³

⁵³ Very representative for the study of the expert intuition is the work done by psychologist Gary Klein, who dedicated a lot of research to the understanding of this phenomenon and to the development of the naturalistic decision making approach. He and his research group studied expert intuition among highly skillful chess players, firefighters, nurses, army officers and other populations. See: Klein, G. *Sources of power*. (G. A. Klein 1999) for detailed information, or Kahneman and Klein's co-authored article (Kahneman and Klein 2009) for a concise and highly informative examination of the conditions of intuitive expertise.

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Hence, the first and most basic way we distinguish generalities and regularities in experience is *intuitive*, that is to say pre-scientific, automatic, based on immediate perception and memory. Any scientific approach to experience always starts from this primary level and not from zero. It pursues, however, an essentially different outcome, namely to distinguish universal, objectively valid, and potentially verifiable regularities, rules, and principles in the experience. At this point, the methodology of scientific investigation comes to the fore. Here, I suggest distinguishing two types of regularities which correspond to two methodological approaches relevant for our topic. The first type, characteristic of contemporary experimental psychology, aims essentially at seeing *statistical regularities* and forming statistically inferred conclusions about psychological facts. The second type is the one favored by phenomenological philosophy and it targets the so-called *eidetic regularities*, as based on the Husserl's method of eidetic reduction and variation.

Statistical regularities

As Daniel Kahneman most accurately remarks: “statistical thinking derives conclusions about individual cases from properties of categories and ensembles” (Kahneman 2011, 77). The most important argument in favor of the need for the statistical methodology claims that an individual case cannot be representative of the phenomenon under investigation—in this case the phenomena studied by psychology. This implies that not all phenomena can be correctly approached by intuition, as based on the direct observation of concrete cases, and that in our experience there are such situations that require the discovery of the regularities which could account for the principles governing behaviors of groups or ensembles (Kahneman and Klein 2009).

What is the difference between intuitive and statistical approach? Which situations or phenomena can give us the best examples? First and foremost, statistics, and the theory of probability as its foundation, were designed to deal with random phenomena—those that do not contain any directly and, in our terms, intuitively recognizable patterns or regularities. Rolling dice would be a paradigm example of randomness. Psychologically relevant examples may not presuppose true randomness, but just satisfy such conditions as the impossibility of intuitive inference from one case to the class of similar cases or the

impossibility of pattern recognition due to the complexity of the environment.⁵⁴

What does this tell us about the relevance of statistical methodology for psychological research? What is the main reason or motivation to account for the psychological phenomena as *samples* of random data and not individually? I think it is safe to say that the main motivation relies on the desirable universality of any scientifically oriented psychological research. Let us consider an example. Suppose, we want to know how deadline-related stress affects writing productivity in young and in experienced academics. Clearly, if we choose to assess such a relation by selecting one individual for each category—i.e. one postdoc researcher and one professor—the results would give us information only about the relation between deadline-related stress and writing productivity of these particular persons. Under no circumstances will we be able to draw conclusions from these data concerning other postdoc researchers and professors. That would be acceptable only provided that our goal is the psychology of these two individuals, which is very rarely the case.⁵⁵ But if we want to know how deadline-related stress affects writing productivity in academics *in general*, then we will have to find a representative sample of individuals to study in relation to this specific question. One or two persons are almost never representative for the respective population; unless it is very small and rather exceptional.

In this sense, the statistical experimental approach is advantageous insofar as it allows for generalizations not only about particular samples, but also for respective populations which such samples should be able to represent. The downside of such an approach is a certain vagueness in what concerns individual and exceptional cases and their relation to statistical generalities. If it is true that an individual case can rarely be representative of a group, then it is no less true that a statistical average can hardly be representative of each and every individual case. That is to

⁵⁴ The latter factor depends on the so-called “validity of the environment”—its inner capacity to provide distinguishable and learnable cues of its static and dynamic organization. For example, experts’ long-term predictions concerning international politics or stock prices are less likely to be correct than the expert intuition of the experienced chess-players about the game, or of skillful nurses about the infant’s health—precisely due to the factor of environmental validity, as in the first case there are fewer possibilities to get acquainted with the necessary regularities, and hence greater randomness is experienced (Kahneman and Klein 2009).

⁵⁵ Although it can be different in the areas where individual case studies are informative enough or represent a goal *per se*.

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say: statistical generalities do account for what is most *probable* for each individual case, but not necessarily for what is actually and factually true. This is one of the reasons why statistical thinking is claimed to be advantageous in judgments under uncertainty as well as in any situation which requires the assessment of probabilities rather than direct observation (Tversky and Kahneman 1974, 1974).

To summarize what has just been said: (1) statistical regularities are those that account for the groups of data rather than for individuals or individual cases; (2) statistical regularities are those that account for probability rather than factuality; (3) the statistical approach is advantageous when an individual case cannot be representative of the group or category to which it belongs.

Eidetic regularities

Now, we should be able to distinguish between such psychological questions which require sampling and statistical inference and the ones which instead do not. The latter ones would entail that the respective questions target phenomena that could be in principle individually representative of their class, or, to be more precise, that they could be so under certain conditions. As we have already seen, most correlational or causal relations between distinct variables can hardly be generalizable on the basis of individual cases. But what about mental states as such? How relevant can statistical sampling be for the understanding of the general structure of perception or remembering, taken as subjective experiences and not as physiological states? Random selection of perceptions of a wooden table or phantasies about pink unicorns can provide a valuable multiplicity of experiences, but no statistical inference can tell us anything about what it means to have such experiences or what are their necessary structural components. Moreover, as I have already pointed out, statistical analysis already presupposes a certain understanding of what the collected data are about. This leaves any hypothetical researcher with two options: either to rely on the commonsensical, pre-scientific and intuitively available notions of what one means by “perception” or “imagination” and try to operationalize them, or to find a way of approaching these intuitively available ideas as universals.

This last scenario might seem excessive for an experimentally oriented researcher, since after all common sense ideas of mental phenomena can be taken as good enough for the purpose of specific experi-

ments. But let us contemplate for a moment the state of psychological or neuroscientific research on a complex phenomenon such as consciousness. All intuitively available notions of “awareness” or “being awake” are vague and leave little if any room for operationalization. Any empirical investigation on neural correlates of consciousness always starts with a theory of what consciousness might be. Thus, if one takes it to be related to a minimal form of self-awareness, then one is likely to design experiments looking for the self-related areas in the brain. If one believes instead in the currently popular theory of consciousness as related to “qualia” or the “what-it-is-likeness” of experience, then one faces the task to find something similar to that kind of ineffable entity, or to state in principle its inaccessibility for a neuroscientific explanation. In any case, it is clear that some kind of theory or at least theoretical hypothesis about the nature of consciousness is required for any possible empirical research to be conducted at all.

Consciousness is a good example because of its apparent complexity and even obscurity, but the same concerns many other phenomena as well. What is meant by such complex mental entities as perception, sensation, attention, memory, emotions, understanding another person or decision making is far from clear in the respective psychological disciplines. The operationalization of such “fuzzy” notions for the goals of experiments or empirical observations can be very helpful and provide fascinating results, which will indeed enrich—and have already enriched significantly—the meaning of the concepts we use as well as the understanding of the phenomena we seek to elucidate. Nevertheless, such an approach will behold an implicit reliance on the pre-given, commonsense understanding of those issues without the necessary clarification of their essence and experiential structure. Moreover, the “explanatory gap” between the phenomena under investigation and their theoretical and operational definitions appears to be the inevitable price to pay for the progress of empirical research. Operational definitions not only show the advantages of clarification and concretization, but also the disadvantages of simplification and potential departure from the essence and complexity of the phenomena they seek to investigate.

When one deals with essentially complex phenomena in psychology, the statistical method becomes of very limited use. In the words of the economist and philosopher, Friedrich Hayek:

The statistical method is [...] of use only where we either deliberately ignore, or are ignorant of, the relations between the individual ele-

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ments with different attributes, i.e., where we ignore or are ignorant of any structure into which they are organized. [...] While statistics can successfully deal with complex phenomena where these are the elements of the population on which we have information, it can tell us nothing about the structure of these elements. It treats them, in the fashionable phrase, as “black boxes” which are presumed to be of the same kind but about whose identifying characteristics it has nothing to say (Hayek 1964, 59-60).

It is precisely for these types of hard problems and complex phenomena in the mental realm that the phenomenological method was first designed by Edmund Husserl. Contemporary to the beginnings of scientific psychology in Austria and Germany, and dissatisfied with both purely introspective and quantitative approaches to the human *psyche*, he sought to elaborate such a method that could account for the general and essential structures of experience, without which such experience would be unthinkable or would be something completely different than it is.

It was clear for Husserl that intuitively available experience should always be a foundation for scientific generalizations. However, as he stated in his inaugural lecture at the Freiburg University, “Mere experience is not a science” (Bernet et al. 1993, 78). There are many regularities and patterns in nature and in social life that we recognize intuitively, by habit and observation. Such regularities are also not a science, but, it is to this general capacity of distinguishing such patterns and raising questions about them that “we owe the beginning of science” (Hayek 1964, 55). Husserl was primarily interested in a method of investigation that could account not for empirically induced but rather for essential generalities, which therefore would lead to a science of essences as distinguished from a science of facts.

Thus, the starting distinction which introduces the idea of eidetic phenomenology is the one between *fact* and *eidos*, or *essence*. Whereas empirical intuition is an experience of something individual in its concreteness and factuality, eidetic intuition is supposed to be a somewhat purified experience, an invariant of all possible experiences of the same kind. In order to achieve this eidetic intuition, Husserl introduced a method called eidetic variation—the idea being to grasp a pure eidetic universality of a phenomenon by mental comparison or running through all its possible types and particular variables. The aim of such a variation approach is to distinguish what is essential from what is accidental in a phenomenon, namely its indispensable structure and characteristics without which this phenomenon could not be the same.

Being a mathematician himself, Husserl was inspired by such pure eidetic sciences as mathematics and geometry. However, this does not mean that he took phenomenological philosophy and psychology to belong to the same class of eidetic disciplines as exact mathematical sciences. Phenomenology—he points out in the *Ideas I*—is not *exact*, but “a *descriptive* eidetic doctrine of transcendently pure mental processes as viewed in the phenomenological attitude” (Husserl 1982, 167). As in geometry one deals with pure forms of space (*Raumgestaltungen*) notwithstanding their actual existence in the reality of nature, likewise in phenomenology one is supposed to regard mental phenomena as free from all their reality and concreteness in particular human experiences.

In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl refers to the idea of eidetic analyses as to “a fundamental methodological insight, which, once it is grasped, pervades the whole phenomenological method” (Husserl 1960, 69). This insight builds upon the possibility to separate between the factual and the essential and to think of any fact as an example or a variation of a pure possibility, or *eidōs*.⁵⁶ This does not presuppose any kind of pre-existence of such essences. Husserl’s view on the *a priori* was never meant to go beyond experience, but merely to uncover generalities which belong to this latter essentially.⁵⁷

The aim of this method is to achieve “an intuitive and apodictic consciousness of something universal” (Husserl 1960, 71). This suggests that, first, eidetic methodology itself belongs to some kind of intuitive experience, and, second, that it should be distinguished from empirical intuition as being capable to bring about a certain kind of scientifically acceptable evidence. Ordinary experiential intuition—such as external perception—is bound to be inadequate, as incompleteness and perspectivity are among its essential properties. Eidetic intuition, instead, is supposed to overcome this incompleteness. However, this does not happen through actual experiential fulfillment, which would only facilitate a higher degree of fullness, and not complete and adequate givenness. According to Husserl, evidence

⁵⁶ See, for instance, *Cartesian Meditations*: “Every fact can be thought of merely as exemplifying a pure possibility” (Husserl 1960, 71). *Ideas I*: “Experiencing, or intuition of something individual can become transmuted into eidetic seeing (*idea-tion*)—a possibility which is itself to be understood not as empirical, but as eidetic” (Husserl 1982, 8).

⁵⁷ “Of the concepts belonging to the ambiguous expression ‘*a priori*,’ [the concept of the *eidōs*] defines the only one to which we grant philosophical recognition. It is exclusively the *eidōs* which is meant wherever I speak in my writings about the ‘*a priori*.’” (Husserl, E. in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929) – cited from (Bernet et al. 1993, 78–79)).

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of eidetic intuition does not concern individual objects with all their multifacetedness, on the contrary, it aims at essences, about which its mode of givenness can present us with adequate or apodictic intuition.

Husserl himself insisted on the possibility of eidetic intuition which, in principle, could be adequate and free from all empirical implications, therefore allowing for pure and scientifically true descriptions of mental phenomena. The absoluteness of such ambition, however, has been put into question by several phenomenologists. For example, Alfred Schutz underlined that eidetic intuition originates from facticity and therefore can never be completely separated from the inductive methodology. His point in David M. Levin's exposition runs as follows:

[...] in spite of important differences ideation is continuous with induction. It represents a more rigorous articulation of the inductive types already operative, in a prereflective capacity, in our encounter with the world. [...] Eidetic consciousness has its origins in facticity, and builds upon its given resources of typification (Levin 1968, 2).

Levin argues that eidetic intuition is bound to inadequacy just as much as empirical intuition. The one-sidedness and principal incompleteness of any spatial perception, which renders it inadequate, might as well be found in eidetic intuition since the latter also deals with essences as transcendent objects:

Spatial profiles, or adumbrations, are, of course, considered to be the source of thing-transcendence. But, strictly speaking, it is not spatial profile *as such* which entails transcendence; it is objective sense. And essences have objective sense just as much as things, regardless of how this sense is to be characterized more specifically, in other words, as transtemporal or, on the other hand, as spatio-temporal (Levin 1968, 5).

This is an important point, which I do not read as a refutation of Husserl's eidetic methodology, but rather as its elaboration. Both Schutz's and Levin's arguments highlight some close interconnections between empirical, factual intuition embedded in the ordinary experience and the phenomenological task of investigating the essential structures of intuitions. Such an acknowledgment of the necessary intrinsic limitations of eidetic methodology may appear inconsistent with Husserl's original idea of phenomenology as a strict science of pure essences. Conversely, it may just present such a science as an open project which corresponds to the open character inherent in and essential to the experience itself. In other words, as Elizabeth Behnke puts it: "Eidetic investigation, in

short, remains an ‘open process’ precisely insofar as it is true to an ‘open experience’ in which not only ‘new’, but the genuinely ‘novel’ can emerge” (Behnke 2010, 62).

The eidetic method aims not only to uncover essential characteristics and structural components of mental phenomena, but also their essential lawful regularities and *Wesensgesetze*. Such regularities and necessities concern types of connections, which are operative in the mental realm, and go beyond the level of static phenomenological analyses. Compared to static phenomenological descriptions, the concern of genetic phenomenology is no longer with analyzing “finished systems of correlation, but rather with inquiring into their genesis” (Bernet et al. 1993, 197). As much as phenomenology is interested in uncovering the essences of statically viewed phenomena, it is no less interested in bringing about essential rules which define the way these phenomena are constituted—rules which are to be found in multiplicities of appearances, temporal modifications, and associative connections.

To conclude these methodological clarifications, let us for a moment return to Daniel Kahneman, to whose work I owe the idea of distinguishing different types of regularities. His insight concerns the distinction between intuitive and statistical regularities: if intuitive thinking “represents categories by a prototype or a set of typical examples” (Kahneman 2011, 93), then statistical thinking—the advantages of which Kahneman is advocating—“derives conclusions about individual cases from properties of categories and ensembles” (Kahneman 2011, 77). Namely, thinking statistically means to judge a certain property or relation on the basis of its probable behavior, yet not in any particular case, but rather in a substantial number of similar and randomly selected cases. Thinking intuitively means to judge a case on the basis of available information and typical expectations about a particular situation from a particular perspective.

My point is that phenomenology operates with a third type of regularities, namely eidetic regularities, which can be described as invariants of intuitive regularities. Compared to the statistical approach, eidetic intuition deals with regularities or generalities not by analyzing properties of ensembles of data, but by defining essential properties and structures of experiential phenomena. Thus, it assumes the subjective perspective of intuitive experience, but arguably overcomes its limitations by representing what is essential and universal about it. Such method is advantageous when research is primarily concerned with complex mental phenomena which cannot be elucidated on the basis of mere data collection.

7. Associative connectivity and principles of content-binding

We will now turn our attention to the associative connectivity of consciousness and its role in the constitution of unified experience. We have already seen that Husserl approached the temporality of consciousness and temporal syntheses as fundamental types of connectivity, which provide continuity and unity to any possible subjective experience. The structure of temporal consciousness—exemplified by the model of primal impression, retention, and protention—contributes to our understanding of how experience always proceeds in a coherent flow of mental states “following one another in continuous sequence” (Husserl 1960, 40), in which expectations can be fulfilled by actual experiences, and subsequently sink into the recent and then remote past. Temporal connections are responsible for simultaneity, continuity, and—on the higher end—for the overall unity of one’s conscious life. In the same vein, it is to this temporal connectivity that we owe the capacity for the development of our narrative integrity, and also a representation of the unified experience as linear and, to a certain extent, sequential.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, however powerful and ubiquitous this temporal dimension of conscious life is, it does not account for all possible connections between our experiences, as well as between their objects. One way of seeing associative connectivity as a part of the unified experience problem is to conceive of the experiential organization as not only linear and continuous, but also as inherently linked through random content-based connections, which cannot be clarified in temporal and logical terms. Randomness concerns only the parts of experience that can be brought together; the principles of such connections, nevertheless, may imply a universality of mental laws, or “lawful regularities,” as Husserl often prefers to call them. It should be clear by now that the phenomenology of associations deals precisely with these principles.

The first difficulty encountered in a phenomenological explication of associative syntheses concerns its almost inevitable confusion with the empirical notion of association. At the beginning of this chapter, I pointed out that the topic of association should be distinguished with regard to two different traditions—namely, the traditions of British empiricism

⁵⁸ It belongs to the “logic” of temporality to represent one’s life as a coherent series of events.

and of transcendental philosophy. Then, some important methodological distinctions were introduced concerning how to approach the distinctive regularities of human mental life. The next step is to clarify exactly how Husserl's idea of associative syntheses should be separated from the associationist approach.

7.1. The “productive paradox” of associations: Gestalt vs. Atomistic psychology and phenomenology's distance from both

The problem of association belongs to one of those “persistent riddles of psychology,” which are very likely to maintain their paradoxical character throughout the theoretical development of this discipline. According to Gordon Allport and David B. Klein, the topic of association represents a “productive paradox” (D. B. Klein 1970, 220), since, on the one hand, it can provide a satisfactory explanation of such phenomena as learning and memory, but, on the other hand, it can lead to an atomistic approach to mental organization. In other words, the successful explanation of certain mental phenomena comes at the price of an overall unsatisfactory psychological theory, which overlooks other essential properties of the mind, incompatible with the associationistic view.

The paradox in question entails the classical problem of part-whole relations and is crucial for the dispute between associationist and Gestalt approaches in psychology. It can be argued that our experience always manifests itself holistically: the perceptual experience in all its dimensions does not appear as a mere combination of different sensations, but rather as a unitarily—both diachronically and synchronically—structured whole; our bodily self-awareness presents us with a coherently functioning organism; our behavior, decision making, relations with the past and possible future are all strongly biased towards consistency. It appears that, from the experiential perspective, the parts only let themselves be distinguished on the basis of an already presupposed unity of mental life. However, an opposite perspective on the same phenomenon is also conceivable: the wholeness of experience can be regarded not as a presupposition, but rather as an accomplishment which is possible due to relations between otherwise unconnected parts. Such a perspective can be especially productive when attention is given to experienced unities which show no necessary connection among their components—unities which, in princi-

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ple, could have been otherwise, or not been at all, if it were not for certain established relations between their parts. Most of the examples come from the realm of memory and learning processes, which show how distinct episodes or moments of one's experience can be unified by establishing a link between them and how such links can be voluntarily or involuntarily formed between originally unconnected units.

In other words, the wholeness of an experience may be seen as a necessary background for parts differentiation, or as the result of distinct parts being connected together. The tension between favoring one perspective over the other is best clarified on the level of perceptual organization. The central point of the Berlin school of Gestalt psychology, represented by Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Köhler, consisted in claiming that “structured wholes or Gestalten, rather than sensations, are the primary units of mental life” (Wagemans et al. 2012, 1173). According to this view, the perception of organized unities cannot be understood on the basis of the mere integration of sensations. The whole must often be grasped before the parts, and must serve as a foundation for their discrimination. The classical examples include the perception of a melody, which is recognizable even when transposed in another key, or of any object which cannot be reduced to its constituents. There is something in the perception of a process or a figure—a certain order, a structure—which cannot be explained through a mere adding up of elements. Moreover, the abstraction of such elements appears to be secondary to the perception of the whole to which they belong.

Starting from the basic assumption that the perception of a whole should follow its own rules and be different from the sum of its parts, Gestalt psychologists were interested in defining the major principles of perceptual organization responsible for unit-perceptions. The necessary formulation of the principles of such holistic structures pertaining to any perceptual experience led to Wertheimer's proposal of the “Gestalt laws of perceptual organization” (Wertheimer 1923/2009, 1923).

The perceptual field does not appear to us as a collection of sensations with no meaningful connection to one another, but is organized in a particular way, with a spontaneous, natural, normally expected combination and segregation of objects. Wertheimer's (1923) paper was an attempt to elucidate the fundamental principles of that organization. Most general was the law of *Prägnanz*. This states, in its broadest form, that the perceptual field and objects within it take on the simplest and most impressive structure permitted by the given conditions. More specific were the laws of proximity, similarity, closure, and good continuation (Wagemans 2015, 8).

Clearly, the “Gestalt laws” are at least partially very similar to the principles of associations, among which contiguity (or proximity) and similarity have always been two of the most indisputable. This indicates that the difference between associationist and Gestalt psychologies was not about principles of perceptual binding, but mostly about theoretical presuppositions concerning what should be taken as primarily constitutive elements of perceptual experience in particular and of any kind of subjective experience in general.

For Gestalt-oriented thinkers, unity and “wholeness” prevail at any level of experience. Indeed, we always find ourselves in a fully functioning coherence of experiencing, and a certain intellectual effort is required to separate distinct experiential parts from this pre-given unity, or to inquire, for instance, about how different sense modalities coincide in orderly perception. This latter question could not have been formulated if there were no coherent perception in the first place. Therefore, any approach which starts by describing principles of association or combination appears to be secondary in regard to the experiential factuality of the perceptual unity. Gestalt psychology seems then to be fully justified in its efforts to see whole-structures and whole-processes as primary elements of perceptual experience.

However, the Gestalt identification of the essential principles of any experience can be seen as just another way of approaching the same problem tackled by the associationists’ attempts to clarify perceptual organization and interconnectedness, which manifest themselves at any level of mental life. The undeniable fact that such an approach ended up in a naturalistically bound causal system of explanatory psychology, should not obscure its initial intention to account for the same principles of connectedness and experiential structures which motivated Gestalt theorists. It is worth mentioning that this fact did not escape the attention of the Gestalt psychologists themselves. For example, Kurt Koffka in his *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* stated that:

To apply the category of cause and effect means to find out which parts of nature stand in this relation. Similarly, to apply the Gestalt category means to find out which parts of nature belong as parts to functional wholes, to discover their position in these wholes, their degree of relative independence, and the articulation of larger wholes into sub-wholes (Koffka 1935).

This citation, apart from indicating the aforementioned affinity between the two rival approaches, also contains another crucial point, which

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separates them both from phenomenological philosophy. This point concerns the presumed naturalization of the perceptual structures, be it the causal or associative relations among parts or the functional wholes.

It is important to understand that Gestalt principles of perceptual organization represent merely “a set of descriptive principles” (Bruce et al. 1996, 110), not only because they do not suggest any theory of perceptual processing (which would be of importance for the empirical account of perception), but also because they do not account for the constitutive side of experience. In this regard, the preference for one set of explanatory or descriptive principles over the other is just a matter of perspective.

Even though phenomenological philosophy is generally taken as rather sympathetic towards Gestalt theorists, we should point out that its aim was to go beyond both mentioned empirical approaches and to abandon the naturalistic assumptions they have in common.⁵⁹ In his introduction to the English edition of the second book of the *Ideas*, Husserl expressed his position as follows:

Evidently and in principle, it makes no difference in this regard whether one lets the psychic data be blown into aggregates “atomistically,” like shifting heaps of sand, even though in conformity with empirical laws, or whether they are considered parts of wholes which, by necessity, either empirical or apriori, can behave individually only as such parts within a whole—at the highest level perhaps in the whole that is consciousness in its totality, which is bound to a fixed form of wholeness. In other words, atomistic psychology, as well as Gestalt psychology, both retain the sense and the principle of psychological “naturalism” (as we have defined it above) or “sensualism” as it can also be named if we recall the use of the term “inner sense” (Husserl 1989, 423-424).

From the perspective of phenomenological philosophy, whether one sees the field of conscious experience as an “assemblage of forms” or as a collection of associatively linked sensations is only a case of choosing one side of the same approach. Thus, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty points out, Gestalt theory yields remarkable results when it stays on the purely descriptive level, but not when it attempts to construct a theory of consciousness based on the principles of perceptual grouping. The phenomenological view on Gestalt psychology in both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty consisted in emphasizing the importance of the transcendental

⁵⁹ For an elaborate account of the reception of Gestalt psychology in the tradition of phenomenological philosophy see Sara Heinämaa’s article “Phenomenological Responses to Gestalt Psychology” (Heinämaa 2009).

approach, which by definition goes beyond mere description, refraining from causal explanations.

Gestalt theory does not recognize that psychological atomism is but a particular case of a more general prejudice: the unquestioned belief in determinate being and in the world, and this is why it forgets its most valuable descriptions when it seeks to give itself a theoretical framework. Gestalt theory remains free of errors when it operates within the medium regions of reflection. When it wishes to reflect upon its own analyses, it treats consciousness—despite its own principles—as an assemblage of “forms” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 510).

Such a claim certainly should not be seen as a rejection of the important findings of Gestalt thinkers, but only as a rejection of the theoretical framework common to any empirical approach in psychology. Merleau-Ponty, whose *Phenomenology of Perception* is rich in Gestalt-influenced examples and analyses, intended to maintain the truth of the Gestalt-oriented descriptions by subjecting them to a transcendental-phenomenological inquiry.⁶⁰

The main point of the phenomenological critique of both associationists and gestaltists concerned not the validity of their concrete findings, but rather the theory of consciousness which resulted from them. Pointing out “the failure of the modern attempts to distinguish between a psychological and a philosophical theory of consciousness,” Husserl repeatedly emphasized that naturalistic atomism cannot be overcome by simple postulation of additional qualities which bind psychic data together:

In advance, as though this were obviously correct, one misinterprets conscious life as a complex of data of “external” and (at best) “internal sensuousness”; then one lets form-qualities take care of combining such data into wholes. To get rid of “atomism,” one adds the theory that the forms or configurations are founded on these data necessarily

⁶⁰ Such an attitude resulted, on the one hand, in his faithful adherence to the Husserlian problematic of constitution, and, on the other hand, in his clear preference for a Gestalt-inspired approach to perception over the atomistic approach of the associationists. For example, in the introduction to the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty unambiguously emphasized this primacy of unity over associative connections: “There are no indifferent givens that together set about forming a thing because some factual contiguities or resemblances associate them. Rather, because we first perceive a whole as a thing, the analytic attitude can later discern resemblances or contiguities there” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 16). And: “If we hold ourselves to phenomena, then the unity of the thing in perception is not constructed through association, but rather, being the condition of association, this unity precedes the cross-checkings that verify and determine it, this unity precedes itself” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 17).

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and the wholes are therefore prior in themselves to the parts (Husserl 1960, 38).

This point can bring to mind the discussion on the nature of consciousness in the contemporary philosophy of mind, to which we paid some attention at the end of the previous chapter. In this context, understanding consciousness as a mere quality of experience, which supposedly changes its phenomenological status, can be seen as just another variation of the old naturalistic tendency to attribute unresolved issues to made-up qualitative properties and to treat consciousness and subjectivity as constituted by such qualities.

The parallel is the following: if, on the descriptive level, we can state that there is a “what-it-is-likeness” to any experience or that in any perception there are necessary holistic relations to be distinguished, it does not follow—logically or otherwise—that “what-it-is-like”-qualia or holistic form-qualities are real entities inherent to the mind. Husserl saw it as one of the biggest naturalistic fallacies to treat consciousness and subjectivity in the same way as one treats objects and laws of nature, that is, as real things subject to real causal relations. The whole point of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction was to go beyond this relation between subjective and objective, which either makes subjectivity a part of “nature,” or makes objectivity a part of the mind.⁶¹

The phenomenological *epoché*, as a suspension of the belief in the existence of the world, and consequently of all ontologically bound judgments, has nothing to do with radical subjectivism or the denial of external reality. Phenomenological reduction is not a philosophical position, stating that the world is a product of transcendental subjectivity, but rather a purely methodological move. This move ensures that no naturalistic predicates and judgments about reality can enter the realm of the pure phenomenological experience. Whereas, in the “real world,” we believe that perceived qualities, relations, and predicates belong to objects and define actual state of affairs, according to the phenomenological attitude such relations or characteristics of things are taken as part of the appearing phenomena, without assuming any kind of natural causality. Phenomenological *epoché* aims to avoid naturalistic attributional biases by suspending the core presupposition of any independent reality and natural causality. This allows us to

⁶¹ “Just as the reduced Ego is not a piece of the world, so, conversely, neither the world nor any worldly Object is a piece of my Ego, to be found in my conscious life as a really inherent part of it, as a complex of data of sensation or a complex of acts” (Husserl 1960, 26).

focus on the experiential side of phenomena and uncover their structure and functioning without relying on any external explanation.

This also applies to the investigation of regularities defining inner connectivity and forms of order in the subjective experience. The phenomenological intention is to describe such temporal and associative connections purely in terms of syntheses of consciousness and refraining from naturalistic attributions. Therefore, in order to understand Husserl's transcendental doctrine of association, we need to see it in the context of his theory of consciousness and *vice versa*: in order to understand the phenomenological conception of consciousness we need to clarify association as one of the fundamental types of synthesis.

7.2. Husserl's transcendental doctrine of association:

Association as a synthesis of consciousness

Contrary to the rival psychological views debating primacy of wholeness over associative combination, Husserl holds these two moments—i.e., combination and unity—to be essentially inseparable. The unity and coherence of our subjective experience is an essential fact regarding experiential organization. The transcendental inquiry into its conditions of possibility does not presuppose that this unity should be broken down into distinct abstract pieces. There is no contradiction in seeing the same object or process as a whole or as a series of multiplicities. There is no rejection of an originally unified character of conscious experience in any inquiry concerning what made this unity possible in the first place.

Husserl's view, already familiar to us as far as time-consciousness is concerned, does not rely on a representation of the mind as a collection of experiences and sense data brought together by some additional quality or form. His early account of time as a real connection, which at some point can be comparable to seeing the form of time as an additional quality, was rejected as unacceptable by Husserl himself. The mind's interconnectivity was then conceived of as made possible by consciousness and its synthetic function. This step coincided with the general turn towards transcendental phenomenology, and not without reason: any psychological view on consciousness carries in itself an inevitable—both historically and ontologically—representation of it as some sort of objective reality. This then leads to the aforementioned tendency to see any descriptive attributes of subjective experience as real qualities or relations. One of the aims of transcendental reduction was to refrain from

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transferring any given real-world relations and properties to the description of the transcendental realm. In this regard, understanding consciousness through its synthetic function does not mean that consciousness somehow causes things to be connected together, or that it connects some pre-existing entities. That would imply that the sensations are already there somehow unrelatedly, and they are then connected by conscious activity. This idea is not only absurd and far-fetched, but also at odds with our natural way of experiencing. Husserl points out that synthesis is not something that occurs “afterwards” bridging otherwise separated data, but rather concerns the way one is consciously aware of them as belonging together: “If two similar elements occur in a present, it is not the case that they first exist [separately] and that then their synthesis follows; rather, we call ‘similar’ what occurs in such a synthesis as coexistent” (Husserl 2001a, 494).

In every version of his systematization of phenomenological philosophy, Husserl claimed the centrality of the intentional correlation between *cogitatio* and *cogitatum*, i.e. the intentional act of perceiving, remembering and the like, and the object intended in such acts. Among other things, this implies that an identical object can be given in multiple modes of givenness and that any particular mode of givenness can be seen as a multiplicity of appearances of the same intentional object. The question of unity itself can therefore be seen as twofold: on the one hand, we have the unity of an object which appears identical—the unity of its multiple appearances, such as the same object seen from different angles; and on the other hand, we have the unity of the temporal flow of the perceiving itself, of a coherent sequence of appearing, of changing modes of seeing. These two sides of intentional experience are correlated: multiplicities of manners of appearing correspond to the synthetic unity of a perceived object.

Always we find the feature in question as a unity belonging to a passing flow of “multiplicities.” Looking straightforwardly, we have perhaps the one unchanging shape or color; in the reflective attitude, we have its manners of appearance (oriental, perspectival, and so forth), following one another in continuous sequence (Husserl 1960, 40).

Each *cogitatio*, each experience (*Erlebnis*) has its “structure of multiplicities,” which does not contradict its unified character. Rather the two are complimentary: there is no conceivable unity without multiplicities of appearing being experienced in a continuous flow. This idea is directly related to how Husserl understood the dynamic structure of

experience in general and of perceptual experience in particular. That is why in order to apprehend the phenomenological idea of multiplicity and unity of conscious experience, we need to look closer into how he chooses to introduce the topic of passive constitution and therefore into his account of perception. The phenomenology of perception offers one of the clearest ways to understand synthetic consciousness in Husserl.⁶²

First of all, in his lectures on transcendental logic, known as *Analyses concerning Passive Synthesis*, Husserl chooses to introduce perception as being essentially characterized by its inadequateness—its “constant pretension to accomplish something that, by its very nature, it is not in a position to accomplish” (Husserl 2001a, 39). One can easily notice that this is rather an unusual first step in discussing perception, which in phenomenology, had always been defined as the most original self-giving mode of consciousness. And yet, Husserl claims at the very beginning of the section “Self-giving in Perception” that such a self-giving can never fully happen. This does not mean that perception always simply fails to accomplish intuitive givenness of its objects, but rather, that such givenness remains incomplete: any new side of the object-acquaintance opens up to countless possibilities of seeing others.

Every perceptual object in the epistemic process is a flowing approximation. We always have the external object in the flesh (we see, grasp, seize it), and yet it is always at an infinite distance mentally. What we do grasp of it pretends to be its essence; and it is it too, but it remains so only in an incomplete approximation, an approximation that grasps something of it, but in doing so it also constantly grasps into an emptiness that cries out for fulfillment (Husserl 2001a, 58-59).

The actual process of perception consists in a continuous interplay between fullness and emptiness: the becoming visible of new sides of an object is complemented by the gradual disappearing of the sides just

⁶² In the part of his lectures on transcendental logic, which deals directly with the topic of passive synthesis and transcendental aesthetic, Husserl focuses on the two following thematic blocks: (1) the *phenomenology of perception*, whose goal is to uncover the mode of self-givenness in perception and its essential ways of fulfillment and modalization; and (2) the *phenomenology of association and affection*, which concerns the discovering of essential structures and regularities operative on the level of passive, pre-predicative constitution—this includes the thematization of the principles of associative content-binding and the affective interconnectedness of subjective life. The two mentioned thematic blocks (perception and association) are closely related. Descriptions of the former set the ground for the complicated genetic analyses of the latter. On the example of perception, we can assess the need for the explanation of passive connectivity of consciousness in its most concrete habitat.

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seen. Thus, every appearance finds its place inside the multiplicity of other appearances and stays in relation to those. Husserl goes on claiming that “every perception *implicite* invokes an entire perceptual system” (Husserl 2001a, 48). Any single perceptual act is an abstraction from the whole experiential process to which it belongs. Any static perception can be seen as “complex, many-sided continuum” (Mohanty 2011, 167) and all unity and wholeness—as a multiplicity, a system of interrelated appearances. Finally, this paradoxical feature of perceptual experience turns out to be illuminating in order to understand subjectivity: it shows experience as, on the one hand, “a constant process of anticipation, of preunderstanding” (Husserl 2001a, 43) and, on the other hand, as a constant process of sedimentation and transformation.

Moreover, this description applies not only to perception, but to other modes of experience too, so that it ultimately embraces the whole subjective experience, “the whole of conscious life as unified synthetically” (Husserl 1960, 42). When Husserl says that every consciousness is ultimately a synthesis, he implies these two sides of the same coin: first, every intentional consciousness presenting or presentifying its objects as identical through multiplicities of appearances; and second, the synthetic consciousness as a dynamic whole of all of the conscious life.

By providing analyses of perceptual phenomena, Husserl encourages us to see subjective experience and, hence, subjectivity itself from a new angle: not as a relation between subject and object, but as a process, a unity constituted through continuous changes. This new, dynamic, perspective, highlighting historicity and openness of consciousness, demands also a new methodological approach. Such an approach is already known to us under the rubric of genetic phenomenology, which pursues precisely at the uncovering of “the most lawful regularities of genesis” of subjectivity. And it should not escape our attention that this is exactly what is at stake here. That is to say: the main question, i.e. the gravitational center of Husserl’s transcendental aesthetic, concerns first and most of all a phenomenological clarification of “the basic, essential conditions of the possibility of subjectivity itself” (Husserl 2001a, 169).

The first, most basic and ubiquitous lawful regularity, “connecting all and governing within each single process in particular,” is the universal form of the temporal flux—“a *formal regularity pertaining to a universal genesis*, which is such that past, present, and future become unitarily constituted over and over again, in a certain noetic-noematic formal structure of flowing modes of givenness” (Husserl 1960, 75). Such a tem-

poral unity of subjectivity is constituted as “the unity of a ‘history’,” a continuous history of acquisition, sedimentation, and transformation.

Another universal principle of subjective genesis, operative on the passive, pre-predicative level of constitution, bears the name of association. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl introduces the topic of association as “a *fundamental concept belonging to transcendental phenomenology*” (Husserl 1960, 80), whose meaning should be separated from the naturalistic tradition:

It is phenomenologically evident, but strange to the tradition-bound, that association is not a title merely for a conformity to empirical laws on the part of complexes of data comprised in a “psyche”—according to the old figure, something like an intrapsychic gravitation—but a title (moreover an extremely comprehensive one) for a conformity to eidetic laws on the part of the constitution of the pure ego. It designates a *realm of the “innate” Apriori*, without which an ego as such is unthinkable. Only through the phenomenology of genesis does the ego become understandable: *as a nexus, connected in the unity of an all-embracing genesis, an infinite nexus of synthetically congruous performances* (Husserl 1960, 80-81).

Husserl’s transcendental doctrine of association aims at defining the eidetic regularities describing the synthetic connectivity of consciousness and the genesis of subjectivity. Its task is to clarify how multiplicities of appearances relate to each other so that they result in an organized and coherent perceptual experience. In other words, the task of the phenomenology of association is to understand how perceptual experience can harmoniously relate to past experience or how, at the end, the whole of the present life can be connected with the whole of the past life without contradiction, without turning into the chaotic relation of everything with everything.

It was clear for Husserl that the analyses of time-consciousness were necessary, but not sufficient for the explication of this ultimate complexity of subjective interconnectivity. Contrary to Kant’s formal transcendental aesthetic, Husserl’s inquiry into the principles of passive constitution bears upon the most concrete, content-based, organization of pre-reflective experience, such as the organization of sense-fields and the associative awakening of the past. Moreover, Husserl takes affectivity, i.e. the way objects affect the ego, as a fundamental dimension of subjectivity and as a possible topic of transcendental explication.⁶³

⁶³ For Kant, the phenomenon of affection was beyond the transcendental explication. While risking to venture into generalization, one might say that Kant’s

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In what follows, I will turn to a systematization of Husserl's account of associative syntheses and will present the main types of association, as well as the basic principles of associative connectivity. Anybody familiar with Husserl's writings concerning this topic might have experienced not only their insightful and observant force, but also a somewhat disorganized and intricate manner of presentation. Husserl barely ever sacrificed the complexity of his remarks to clarity of exposition, and it was certainly his privilege as a pioneer in the transcendental approach to association. My task, however, is more modest and compels me to favor structure and clarity which sometimes come at the price of simplification and a disregard of nuances, which anyway can always be experienced fully in Husserl's own texts.⁶⁴

7.3. Types of associative syntheses

Introducing the topic of association in the *Analyses concerning Passive Synthesis*, Husserl first of all recalls the distinction between the traditional account of association, relying on the idea of objective, psychophysical causality, and the phenomenological approach, which sees association as "a form and lawful regularity of immanent genesis that constantly belongs to consciousness in general" (Husserl 2001a, 162). We have discussed this important distinction enough already and can now focus on the function and systematization of associative syntheses in the immanence of conscious life. Based on the phenomenological descrip-

transcendental aesthetic was restricted to formal conditions of sensibility, such as the forms of time and space. Husserl instead includes also a dimension of affection and hence association as parts of the transcendental explication of the possibility of pre-reflective experience.

⁶⁴ As for the secondary literature, the most comprehensive and accomplished systematic account of the phenomenology of association is Elmar Holenstein's book *Phänomenologie der Assoziation: zu Struktur und Funktion eines Grundprinzips der Passiven Genesis bei E. Husserl* (Holenstein 1972). In his analysis, Holenstein touches upon all the most important points of the topic and also discusses notably the differences and similarities between the phenomenological and psychological approaches to association. In her book on *Intersubjective Temporality. It's about time* (Rodemeyer 2006), Lanei Rodemeyer provides an account of association and its relation to retention and recollection. On the topic of association in the context of Husserl's investigations on passive synthesis, see also Anthony Steinbock's introduction to his translation of the *Analyses concerning Active and Passive Synthesis* (Steinbock 2001); Yamaguchi, Ichiro: *Passive Synthesis und Intersubjektivität bei Edmund Husserl* (Yamaguchi 2013); Biceaga, Victor: *The Concept of Passivity in Husserl's Phenomenology* (Biceaga 2010).

tion of subjective experience, we find ourselves in the streaming present life of consciousness, to which retentional and protentional moments necessarily belong. To this life also belong emerging rememberings and expectations, as well as the whole past and future horizons. In other words, we find ourselves in the framework of the temporally organized experience, which, for Husserl, is the basic dimension for any possible analysis of experiential organization. It should therefore not come as a surprise that the division of the main types of associative syntheses directly mirrors this general temporal structure of consciousness.

Association delineates a specific type of conscious connectivity, which is not to be confused with the rules of temporal syntheses. Husserl claims that the first approach to subjectivity's consciousness of its life as streaming in the living present and in reference to the past and future is still incomplete and abstract. Meaningfulness is achieved only if subjectivity is conscious of itself concretely. The phenomenological task consists therefore in describing "the syntheses concerning content that extend beyond the transcendental synthesis of time" (Husserl 2001a, 171).

Nevertheless, it should not escape our attention that Husserl never drew a strict line between these two orders of synthesis. All along his descriptions of association and affectivity, the form of time holds its fundamental and exemplary status and dominates the understanding of association. We shall discuss later whether or not such an approach limits the possibilities of the phenomenological discussion of the passive constitution. As for now, it is important to keep in mind that, in Husserl's works, content-based associative syntheses rely on the form of time ubiquitously and are described as "a higher continuation of the doctrine of original time-constitution" (Husserl 2001a, 163).

In accordance with the general structure of temporal experience, association is also divided into three categories or three groups of phenomena, namely: (1) reproductive association; (2) anticipatory association; and (3) primordial association (*Urassoziation*).⁶⁵

⁶⁵ This division is directly drawn from Husserl's account of association in the *Analyses*. Holenstein suggests distinguishing two groups of associations: (1) association in the ordinary sense, which includes reproductive and anticipatory associations, and (2) primordial association (*Urassoziation*) which then includes affective and pre-affective associations (Holenstein 1972, 32-39). Rodemeyer proposes distinguishing the following three types of association: (1) primordial association corresponding to *Urimpression* and the near retention, (2) motivated association corresponding to the far retention and typified memories, and (3) reproductive association which accounts for recollection (Rodemeyer 2006, 99).

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The first and most fundamental type of associative connectivity is known under the rubric of *reproductive association*. It concerns the possibility of remembering as well as reproductive consciousness, and is relevant for both the traditional and phenomenological doctrines of association. In Husserl's words, "the doctrine of the genesis of reproductions and of their formations is the doctrine of association in the first and more genuine sense" (Husserl 2001a, 164). The here operating synthesis of consciousness delineates a "purely immanent connection of 'this recalls that,' 'one calls attention to the other'" (Husserl 1973a, 75). To be sure, reproductive association is not to be confused with the phenomenon of explicit, deliberate recollection. What is at stake here is rather the passive, pre-reflective conditions of anything being brought to the present awareness by means of associative connectivity, and, in a wider perspective, also the conditions of any possible interconnection between the past and present life of the same consciousness.

The second type of association is closely related to the first and concerns "a doctrine of the genesis of expectations" as well as the whole realm of anticipatory intentions. Husserl calls this connection inductive or *anticipatory association*. It concerns "essential conditions of the possibility of a subjectivity that can know itself as identically one, having its inherent endless future life" (Husserl 2001a, 169).

Then, from these two types of associative syntheses, which govern intuitive, content-based, relations between present, past, and future, Husserl proceeds to distinguish the third type, which brings the topic of association to a new level of inquiry. He designates it under such titles as "primordial forms of association or originary impressional associations," which are said to define the rules of "unification within a presence" (Husserl 1973a, 177). Husserl suggests to consider the structure of the living immanent present as a universal genetic phenomenon and to describe the regularities of connection essential to it. On this level, *primordial associative syntheses* are taken to be responsible for the organization of the sense-fields, group-formations, and "the coming into prominence of particular members from a homogeneous background" (Husserl 1973a, 76). In psychological terms, one would speak about such topics as perceptual organization, feature-integration, and multisensory integration.

Now that we have distinguished three groups of associations, we should discuss the principles of associative syntheses. Such principles are universal and concern primordial, reproductive, and anticipatory associations. However, specific details of such principles and formations of unity

are different for primordial and reproductive (including anticipative) types of syntheses. Following Husserl's own preferences, I will first present his analyses on the primordial level of constitution and then turn to the realm of reproductive association. The topic of anticipatory association falls out of the scope of this work. On the one hand, it is less significant for the constitution of the experiential unity, since, in Husserl's words, "the future does not fashion the unities of experience in the original sense, it presupposes them" (Husserl 2001a, 235). On the other hand, anticipatory association is conceptually close to primordial and reproductive association and relies on the same principles.⁶⁶

7.4. Principles of primordial association and unity-formation

The particular task behind the analyses of the primordial association consists in accounting for the most basic level of unity-formations. Principles of primordial association are those describing the organization of the pre-reflective perceptual experience. This includes accounting for the types of connections through which this level of experience is made possible. Husserl underlines that these connections should not be understood as real, causal links, thereby referring back to Hume's point that an association does not establish any real connection between two separate events or things:

To be sure, one can say that similarity between particular data establishes no real bond. But we are not speaking now of real qualities but of the way in which sense data are connected in immanence (Husserl 1973a, 74).

We are speaking about immanent data, for example, about concrete color data in the unity of a streaming present [...] these necessarily have a unity through consciousness, a unity through kinship, as similar to one another or uniform with one another: several discrete color-data in the visual field are grouped together; they are especially united by virtue of their similarity (Husserl 2001a, 175).

The principles of connection here investigated are in fact quite abstract, in the sense that they delineate only general rules of synthesis, but do not account for the real qualities of connected elements. For instance, one can refer to the connection of homogeneity between a group of distinct ob-

⁶⁶ However, an important aspect of this topic concerns the affective dimension of anticipatory association. As Husserl writes, "affection has a unitary tendency toward the future" (Husserl 2001a, 204). Rodemeyer calls attention to this feature of affectivity and stresses that the protentional openness of experience towards the future enables affection to exercise its allure on the self (Rodemeyer 2006, 155-160).

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jects as being united on the basis of a similar quality they all share (such as redness or squareness), or to the homogeneity of a red figure which distinguishes itself from a white background and thus makes it perceived as a distinct object. All these are experiential not real connections. The principles of the primordial associative syntheses account for the universal conditions of the basic level of perceptual experience, of the way one is pre-reflectively conscious of the contents of one's life. These principles, however, do not provide any ground for justification of necessary or real connections between things.

These particular structures of primordial content-binding, according to Husserl's work, include two basic types: (1) temporal associations of coexistence and succession; and (2) associations of homogeneity and heterogeneity (based on the principles of similarity and contrast respectively).

Temporal association of coexistence and succession. Nowhere do temporal and associative connections come so close to each other as in the living present. First of all, the unity of the living present as such is already an achievement of temporal synthesis. And since the form of time is "the presupposition of all other connections capable of establishing unity" (Husserl 1973a, 164), the basic forms of unification in the living present are universal syntheses of coexistence and succession, which establish the reciprocal relations among all immanent objects. Multiplicities of prominent objects or of immanent data are first connected temporally, as experienced simultaneously or continuously. These syntheses are temporal in essence, but at the same time they cannot be described as purely formal, because they associate immanent data as belonging together.

We find in every such present essentially a hyletic core; a unified multiplicity of sensible data (visual data, sound data, etc.)—unified in the most loose manner—is essentially and constantly constituted in simultaneity and living succession (Husserl 2001a, 184).

Husserl points out that data configuration in coexistence and succession belong to the phenomenological exploration of association and that they actually shed light on a new aspect of association, which had not been established before.⁶⁷ In this case, one can speak about *temporal association*,

⁶⁷ "From phenomenology, which was very late in finding avenues to the exploration of association, this concept receives a completely new aspect, an essentially new delimitation, with new fundamental forms. Here belongs, for example, sensuous configuration in coexistence and succession" (Husserl 1960, 80).

which represents an interesting case of blending between formal and content-based connectivity.

Apart from these basic forms of temporal association, there are also purely content-binding *associative syntheses of homogeneity and heterogeneity* which establish connections of *similarity and contrast*.⁶⁸ These are two general principles of perceptual organization, which should be understood in relation to the phenomenon of gradation. It means that the connection of similarity has its degrees: from the strongest connection of uniformity to more differentiated—and less congruent—connections, when two elements are similar in some relation and contrasted in others. The connection based on uniformity in this sense is the higher degree on the scale of homogeneity, while the phenomenon of contrast is at the opposite end. Both these types of connections are fundamental for the most basic level of constitution and its unity: “The unity of the field of consciousness is always produced through sensible interconnections, in a sensible connection of similarity and sensible contrast. Without this there could be no world” (Husserl 2001a, 505).

Husserl describes the phenomenon of contrast as a primordial phenomenon responsible for the becoming prominent of objects as opposed to other objects or data. An example of such a prominence under contrast is figure-background differentiation in different sense modalities, such as red patches on a white surface or a loud noise against a homogeneous tonal background. Generally speaking, a relation of contrast makes differentiation possible so that one unity can be distinguished from another. The relation of homogeneity is responsible instead for binding immanent data. The application of this principle is multifaceted. It can apply to the unity of prominent objects or to the unity of a sense field, which as such is united by all its data being homogeneously visual or tactile. According to Husserl, every sense field as such is homogeneously unified and “stands in the relation of heterogeneity to every other field of sense” (Husserl 1973a, 73).

In order to make this systematization more meaningful, I suggest approaching the topic of primordial association by considering types of unities established by means of associative syntheses. Here, following Husserl’s descriptions we can distinguish several questions concerning the unity of sense-fields for themselves, multisensory unity, the unity of prominent figures and groups of figures, and then the so-called forms of order.

⁶⁸ “The most general connections of prominent objects that are determined with respect to content are [...] connection of homogeneity and connections of heterogeneity” (Husserl 2001a, 175).

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Let us start with *the unity of sense-fields*. Here, the most important principle of unification is that of homogeneity, which ensures the unity of each sense-field based on a particular type of content. Husserl points out that temporal continuity cannot “be filled with just any content: we cannot mix color data together with sound data to form a unity of an immanent temporal datum” (Husserl 2001a, 188). The homogeneity of each sense-field in itself consists simply in the connection of everything visual through visual homogeneity, of everything tactile through tactile homogeneity, etc. (Husserl 2001a, 184).

Obviously, this is only an example of overall homogeneity concerning a sense-field, which does not account for the particularities of its inner organization. Within each homogeneous sense-field we can distinguish a number of separate dimensions or features, such as color, shape, brightness, orientation and so forth. All these dimensions are inherently united as homogeneous. This also implies that separated objects can be connected and/or contrasted on the basis of feature-similarity: for instance, everything green in the field of perception is connected together but contrasted to blue; similarly, all brightly illuminated surfaces are contrasted with dim ones. Furthermore, another type of unity-formation enabled by primordial associative syntheses concerns the *unities of prominent multiplicities*, or unities of groups of objects or any other kind of data. According to Husserl, multiplicities and groups of multiplicities can become prominent on the basis of their special homogeneity, e.g. a group of blue figures, a group of triangles, etc.⁶⁹ In general, gradations of homogeneity produce unity-formations based on similarity, which can vary depending on which bridging term is used to establish such a connection. Besides the similarity based integration, there is also a separate group of problems which concerns the integration of heterogeneous features in one object. Husserl did not discuss it as such in this text, but this topic is in principle consistent with his theory.⁷⁰

Closely related to this issue is the problem of *heterogeneous multisensory integration*. This concerns the unity of the field of consciousness as a whole, or as the unity of various sense-fields. The main question can

⁶⁹ “It is thus only by associative blending (homogenous association) that a field of sense is a unity; likewise its order and articulation, as well as all formation of groups and likenesses, are produced in the field by the effect of association: the similar is evoked by the similar, and it contrasts with not similar” (Husserl 1973a, 75).

⁷⁰ Within the context of contemporary psychological research, this topic has interesting connotations with Anne Treisman’s feature-integration theory of attention (Treisman 1998; Treisman and Gelade 1980).

be phrased as follows: How is it possible that we do not have isolated visual, auditory, and tactile experiences, but rather have one coherent experience in which different sense-modalities are perfectly integrated? In my view, Husserl anticipated at least three different directions to answer this question. Even if these directions extend beyond the scope of his account of primordial association, it is important to briefly mention them all. First of all, he clearly claimed that the overall unity of sense-fields in one consciousness is formal and due to the inner temporality and self-related character of consciousness:

Within each field we have an inner connectedness of the field; such an inner connectedness of the field can only have the optical as the optical, etc. But beyond this we have a universal unity of form, which as such makes connections, but also only makes connections in the life of a single ego (Husserl 2001a, 510).

This is the most fundamental level of multisensory integration—the one related to formal conditions of time-consciousness. The second line of enquiry for the understanding of multisensory integration in Husserl’s philosophy comes from his investigations on the corporeality of perception. In *Ideas II*, he depicts the lived body (*Leib*) as “the perceptual organ of the experiencing subject” (Husserl 1989, 152) in which different sensations are localized, and namely not as properties of a physical thing but as phenomenal fields. This implies that all sensory modalities are embodied and that their unity is not different from the unity of their bodily consciousness. Perception is a kinesthetic experience, and each modality of perception (vision, hearing, and so on) is a kinesthetic experience of its own, although not separated from the others but originally unified in one living body. Husserl features the lived body as “zero point” or as “center of orientation” and movement (Husserl 1989, 165-166). Bodily consciousness always unfolds as a synthetic unity of continuous movements in which spatial modes of appearances and multiple perspectives on identical objects are made possible. According to this perspective, different sense modalities are regarded as kinesthetic systems, whose integration is dependent on the pre-reflective unity of one’s bodily existence.

The third direction concerns the presently discussed topic of association and affectivity. In the *Analyses*, Husserl suggests that heterogeneous elements united temporally can function as “affective nexuses,”⁷¹ that is to

⁷¹ “[...] we also have affective nexuses of heterogeneous elements through the homogeneous shape of time” (Husserl 2001a, 518).

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say they can represent a particular sort of heterogeneous unity established through content-based connections. Furthermore he points to “the possibility of the unification of data from different sensuous fields given in a single presence (heterogeneous association)” (Husserl 1973a, 177). This content-based affective unity underlies the possibility of cross-modal association, so that pattern-similarity can be established between, for instance, visual and auditory sensations and the “usual association of sense-regions can also spread from sense-region to sense-region” (Husserl 2001a, 518).⁷²

Thus, temporality, embodiment, and affectivity are three basic structures that account for the multisensory unity of perceptual experience. While time-consciousness is responsible for formal synchronic and diachronic integration, and corporeality is responsible for kinesthetic integration, then affectivity must account for the content-based integration of perceptual experience.

To conclude with the primordial association, we need to mention the topic of the so-called *forms of order*, which describe basic organizational types for groups of prominent figures. What distinguishes these forms of order from unity-formations is their particular type of connectivity, which relies on the same associative principles, but also functions as some sort of prefigured concatenation. Here, the phenomenology of association comes very close to Gestalt principles of perceptual organization. But unlike Gestalt psychologists, Husserl integrates different types of Gestalt-formations based on his basic principles of succession, coexistence, homogeneity, and contrast.

First, the principle of succession introduces a temporal order in the form of a sequence (linear, uniform concatenation), such as for example a sequence of lights’ signals or sounds, melodies and the like. Subsequently, the principle of coexistence is generally responsible for any order of grouping on the basis of contiguity. As Husserl maintains, this form of order on the basis of coexistence is not available for the auditory field.

A unity based on homogeneity as such is not an order yet, but orders or groupings of similarity, uniformity, and gradation can be established on it.

These types of connections through homogeneity can be connected differently by bridging terms, thus forming different groups of homogeneity that have the single terms in common. For example, a red triangle is in a unity with other differently colored triangles. [...] The same red triangle, however, can form a uniform group with other fig-

⁷² This is but a preliminary indication. The role of affectivity for the constitution of experiential unity will soon come to the fore of this inquiry.

ures that are not uniform but that are all red—uniformity with respect to red (Husserl 2001a, 178).

For example, coexistence, contrast, and homogeneity all contribute to the formation of an order of coexistence of homogeneous random specks of color or sharply delimited figures. Interestingly, while discussing this issue, Husserl seems to freely interchange the use of such terms as “forms of order” and “primordial phenomenon.” Under the last title he mentions, for example, the unity of a prominent object, the multiplicities of prominent objects, then phenomena of contrast, uniformity, gradation, and similarity. It is also worth mentioning such primordial orderly formations as part-whole relations. Husserl ascribes this kind of order to the framework of homogeneity, which therefore prefigure “the relationships of the object and of the inner, dependent feature, and of the object as a whole and as a part” (Husserl 2001a, 179).⁷³

7.5. Reproductive association: Associative awakening of the past

The topic of reproductive association deals with one of the most puzzling phenomena in human mental life—our capacity to be conscious of ourselves as having a life which extends beyond just the present moment, to bring past events to current awareness—in other words, to have a memory which connects who we are with who we were and possibly will be. Already Aristotle linked memory with time-perception,⁷⁴ and the phenomenological description of reproductive consciousness firmly established this connection between temporality and remembrance. The real puzzle, however, concerns not only the temporal interconnectivity of experience, but also the concrete, content-based connections between present and elapsed moments, which defy time itself.

Everybody certainly knows what it is like to come back after a long absence to the place where you once lived: you still can find your way home without having to remember the number of the house; you can

⁷³ Holenstein, analyzing this concept in Husserl’s writings, distinguishes the following main types of *Ordnungsformen*: coexistence and succession, sense-fields, and whole-part relations (Holenstein 1972). My view is close to his, diverging only in relation to sense-fields.

⁷⁴ “[...] the object of memory is the past. All memory, therefore, implies a time elapsed; consequently only those animals which perceive time remember, and the organ thereby they perceive time is also that thereby they remember” (Aristotle and McKeon 1941, 607–608).

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recognize the feeling of climbing that particular staircase, and then, of course, the smell which at first dominates all other sensations but after a while you just stop noticing. All such details and bodily sensations bring back the whole world of experiences connected with them: former thoughts and feelings, hopes and preferences, a former self, which might feel both recognizable and estranged.

“The world of perception and the world of memory are separate worlds” (Husserl 1973a, 160). However, in our experience, they manage to establish unity and communicate through innumerable associative connections. This connectivity between past and present is puzzling in many ways. The idea of the past as such is contradictory as far as it is taken as existent and capable of affecting the actual consciousness: it is nowhere to be found and yet there is hardly any present experience without recognition or influence of former experiences. Such an interweaving of presence with something which is no longer there, the possibility that a new experience will evoke things long forgotten, this very particularity of our mental life requires a phenomenological explication.

Moreover, one cannot help but noticing a very specific feature of these connections, a certain inner logic, which unite past and present on the basis of their similarity. However time separates the world of memory and the world of actual perception, there always remains something outside the time itself which ties them together. Marcel Proust undoubtedly came closer than anybody else to the essence of this mysterious capacity of our memory to bring these two worlds together and establish ineffable but meaningful identity between otherwise distinct and unrelated moments. For instance, in *Finding Time Again*, the protagonist discovers the extra-temporal character of his most valuable impressions in the famous library passage:

And I began to divine this cause as I compared these varied impressions of well-being with each other, all of which, the sound of the spoon on the plate, the uneven flagstones, the taste of the madeleine, had something in common, which I was experiencing in the present moment and at the same time in a moment far away, so that the past was made to encroach upon the present and make me uncertain about which of the two I was in; the truth was that the being within me who was enjoying this impression was enjoying it because of something shared between a day in the past and the present moment, something extra-temporal, and this being appeared only when, through one of these moments of identity between the present and the past, it was able to find itself in the only milieu in which it could live and enjoy the essence of things, that is to say outside of time (Proust 2002, 179).

Fully in line with these remarks, Husserl provides some analyses of reproductive association. Their scope, however, extends far beyond involuntary memory and embraces the conditions of possibility of any memory as far as it brings together past and present moments of the same consciousness. The phenomenology of association, therefore, intends to clarify how it happens that subjective experience is interconnected throughout and how such concrete, content-based connections make the reappearance of the past in the stream of the living present possible. In Husserl's own words, the question is as follows: "How each present can ultimately enter into a relation with all pasts, how—extending beyond the living retention—it can enter into a relation with the entire realm of things forgotten" (Husserl 2001a, 169).⁷⁵ In its broader context, the phenomenology of reproductive association is here required to provide a full account of the possibility for subjectivity to be conscious of its entire life with its past and future-horizons; that is to say to have a life which is accessible through memory.

We have seen already that association in the phenomenological understanding accounts for the basic, universal principles of content-binding, among which similarity and contrast are the two most important ones. Reproductive association, in this regard, is a particular case of associative synthesis whose function consists in linking what is presently perceived to the not-present, including remote memories and even imaginary objects (Husserl 1973a, 177). The similarity principle has indeed the most important role, as the similar evokes the similar. As a result, something present reminds me of something from the past in virtue of a particular homogeneity between the two.

Similarity alone, however, indicates only the principle according to which experiences and their objects are connected in consciousness. According to this principle, all experiences of the same ego can be associatively connected with each other as long as they "objectively constitute in themselves anything similar and anything comparable" (Husserl 1973a, 180). Indeed, everything can be connected in principle, but not everything is connected *de facto*. This suggests that from this general principle of reproductive association we should distinguish the genetic

⁷⁵ "It is, to be sure, a fundamental problem of phenomenology to explain fully how every experience (e.g. every recollection) comes to have this connection with every other (e.g. a recollection has a connection with the corresponding actual perception) of the same ego or in the stream of consciousness of the same ego, a connection which produces the association of everything that is experienced in one time" (Husserl 1973a, 166-167).

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phenomenon of actual awakening (*Weckung*). Such an associative awakening occurs passively and, according to Husserl, is a precondition of any remembering, be it explicit or implicit, deliberate or involuntary. Even “*active remembering is possible only on the basis of the associative awakening which has already taken place*; the awakening itself is an event which always occurs passively” (Husserl 1973a, 179).

Husserl suggests seeing such a phenomenon of awakening, which brings together temporally separated experiences, as a two-terms genesis with one term functioning as awakening and another as awakened. Something in the present (a smell, a particular light effect, an object, a voice, a combination of details) evokes something from the past. As Husserl says, there is a tendency which extends from the present to the past and brings it to awareness by means of associative synthesis. Such syntheses run their course mostly unnoticed and they secure the recognizable reality we all enjoy.⁷⁶ In a particular case of recollection, associative awakening ensures the connection between otherwise separated terms which then can be fulfilled by an intuitive act of reproduction.

The idea of a genetic understanding of memory through the phenomenon of associative awakening sets the theoretical framework for further, more elaborate analyses. Such analyses are required to clarify the general conditions for an actual awakening to occur. This happens mainly in the context of the discussions on affectivity, to which we are about to turn. For now it is important to underline Husserl’s view that the tendency towards the awakening of the past and the motivation for such awakening always come from the living present:

Every awakening goes from an impressional present or a present that is already non-intuitively or intuitively reproduced toward another reproduced present. This relationship, or as we can say forthwith, this synthesis presupposes a “bridging term,” something similar; from here the bridge arches across a special synthesis by means of similarity. Transmitted in this way, a present enters into a universal synthesis with another submerged consciousness of the present, a synthesis which serves as the framework for special syntheses of awakening and for special reproductions (Husserl 2001a, 168).

In principle, “the awakening does not often lead to an intuitive memory, but instead to an empty presentation” (Ibid, 167). This suggests that not all

⁷⁶ “Just as we fail to notice so many different things that are in our field of consciousness, so too, we fail to notice the connections of association [...] while the entire associative nexus runs its course in consciousness, it is not noticed in any special manner” (Husserl 2001a, 167).

associative connections reach the level of actual reproductive intuitions and that the associative awakening should not, therefore, be confused with reproductive recollection. Husserl's indication that active remembering is possible only on the basis of associative awakening features reproductive association as the pre-condition of explicit memory. I hold, therefore, that the impact of reproductive association should not be restricted only to a particular type of involuntary associative memory, as, for instance, when a detail from the present evokes a similar memory from the past without any effort on my part. My view is that Husserl's intention was much more ambitious than that. Associative syntheses are involved in all kinds of remembering: be it recognition of familiar objects or situations, involuntary recall or active conscious effort to remember something. Thus, I believe that for Husserl, associative awakening and associative connectivity of consciousness were as fundamental phenomena and conditions of memory as temporal continuity itself.⁷⁷

As temporal connectivity makes continuity, overall coherence, and unity of conscious experience possible, similarly associative connectivity is what makes it meaningfully interrelated. Temporality does not account for what is experienced; in principle, anything can be ordered in a coherent experiential sequence. But it is associative connectivity which ensures that the similar is connected to the similar and contrasted with its opposite. It is associative connectivity which makes any experience connected to various kindred experiences from the past or even from imagination. When the reproductive type of associative syntheses is actually at work, its function consists in reviving concrete links between different experiences, and correlatively—between their objects:

[...] it is thus the function of association first of all to vivify the connection which all perceptions, past and present, of one ego have with one another on the basis of their being constituted in one time-consciousness and to establish among them an actual unity relative to consciousness. Only on the basis of an associative awakening can separated memories be related to one another and be inserted, as we move back from one member to the next, into *one* intuitive nexus of memory. This means that, once memories are associatively awakened, they can then be ordered in the temporal connection [...] Associative awakening thus constitutes the *presupposition for the constitution of temporal relations*, of the “earlier” and “later” (Husserl 1973a, 177-178).

⁷⁷ I will return on the topic of reproductive awakening and its distinction from explicit remembering in my discussion on implicit memory in § 12.3 of the third chapter.

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As no meaning would make sense outside the context and relation to other meanings, in the same vein, no experience would be possible outside the experience as a whole in all its concreteness. One might notice how Husserl speaks of a *nexus* of associative connectivity, of memory, and consequently of a nexus of the whole conscious life. Such a view is in line with his general attitude regarding the topic of association and passive constitution, which underlines exactly this multiplicity and interconnectivity of subjective experience. “It is precisely the analysis of associative phenomena that draws our attention to the fact that consciousness must not necessarily be a consciousness of a single object for itself” (Husserl 2001a, 165). This applies not only to the objective realm, but also to subjectivity, which accordingly can be understood *not as a singular subject for itself, but as a concrete nexus of interrelated experiences*.

Indeed, the investigation of association greatly emphasizes subjectivity’s dynamic and interconnected features. Hence, a new perspective on consciousness can be elaborated based on its description in terms of associative syntheses. The fulfillment of this intention implies the introduction of a new dimension of consciousness described in terms of affectivity. For the topic of association it implies, among other things, that what has just been described in terms of “associative awakening” will be clarified by Husserl as “affective awakening.” Although these two terms might be often used as synonyms in Husserl’s analyses, the notions of association and affectivity have to be distinguished. In what follows, I will focus on these distinctions and discuss why the phenomenological elucidation of association requires the consideration of the phenomenon of affection. It is my opinion that the investigation of affectivity in Husserl’s genetic phenomenology (1) is indispensable for the understanding of associative syntheses and of the “inner logic” specific for pre-reflective connectivity and (2) introduces a new view on consciousness, subjectivity, and related phenomena.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ On the topic of affection and affectivity in Husserl see: Bégout, Bruce: *La généalogie de la logique* (Bégout 2000); Zahavi, Dan: *Self-awareness and alterity: A phenomenological investigation* (Zahavi 1999) and his paper “Self-Awareness and Affection” (Zahavi 1998); Montavont, Anne: *De la passivité dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Montavont 1999) and her paper “Le phénomène de l’affection dans les *Analyzen zur passiven synthesis*” (Montavont 1994); Depraz, Natalie: “Temporalité et affection dans les manuscrits tardifs sur la temporalité (1929-1935) de Husserl” (Depraz 1994); Steinbock, Anthony: *Affection and attention: On the phenomenology of becoming aware* (Steinbock 2004); Mishara, Aaron: “Husserl and Freud: Time, memory and the unconscious” (Mishara 1990).

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An actual connection, an actual formation of unity always and necessarily presupposes affective force or affective differentiation (Husserl 2001a, 221).

After having assessed the role of associative syntheses and their basic types, Husserl turns to the phenomenon of affection. This topic is expected to enrich the phenomenological analyses of association and even to bring them to a new level. The description of associative syntheses based on the idea of affectivity and affective constitution of subjective experience is at the heart of the phenomenological account of the pre-cognitive level of mind's connectivity.

In order to account for how exactly affectivity contributes to an understanding of associative connectivity and of the pre-reflective organization of subjective experience, I will deal with the following topics: (1) the phenomenon of affection as presented in the *Analyses concerning Passive Synthesis*; (2) Husserl's theory of association as affective awakening; (3) the affective awakening of the self and the possible meaning of affectivity for the constitution of the self; (4) the clarification of temporal relations in affective terms; and (5) the idea of affective consciousness and its application to the unity of subjective experience.

8.1. Definitions and conditions of affection

Throughout his writings on passive syntheses and genetic constitution, Husserl gives several viable definitions of affection. This does not suggest that there are several distinct phenomena referred to by the same name, but rather that there are different possible ways of approaching the issue. The first definition in the *Analyses* is given as follows: “By affection we understand the allure given to consciousness [*bewußtseinsmäßiger Reiz*], the peculiar pull that an object given to consciousness exercises on the ego” (Husserl 2001a, 196). Later on, with a slight change of perspective, it is said that: “Where the object is concerned, we can also characterize affection as the awakening of an intention directed toward it [i.e. the object]” (Husserl 2001a, 198). Based on these two sets of remarks by Husserl, we can already draw a first conclusion, namely, that the term *affection*

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defines an original correlation which is established between the affected self or consciousness and the affecting object.

Bruce Bégout argues that for Husserl affection refers to something implicit as becoming explicit and then that affection means merely “the simple fact of sensing an effect provoked by something, without knowing whether this effect as such is of the affective or cognitive order” (Bégout 2000, 167-168).⁷⁹ In this regard, it is important to bear in mind the different meanings of the term “affective” and to point out that, here, affection refers mainly to the subject’s receptivity rather than to the affectivity resulting from the emotional sphere specifically. Affects in this latter sense—referred to by Husserl using terms such as feelings (*sinnliche Gefühle*) and instincts (*Instinkte, Triebe*)—do indeed belong to the sphere of affectivity and sensibility, but they make up only a part of it. Therefore, with regard to affectivity in Husserl, we should reconsider affection as a general term which may refer to different subgroups but is merely intended to designate a passive, original correlation between the affecting and the affected, without any implication on what particular qualities it may have.

Since the phenomenon under investigation belongs to the level of pre-predicative experience, such a correlation cannot presuppose either subjectivity in the strong or reflective sense of the term, or objectivity in the intentional sense. As Husserl puts it in *Experience and Judgment*:

It is once again necessary to remind ourselves that, when one speaks here of an object [*einem Objekt, einem Gegenstand*], the term is not being used properly. For, as we have already pointed out several times, one cannot yet speak at all of object in the true sense in the sphere of original passivity (Husserl 1973a, 77).

The same should apply to the “affected ego,” although this question is more difficult to elucidate based on Husserl’s writings. So far, it is only clear that Husserl is talking about the self or the ego in its receptivity, its pre-cognitive state of awareness (Husserl 1973a, 79). We shall return to this question later in the discussion concerning the affective awakening of the self.

While, in *Experience and Judgment* and in the *Analyses concerning Passive Synthesis*, Husserl still speaks about affection in terms of a certain objectivity that affects the self or the I, in the late manuscripts of

⁷⁹ My translation of : “le simple fait de ressentir un effet provoqué par quelque chose, sans savoir si cet effet est à ce titre d’ordre affectif ou cognitif.”

the 1930s (group *D*) he prefers to use the expression “foreign to the I” (*Ichfremdes*) instead of the term “object”:

To the universal structure of my being belongs, as inquiry indicates, I and foreign-to-the-I. What the term “*hyle*” grasps in its streaming totality is for me; I am in a broadest sense related to it, in the broadest sense it affects the I (Husserl 2014).⁸⁰

It is not the object that affects the I but rather the “matter,” as it can be described at this level, that is not the self, but rather that which is essentially foreign to the self. Thus, stressing on this point once again, Husserl doesn’t speak about the correlation between subject and object, but rather about some sort of *original correlation which is established in affection as a relation between the self and that which is foreign to the self*. However, as Zahavi argues, this passive, affective correlation is comparable to the active, intentional correlation inasmuch as it expresses the same phenomenological principle, namely, that the subject of the experience, the self in its concreteness, “cannot be thought independently of its relation to that which is foreign to it” (Zahavi 1998). In the intentional correlation, each act of consciousness, each *cogito*, is necessarily conscious of something other than itself. In the pre-cognitive, affective correlation it is the relation between the self and the hyletic matter, the *Ichfremdes*, which affects it. The affective correlation belongs to the level of pre-givenness, which precedes an actual attentive grasping of objects in intentional consciousness:

What is constituted for consciousness exists for the ego only insofar as it affects me, the ego. Any kind of constituted sense is pre-given insofar as it exercises an affective allure, it is given insofar as the ego complies with the allure and has turned toward it attentively, laying hold it. These are fundamental forms of the way in which something becomes an object (Husserl 2001a, 210).

The phenomenon of affection obviously cannot be reduced to this mere basic definition, as it opens up for Husserl a whole new topic for transcendental explication. His next step is to discuss the *essential conditions of affection* and consequently to define the *affective relations* which operate on the passive level of conscious experience.

⁸⁰ My translation of: “Zur universalen Struktur meines Seins gehört, wie die Rückfrage ergibt, Ich und Ichfremdes. Was der Titel ‘Hyle’ befasst in seiner strömenden Totalität, ist für mich; ich bin darauf in einem weitesten Sinn bezogen, in einem weitesten Sinne affiziert es das Ich.”

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First of all, it is worth remarking that the phenomenon of affection is primarily clarified in terms of affective *intensity*. What affects the self has to be prominent above everything else;⁸¹ it has to have a stronger *affective force* or *vivacity* in order to be able to stand out and reach conscious awareness. Affectivity itself in this particular regard can be seen as “that varying vivacity of a lived-experience” (Husserl 2001a, 214) that determines whether a datum will be salient for consciousness. As Husserl makes clear, this intensity is not to be confused with objective, qualitative intensity, such as that of sounds. The intensity in question has to do with the experiential rather than with an objectively measurable vivacity of particular data. It is the vivacity of consciousness of a sound as opposed to the vivacity of the sound itself.

Another significant point concerns the distinction between the actual affection and the *tendency* towards affection. Affective tendencies belong to the sphere of potentiality: they might reach or might not reach the ego’s attention. Moreover, different affective tendencies compete with one another and are dependent on one another in terms of their relative intensity. Husserl refers to this property of the affective organization as to the “relativism of affective tendencies” (Husserl 2001a, 197).⁸² It should be remarked that the conditions which determine whether a certain datum will become affectively prominent are not empirical according to Husserl. Certainly, the concrete conditions of affectivity are occasional, but the essential rules of affective organization are open to phenomenological explication. And such an explication takes into account the interrelations between different affective tendencies as well as other relevant conditions that may be influencing the affective intensity of a datum or an experience. Among such conditions, Husserl mentions affectively-charged predispositions from the realm of feelings, drives, and instincts:

On the one hand, the emergent affection is functionally co-dependent upon the relative size of the contrast, on the other hand, also upon privileged sensible feelings like a passionate desire founded by a prominence in its unity (Husserl 2001a, 198).

⁸¹ “Affection presupposes prominence above all else” (Husserl 2001a, 196).

⁸² “What gives a single prominent datum the priority of affection? Yet in its interconnection, the single datum is dependent upon the others for its affective force, as these are dependent upon it. We stand in a relativism of affective tendencies, and the question is what kind of laws and ultimately essential laws prevail here?” (Husserl 2001a, 197).

This brings us to a further important point in the phenomenological clarification of affection, namely to the notion of *affective relief*. As we have seen, the definition of affection as an original correlational structure is only the first step in the phenomenological explication of affectivity. Such a definition alone is not sufficient as it does not take into account the fact that affection is never an independent occurrence, but it rather always presupposes a background of concurrent affective tendencies and other affective conditions.⁸³ Moreover, the degree of vivacity of any affection is essentially dependent on such conditions and has always only a relative prominence. This fact has quite a broad range of consequences: on the larger scale, it facilitates the understanding of the whole of conscious experience through gradations of affectivity and, on the smaller scale, of the living present as an affective unity with “a constantly varying affective relief” (Husserl 2001a, 212). Discussing the “affective peculiarity of the living present,” Husserl points out that:

Viewed as a whole, the latter is an affective unity, has accordingly a unitary vivacity into which all special affections that belong to the affective unity are integrated as moments, as moments that are unified synthetically within it (Husserl 2001a, 216).

To conclude with the general definition of affectivity, I suggest to underline one important distinction concerning the notion of affection and affectivity. At the beginning of § 35, Husserl suggests that we should distinguish between two meanings of affection:

We must make an initial distinction here under the rubric of affection between: (1) affection as that varying vivacity of a lived-experience, of a datum of consciousness; whether the datum is salient in the special sense and then perhaps actually noticed and grasped depends upon the datum’s relative intensity; and (2) this salience itself. Here affection has the special sense of a specific affection on the ego, and in doing so meets the ego, excites it, calls it to action, awakens and possibly actually rouses it (Husserl 2001a, 214).

The second meaning coincides with Husserl’s initial definition of affection as relation between the self and the foreign-to-the-self. The first meaning brings new refinement to the notion, suggesting that affection

⁸³ In his account of affectivity in Husserl, Zahavi underlines a similar point: “the affection is always exerted by something which is part of a configuration, it is always an affection from within a passively organized and structured field” (Zahavi 1999, 119).

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does not describe only the affective relation as such, but also refers to the vivacity of any experience. On a higher level, this definition of affection presupposes that the whole experience can be regarded as a dynamic unity of vivacity. This is precisely the meaning of affection that I prefer to call “affectivity.” This terminological choice can also be helpful in order to avoid confusions. By affectivity, therefore, I understand the varying vivacity of subjective experience in what concerns not only its impressional organization but equally its connectedness with the past and its openness towards the future.

Clearly, the introduction of affectivity enables a new approach to the description of the constitutive relations of subjective experience in its passivity. One might ask: why is this considered to be constructive? What exactly are the benefits of these “affective” descriptions? To begin with, as it was promised at the end of § 7, the topic of affection is supposed to clarify and enrich the phenomenological account of association.

8.2. Association as affective awakening

Our field of conscious experience is not uniformly organized: there are objects and groups of objects which stand out against the background; there are sounds which attract more attention than others; there are thoughts and feelings that are more salient, while others are less prominent and yet constantly present; there are memories which suddenly occur and others already incorporated within our way of being. Nevertheless, the fact that our experience is multifaceted and variable does not mean it is chaotic or disorganized. Even a brief examination of the multiplicity of experiences reveals their inherent organization and structure. We have already discussed some of the principles of this experiential organization in the sections dedicated to associative connectivity. As previously argued, certain phenomena are to be found everywhere: e.g. foreground and background differentiations, contrasts among opposite features and the homogeneity of the similar, sustained Gestalt formations (forms of order in Husserl’s terminology), and occasional unities formed by particular affinities.

However, such a description of basic principles of experiential organization remains incomplete as long as the affective dimension of subjective experience is not taken into account. The main reason for this is that association principles and the unity-formations alone are not sufficient to

explain the conditions of prominence of particular experiences. This was already clear in the previous discussion on associative awakening of the past. Everything in the present can in principle be connected with everything in the past as long as there are similarities to be found. Nevertheless, an actual awakening—be it impressional awakening in the living present or retroactive awakening—still requires a certain degree of vivacity for it to happen at all. In Husserl's own words: "An actual connection, an actual formation of unity always and necessarily presupposes affective force or affective differentiation" (Husserl 2001a, 221).

Husserl insists that "only by virtue of affective force does connection come about at all" (Husserl 2001a, 224), suggesting thereby that affectivity plays a crucial role in experiential organization. On another occasion, he describes affection as "an essential condition for the emergence of every constitutive synthesis" (Husserl 2001a, 213). In this regard, as far as the unity of experience is concerned, affectivity becomes indispensable in order to understand the synthetic function of consciousness:

These are all processes of phenomenal formations of unity that seen from within are processes of affective connection, and affective connection is at the same time the awakening peculiar to affective force [...] the most essential feature of this process (i.e. of association) consists in affective interconnections (Husserl 2001a, 420–421).

This is why further explanation of affection in its relation to association and *vice versa* is required. In § 33 of the *Analyses*, Husserl marginally defines association as "the awakening transference of affection" (Husserl 2001a, 201). Affection and association are not identified as being the same thing but are rather mutually clarified: while affection concerns intensity and the prominence of data in conscious awareness, association refers to the principles according to which data interrelate and form unities. Moreover, such interrelations also function affectively, as they can either increase or reduce the relative vivacity of affective tendencies. That is to say that *unities formed associatively function affectively*.

Hence, the role of associative connection in this context is to increase the vivacity of associated data and prevent their affective decrease: "An affection which is currently weak will become strong by means of a radiating affection which awakens" (Husserl 2001a, 211). Such transference of affective force is not random according to Husserl, but follows the rules of associative syntheses discussed in the previous chapters. Both types of associative connections—namely, of homogeneity and contrast, as well as of coexistence and succession—determine

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how exactly affectivity might be “distributed” in the field of consciousness. The examples provided by Husserl include the perception of melodies or of a string of lights. In the latter case, the group of lights functions as an affective whole in itself and produces a strong affective allure as a whole. If one of the lights changed its color or intensity, not only would it become more prominent and accentuated, but it would also alter the affective prominence of the whole string. A similar affective relation is active in the perception of a melody. Even a slight change of tone immediately influences the perception of the melody as a whole. For instance, in the “transition to *pianissimo*, the beginning loud tone carries the tone in affective force to the softest *piano* that would otherwise remain unnoticeable” (Husserl 2001a, 200). The phenomenon of contrast is crucial here. As Husserl points out, “contrast is the affective unification of opposites” (Husserl 2001a, 514). Contrasting elements, however, can not only form unities of opposites but also be in rivalry with each other. This suggests that transference of affection can account not solely for the increasing vivacity and prominence of associated tendencies but also for the suppression and affective weakening of the tendencies which are in conflict with other more favorable ones.⁸⁴

To summarize the foregoing: transference of affective force from one member to another is what association is essentially about. Or, in slightly different words, association can be understood as the awakening of an affection through another affection: “within every living present [...] affections are constantly at work beyond themselves (*beständig Affektionen über sich hinauswirken*); we always find affective awakenings, that is, associations” (Husserl 2001a, 205–206).

In general terms, the concept of affective awakening (*affective Weckung*) refers to “the augmentation of vivacity” (Husserl 2001a, 515) and to the associated affective prominence of a tendency. Since this can occur both as the awakening of a new affection and as an awakening from the past, Husserl introduces a distinction between awakening in the impressional sphere and retroactive awakening.⁸⁵ Interestingly, affective awakening can also refer to a somewhat different topic, namely, to the awakening of the self. It might be worth pointing out already

⁸⁴ See, Husserl on affective conflict in § 8.4; and especially § 10.3 of the present work.

⁸⁵ Thus, “affective awakening” can be used interchangeably with the term “associative awakening” in those cases in which the augmentation of vivacity is enabled by associative connection, as it is the case in retroactive awakening and in the impressional awakening of associatively formed unities.

that what is meant here under the expression “affective awakening of the self” arguably belongs to a rather speculative account, which nevertheless presents an interesting direction in understanding the role of affectivity for the constitution of the primary self-awareness.

8.3. Affective awakening of the self

I have already recalled that affection can be understood as an original pre-cognitive correlation between the self and the foreign-to-the-self. This relation is reciprocal, meaning that through affection both of its parts come to prominence, or are awakened. Accordingly, one might suppose that the affected self does not precede the event of “awakening,” but is awakened by it as we wake up from sleep. To clarify this idea we need to address Husserl’s later manuscripts of the group D—now published in *Husserliana XLII Grenzprobleme phänomenologischer Philosophie* (Husserl 2014). There, a distinction is introduced between the awakening in the sphere of the wakeful life (“*der Weckung in der Sphäre des Wachlebens*”) and the awakening from sleep (“*Erweckung vom Schlaf*”). The former apply to both the retroactive and impressional awakening, as they both take place in the living present of consciousness. The latter, instead, besides the reference to the mere awakening of certain affection, also apply to the awakening of conscious life as such, that is to say the awakening of the totality of present awareness. While retroactive awakening corresponds to what Husserl calls “*Ent-Sedimentierung*,”⁸⁶ the awakening from sleep means that the field of present awareness of not-sedimented is brought to life:

Das Wachwerden würde für den soeben noch Schlafenden bedeuten, dass die von der einen weckenden Abhebung (als Prozess) erfolgende Weckung sofort universale Weckung ist für die Totalität des Nichtsedimentierten (Husserl 2014, 37).

In the *Analyses*, as in the *Bernau Manuscripts*, Husserl makes a distinction between affection as a specific and pre-thematic relation of the self and a hyletic object on the one hand, and the pre-affective and pre-egoic level of constitution on the other hand. The pre-affective sphere pro-

⁸⁶ “Das ‘Wachwerden’ in der Wachheit für das Sedimentierte gründet in der weckenden Assoziation, einem Überströmen der Kraft auf ein Assoziiertes der sedimentierten Sphäre” (Husserl 2014, 38).

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vides the preconditions for affection which must be found in pre-conscious passivity, where there is yet no self involved.⁸⁷

The interpreters⁸⁸ who discussed the issue of passive constitution in Husserl’s works have repeatedly emphasized the problematic character of this pre-affective and pre-egoic level of subjectivity.⁸⁹ Whereas affection is defined as the original relationship between the affecting object and the affected self, the pre-affective sphere, from which affection emerges, remains itself beyond any correlation. Husserl describes it as selfless (*ichlose*), as not given to any consciousness and at the same time as “the core of the foreign-to-the-I” (*Ichfremde Kern*) (Depraz 1994, 72). As far as the phenomenological description is concerned, here the very limit of the describable is reached. Since the pre-affective level is beyond the I and the thematic consciousness, it is also arguably out of reach for any possible phenomenologically oriented investigation. But this is the case only from the standpoint of the subject. Provided that, following Husserl, an “abstractive reduction” is accomplished in order to access the underlying and constitutive layers of ego-consciousness, an effort is

⁸⁷ See, for example, an important passage from the *Bernau Manuscripts*: “Die Reduktion, die wir meinen und die uns eine apriorisch notwendige Struktur ergibt, ist die Abstraktion von einem Ich und allem Ichlichen – freilich eine bloße Abstraktion, aber eine wichtige. Dann haben wir in der ersten immanenten Zeitordnung Empfindungsdaten und sinnliche Gefühle. Sinnliche Triebe sind Affektionen auf das Ich hin, und passives Gezogensein des Ich, ebenso ‘sinnliche’ Realisationen, ‘Triebhandlungen’ sind passive Reaktionen, aber passiv, nichts kommt da aus dem Ich her, ihm selbst entquellend als actus. Das ist also die Sphäre der ‘Reize’ und Reaktionen auf die Reize: Irritabilität. Aber diese wollen wir nun auch noch ausschalten, denn es bringt das Ich mit ins Spiel. Nämlich von diesem Gebiet unterscheiden wir die ‘völlig ichlosen’ sinnlichen Tendenzen: sinnliche Tendenzen der Assoziation und Reproduktion, dadurch bestimmte Horizontbildungen. Die Frage ist, wie es sich schon beim ursprünglichen Zeitbewusstsein verhält. Passive Intentionalität. Hier ist das Ich auch als Pol der Affektionen und Reaktionen außer Spiel gedacht, oder vielmehr davon abstrahiert. Wir haben dann also eine erst ‘abstrakt’ heraushebende Struktur, die der Passivität der ursprünglichen Sensualität” (Husserl 2001b, 275–276).

⁸⁸ See for example: Bégout, Bruce: *La généalogie de la logique* (Bégout 2000); Montavont, Anne: *De la passivité dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Montavont 1999); Depraz, Natalie: *Temporalité et affection dans les manuscrits tardifs sur la temporalité (1929-1935) de Husserl* (Depraz 1994).

⁸⁹ The reader should not be led astray by the term pre-affective. In this case it is the genetic precedence over affection which is meant and not the absence of affectivity. The pre-affective or pre-egoic sphere is precisely the sphere of affectivity which is structured by its principles of unity and contrast; it is the sphere of totally egoless (*völlig ichlosen*) affective tendencies: the sensory tendencies of association and reproduction (Husserl 2001b, 276).

required to see the intentional consciousness itself and the correlation between the self and the object not as the starting point or the absolute beginning, but rather as the result of some prior constitution.

From the pre-egoic point of view (which is of course in itself a contradictory expression) there is neither self nor object before an affection is born from inside the original impression. We can only suggest that this moment of generation of affection is at the same time the one instituting the awakened consciousness and the passive intention. Thus, what is actually at stake is the constitution of the affective and intentional consciousness inasmuch as it is affected by its immanent object. Husserl describes such an institution with the expression “affective awakening” (*affektive Weckung*), which in this context he proposes to understand not only as the awakening of an intention directed at the object (Husserl 2001b, 198) but also as the awakening of the affected self. Before this affective awakening, the self was not exactly nothing, and yet: “Nur war ich eben nicht wach, für nichts, also auch nicht für mich ‘wach’. Mein Selbstbewusstsein war latent, abgewandelt, sozusagen verdunkelt, aber doch nicht nichts” (Husserl 2014, 53). In the §5 of the *Ideas II*, Husserl expresses this thought quite clearly:

But what about a supposed beginning? In the beginning of experience, no constituted “self” is pre-given yet and present as an object. It is completely latent for itself and for others, at least in terms of intuition [...] Furthermore, must we not say that, in contrast to the waking Ego, the sleeping is complete immersion in Ego-matter, in the *hyle*, is undifferentiated Ego-being, is Ego-sunkenness, whereas the awake Ego opposes itself to the matter and then is affected, acts, undergoes, etc.? The Ego posits the non-Ego and comports itself towards it; the Ego unceasingly constitutes its “over and against,” and in this process it is motivated and always motivated anew (Husserl 1989).

We find a similar idea in Anne Montavont’s book, *De la passivité dans la phénoménologie de Husserl*, where she draws on this citation from Husserl’s *Ideas II* and suggests that:

The self is always already there, at first, engulfed in the matter from which it doesn’t differentiate itself, i.e. as the dormant self; then, opposed to the matter, which it posits as the non-self, i.e. it is there as the self awakened by affection. *It is in fact in “facing” the hylé posited as the non-I that the self constitutes its ipseity* (my emphasis – A. K.) (Montavont 1999, 239).⁹⁰

⁹⁰ My translation of : “Le moi est toujours déjà là, d’abord englouti dans la matière dont il ne se différencie pas, c’est-à-dire moi endormi ; ensuite, opposé à la

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Here, as we can see, some emphasis is given to the certain pre-existence of the self in the dormant state, while in Husserl it is not entirely clear how this dormant self can be understood. In my view, there are at least two possible ways to interpret this point: one way leads to some kind of metaphysical statement according to which the very fact of the existence of the ego is non-explicable and only its phenomenal status and appearance can be investigated; the other way is to understand the “affective awakening” of the self literally as its initial appearance and therefore as the original institution of the self in affection, to which there is no pre-existence in the pre-affective sphere, or at least there is no pre-existence in the sense of the ego or the self.⁹¹

This latter interpretation can contribute to the understanding of the role of affectivity for the constitution of the pre-reflective selfhood. From this angle, we could point out that Husserl actually suggests taking the constitution of original consciousness as a correlation between the affected self and the foreign-to-the-self (*Ichfremdes*) that affects it. This correlation as a first principle of differentiation and unification is made possible by the pre-egoic affectivity and its intensity. It is important to stress that this differentiation within affectivity itself is essential for the generation of original subjectivity: the self is awakened to the same degree as the non-self. This idea of the “auto-constitution of the self” in the affective awakening provides an important key in order to understand it as essentially non-cognitive and non-reflective. As Montavont puts it: “The subject doesn’t *appear* to himself as the affected subject; but rather he *senses* himself through this affection” (Montavont 1999, 239).⁹² This indicates that subjective awakening is a matter of “feeling itself” and “being affected” rather than “knowing itself” or “representing itself.”

Husserl’s view on affectivity and its role for the self-constitution should be distinguished from the one advocated by Michel Henry and employed in several contemporary phenomenological approaches. In the contemporary phenomenology, affectivity is often mentioned as a basic

matière qu’il pose comme non-moi, c’est-à-dire moi éveillé par l’affection. *C’est en effet en affrontant la hylé qu’il pose comme non-moi que le moi constitue son ipséité.*”

⁹¹ It is important to point out that such an affective awakening can by no means be sufficient for the constitution of the self-awareness. An important issue is how a continuous awakening and identity of the self is then possible. This question indicates that the temporality of consciousness is indispensable for the self-constitution.

⁹² My translation of : “Le sujet ne *s’apparaît* pas à lui-même comme sujet affecté ; bien plutôt, il *se sent* lui-même à travers cette affection”.

structure of the pre-reflective level of self-experience, alongside temporality, embodiment and primary intersubjectivity. The prominent meaning of affectivity in contemporary discussions is usually derived from the philosophy of Michel Henry, who understands the core level of subjectivity in terms of auto-affection and interprets the sense of “mineness” as a “sense of subjective vitality and self-presence” (Parnas and Sass 2010, 235). It is also argued that the priority of self-affection resides in the most original bodily experience, consisting in the background “feeling of being alive” and enabling the possibility of any subsequent contact with the world (Fuchs 2012c).⁹³ According to this view, auto-affection or self-feeling ontologically precede and make possible the affective and intentional relations with the life-world and the others.

In Henry’s fundamental work, *The Essence of Manifestation*, affectivity is explicitly and strongly established as the essence of ipseity. First of all he defines affectivity as “the identity of the affecting and the affected”⁹⁴ or as auto-affection, as “self-feeling by self” (Henry 1973, 462), and he distinguishes it from sensibility whose main feature is to be affected by something else as itself, as a hetero-affection. For Henry, being the self means in the first place to be affected by itself, “feeling itself,” which provides a necessary condition for being affected by something else than the self.

Strictly speaking, affectivity can be understood, according to Henry, only on the basis of *feeling* which, as auto-affection, has an ontological priority over hetero-affection. He refers, in this regard, to the essence of feeling as lying in “the identity of the feeling and its content” (Ibid, 466): it is love which is felt in love, “it is love or boredom, *it is the feeling itself which receives itself and experiences itself...*” (Ibid, 464). There is no foreign content for feeling which could be felt in it. Feeling “itself is what it experiences and what is experienced, it itself is the power of being affected and

⁹³ This approach is highly influential in contemporary phenomenological psychopathology and underlies the phenomenological understanding of self-disorders, such as schizophrenia. In the works of contemporary psychiatrists and phenomenologists, such as Louis Sass, Joseph Parnas, and Thomas Fuchs, the principal disorder of schizophrenia is taken to be a *fundamental disturbance of ipseity and of the pre-reflective self-experience* (Fuchs 2012, 891). It presupposes disturbances of self-affection, of internal continuity, of self-experience, and of the implicit relation to one’s own living body. The role of affectivity in schizophrenia is specifically elaborated in Sass’ and Parnas’ works: (Sass and Parnas 2003; Sass 2004, 2003; Parnas 2000).

⁹⁴ “The identity of the affecting and the affected is affectivity and affectivity alone, as auto-affection of the essence in its radical immanence, its Self, the Self of the essence, ipseity” (Henry 1973, 468).

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that which affects it” (Ibid). It is this auto-referentiality of feeling that grants it a central position in Henry’s notion of affectivity.

However, Henry’s view on affectivity is not the only one existing in the phenomenological tradition. As it has been previously shown, an alternative account of the constitutive role of affectivity is provided by Husserl’s later enquiries on the phenomenon of “affective awakening.” An important difference between the two accounts of affectivity concerns precisely the understanding of the self-referentiality of affection. Unlike Henry, whose idea of “self-affection” is auto-referential, Husserl conceived of the affective dimension of the self-manifestation as essentially hetero-affective.⁹⁵ This means that the self-feeling of the self, i.e. its original self-referentiality, necessarily presupposes it being affected by something other than itself. For Husserl, the self and the foreign-to-the-self are inseparable.⁹⁶

Thus, we can refer to Husserl’s account of affective self-constitution as to a correlational model of affectivity, by contrast with the self-referential model advocated by Henry. These two different approaches to affectivity lead to very different phenomenological frameworks as well as to different metaphysical positions. While, for Henry, affectivity is the ultimate realm of self-constitution and radical immanence, for Husserl, the affective dimension is the first and the most basic level of being in the world. This implies that alterity is already included in the sphere of immanence at the very heart of subjectivity and is necessary for the constitution of the self.

In his analysis of Husserl’s idea of affectivity, Zahavi underlines the same point and states that the ego is surrounded and affected by “an interior non-egological dimension.” This is “an immanent type of alterity which manifests itself directly in subjectivity, which belongs intrinsically to subjectivity, and which subjectivity cannot do without” (Zahavi 1998). Zahavi further argues that the connection between this immanent alterity and self-awareness can be made clear only on the basis of bodily experience. His argument builds upon the co-dependency of the constitution of perceived spatial objects, on the one hand, and of the perceiving body, on the other. In Zahavi’s words: “The body only appears to itself when it relates to something else” (Zahavi 1998).

⁹⁵ The similar distinction and a very comprehensive account of self-affection and hetero-affection is developed by Zahavi in his book *Self-awareness and alterity: A phenomenological investigation* (Zahavi 1999).

⁹⁶ “[...] untrennbar ist Ich und sein Ichfremdes” (Husserl 2006b, 352).

Similar arguments can be drawn from Husserl's understanding of corporeality in terms of mineness and foreignness. On the one hand, he describes the living body (*Leib*) as having the most original character of "mineness"—"*das ursprünglichst Meine*" (Husserl 1973c, 58)—that is of something that belongs to me, as opposed to what is foreign (*das Fremde*), which I receive in the pure passivity and which is radically different from what is mine. On the other hand, the living body, as affective and affected body, is the source of all foreign content, coming through the senses. But this *foreignness* in regard to the original embodied experience is not a simple characteristic of external objects, but rather *a way of experiencing one's own passivity* in affection. As Husserl writes: "the greatest foreignness is here the one that I merely experience external things, in pure passivity" (Husserl 1973c, 58).⁹⁷ Foreignness can concern not exclusively external things, but also the passivity of one's inner senses and feelings, for example, the passivity of being in pain, hungry, sad or afraid. A subsequent perception of one's own living body as *Körper*, a physical thing, built upon the original embodied experience, can be understood as a way to adjust oneself to one's own passivity, to give an expression to the original experience of one's foreignness to oneself. Thus, I think it is fully consistent with Husserl's theory of affectivity to understand the living body not only as the first "mine," but also as the first "foreign," meaning that both features of embodiment are co-original and co-constitutive ways of self-feeling: self-feeling in the passivity of affection (original foreignness) and self-feeling in the ownership and spontaneity of embodied functioning (original mineness).

An interesting ground for discussing the priority of hetero- or auto-affection can be found in the empirical research on sensory and perceptual deprivation. Deprivation usually describes those experimental conditions in which the quantity, intensity or patterning of sensory stimuli is reduced. In children, sensory and social deprivation leads to impairments of development, as well as to intellectual and emotional disturbances (Suedfeld 1969). Also in adult subjects, prolonged sensory deprivation can be experienced as highly uncomfortable and, in extreme cases, lead to psychotic outbreaks and hallucinations.⁹⁸ The most basic and

⁹⁷ My translation of: "die größte Fremdheit ist hier die, dass ich Aussendinge bloß erfahre, in reiner Passivität".

⁹⁸ "Observations have shown the following common features in cases of sensory deprivation: intense desire for extrinsic sensory stimuli and bodily motion, increased suggestibility, impairment of organized thinking, oppression, and, in extreme cases, hallucinations, delusions, and confusion" (Solomon et al. 1957,

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general conclusion drawn from the research in this field consists in claiming that “the stability of man’s mental state is dependent on adequate perceptual contact with the outside world” (Solomon et al. 1957, 362). It should be also noted that a case of complete sensory deprivation, which would include suppression of all sensory dimensions (including intero- and proprioception), is not only beyond current experimental capacities but it also appears unimaginable. And even if such a complete deprivation of senses were possible, it would arguably amount to the loss of consciousness and the dissolution of subjectivity. However, clinical cases of total loss of sensory input with preserved consciousness as in total locked-in syndrome (Bauer et al. 1979) can provide an additional challenge to the previously discussed ideas.

8.4. Clarification of temporal relations in affective terms: Retention as affective modification

So far, I have argued that the investigation of affectivity allows Husserl to introduce a new perspective for the understanding of the pre-cognitive organization of subjective experience in what concerns conscious connectivity within the living present. Furthermore, it also sheds some light on the affective constitution of the self. However, the story does not end here. Another important implication of affectivity entails the reassessment of temporal relations within conscious stream and therefore a new approach to the interrelations between the past and present life of consciousness. Ultimately, it amounts to a new way of seeing consciousness, the unconscious, and subjectivity itself. But let us not jump too far ahead and proceed with the topic of affectivity as it concerns temporal structure of the conscious stream.

The topic of affectivity has a direct influence on the understanding of temporal relations and *vice versa*: affective relations are also understood as dependent on temporal modifications. According to this idea, the living present is taken to have the strongest affective intensity, while the progressive fading away of retentions is associated with a weakening of affective force. For instance, Husserl claims that “the primordial source of all affection lies and can only lie in the primordial impression and its own greater or lesser affectivity” (Husserl 2001a, 217).

363). See also the volume *Sensory deprivation: fifteen years of research* edited by John Zubek (Zubek 1969).

This implies that the living present possesses a constant source of affective force and that the past (retentional or remote) must be affectively relative to this affectively prominent unity of the living present. And indeed, this is precisely the case in Husserl's approach. The retentional process, which consists in the "continuous modification of the primordial impression" (Husserl 2001a, 217) is accordingly described as a process of "clouding over," as a constant diminishing of affective vivacity. Fresh retentions continuously pass over into empty presentations, which still maintain the objective sense, but lose intuitiveness and affective prominence. The "end" of this retentional process corresponds to a "complete powerlessness of affection":

By every retentional procession losing its affective force in the process of change it itself becomes dead, it can no longer progress by fusing under prominence; for positive affective force is the fundamental condition of all life in dynamic connection and differentiation; if it is decreased to zero, its life ceases, precisely in its vivacity (Husserl 2001a, 219).

This idea allows us to distinguish—at least for the sake of discussion—between two meanings of retention, namely between retention as temporal and as affective modification.⁹⁹ On the one hand, temporal modification in retention consists in syntheses of identification and succession, which make possible the constitution of the continuity of experiences and of the temporal identity of the conscious stream. On the other hand, retentional process consists in the gradual modification of the affective force of original impression; the original vivacity of impression is maintained only as retentional till it becomes completely undifferentiated and "affectively anesthetized," to quote Bruce Bégout's expression (Bégout 2000). These two sides of the retentional modification are complementary and usually follow the same course. However, Husserl is aware of counter-examples, where retention may correspond to the increase of affective force by means of some conflict between concurrent affective tendencies. In some cases, "affective conflict" may indeed become the source of greater affective impact of repressed tendencies:

[...] in the living conflict, repression takes place as a suppression, as a suppression into non-intuitiveness, but not into non-vivacity—on the

⁹⁹ Husserl expresses this point quite clearly when he writes that "corresponding to the temporal perspective, to the phenomenal moving-closer-together of those matters that have just been, is an affective perspective; flowing is a flowing together of affections" (Husserl 2001a, 423).

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contrary, the vivacity gets augmented in the conflict, as analogous to other contrasts (Husserl 2001a, 515).

By complementing his analyses of retention as temporal and affective modification, Husserl achieves an important result, namely, he now has means to explain the process of sedimentation and of forgetting. The principles of temporal modification alone could account only for the preservation of what was experienced in the past, but it could not explain why these past senses are forgotten. Affectivity explains this latter phenomenon by pointing out that the retentive process consists not only in the modification of the temporal modi of experiences, but also in the modification of their affective force. And such modification, as Husserl holds, is not objective—it is rather a modification of consciousness itself.

[...] *retentive modification is a transformation of consciousness itself*, a transformation that is so peculiar that for all syntheses of identification it ultimately leads to the inability to be differentiated. But insofar as it contains the objective sense, precisely by having been integrated into the different lines of the synthetic coinciding that forms identity, we can say from the standpoint of the object: Less and less becomes affective from it. And when there is no affection coming from the diverse objects, then these diverse objects have slipped into sheer nightfall, in a special sense, they have slipped into the unconscious (my emphasis – A. K.) (Husserl 2001a, 221).

In the same vein, affectivity contributes to the understanding of other memory-related phenomena, such as the constitution of the “affective past-horizon” (Husserl 2001a, 204) and of remembering. Within this framework, the past is taken as affectively less prominent than the present, and moreover gradually so. This allows Husserl to speak about the remote past as reaching the point of affective exhaustion or the zero-level of affection, which he also calls the affective unconscious. The affective awakening of the past (or simply retroactive awakening) means then bringing back past intentions through some sort of affective reinforcement coming from the sphere of the affectively strong impressionable present.

Thus, three constitutive phenomena of memory—retention, constitution of the past, and remembering—are clarified here as essentially affective phenomena. Retention is conceived of as affective modification; remote past—as the constitution of the affective horizon, and remembering as affective retroactive awakening. I will turn again to these phenomena

in the third part of this work, which is devoted to the phenomenological approach to implicit memory and the unconscious. As for now, it is important to remark that Husserl's analyses of affectivity go hand in hand with the analyses of temporality: in most cases, it is even possible to claim that they are subordinated to the principles of temporal organization. Nevertheless, Husserl is not always unambiguous about this issue and there are numerous examples from his works suggesting that the "logic" of affectivity must not always coincide with the "logic" of temporality.

8.5. The idea of affective consciousness and "timeless structuration" of subjective experience

The differences between the temporal and the affective structuration of subjective experience suggest that there are different rules of syntheses prevailing on each level. These rules are more complementary than contradictory, and nevertheless there are good reasons to see them independently. In my view, this approach would be generally consistent with Husserl's own position. For instance, in the Appendix 19 to the *Analyses*, we find several hints that Husserl saw affectivity and affective awakening as a necessary condition "preceding" the institution of temporal continuity:

Awakening as the augmentation of vivacity, that is, of affectivity, radiating out from a place: Temporal awakening as propagation, that is, presupposing that the vivacity [or] affectivity has undergone augmentation at this place.

But must we not say that what takes place here temporally is in action in a non-temporal manner in connection to a present that is being augmented. [...]

In succession, in structuring the process, this structuring is such a continual becoming, continual fusing and coming into relief. But what is presupposed here is the "timeless" structuration, the structuration which is not becoming in every momentary present (Husserl 2001a, 515).¹⁰⁰

On the level of the temporal structuration of experience the rules are those of continuity, identification and preservation of the formal identity of the conscious stream. Inner time-consciousness is constitutive of "the temporal forms of the simultaneity, succession and duration of the

¹⁰⁰ See also our discussion on the associative connectivity in § 7.5: "Associative awakening thus constitutes the *presupposition for the constitution of temporal relations*, of the 'earlier' and 'later'" (Husserl 1973a, 177–178).

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whole intentional life of a subject’s acts” (Bernet 2002, 335). Thus, the “logic” of temporality is that of formal continuity. The “logic” of affectivity, instead, is characterized by relations of contrast and similarity, by the relativity of affective tendencies, and by all the factors influencing the intensification or decrease in vivacity of the subjective experience. In short, while temporality is responsible for the experiential continuity and *formal identity* between the present, future, and past life of the subject, affectivity and associative connectivity is what makes possible its concrete, *affective identity* and meaningful coherence. This distinction is consistent with the differentiation between the two types of syntheses—namely temporal and associative—that was introduced earlier in § 7. There are then two important consequences to take into account: one has to do with the idea of consciousness and correlatively of the unconscious, and the other concerns the issue of the unity of subjective experience. Let us start with the former.

First of all, affectivity allows a new approach to the organization of subjective experience—namely a dynamic and content-related view on consciousness itself based on the idea of affective intensity. Husserl suggests that taking vivacity and gradations of vivacity as determining factors of the organization of experience can provide a certain idea of consciousness, which would differ greatly from static, representational accounts.

This gradation is also what determines a certain concept of consciousness and the opposition to the unconscious in the appropriate sense. The latter designates the nil of this vivacity of consciousness and, as will be shown, is in no way a nothing: A nothing only with respect to affective force and therefore with respect to those accomplishments that presuppose precisely a positively valued affectivity (above the zero-point) (Husserl 2001a, 216).

This idea allows us to conceive of consciousness and the unconscious not as opposite and mutually exclusive notions, but as different levels on the scale of affective intensity. As a result, a mental state can be called conscious not because it is accompanied by a high-order thought, inner perception or phenomenal feeling, nor because it represents a certain content, but because its intensity is high enough to reach the level of awareness. In the same vein, the unconscious does not need to correspond to the contradictory notion of “unconscious mental states/representations,” but can be understood as the zero level of affectivity or as repressed by means of affective conflict. Obviously, this idea, however promising, is far from being clear. I will return to it in the third part of this work.

The second implication concerns the unity of consciousness and the idea of affective unity. Indeed, Husserl unambiguously and repeatedly claims that the bigger issue behind his analyses of association and affection is the question regarding the conditions of possibility of subjectivity itself—subjectivity which is conscious not only of its present, but also of its past and possible future life as a whole. His remarks about “interconnective affectivity” (Husserl 2001a, 515) and the function of affection in the constitution of particular unities suggest that he saw affectivity as a necessary component for the understanding of unity-formations. On the one hand, it concerns the possibility of particular unities in the experience: unity of an object, groups of objects, unities of different sorts of experiences—affects, memories, perceptions, motivations—related to the same object, unity of different sense-fields. On the other hand, it concerns the possibility of the unity of subjective experience as a whole. I made clear in § 8.2 on the *Association as affective connection* that Husserl regarded affectivity as the essential condition for associative synthesis or, even more directly, he saw associative syntheses as affective syntheses. This means that any kind of content-related binding functions affectively and increases the vivacity of related elements. For example, the reproductive association which brings together past and present moments of consciousness enables them to be experienced as a unity—a unity which awakens and can eventually lead to an actual intuitive recollection. This unity is of a particular kind, since it is not given as such before awakening: past senses stay exactly the same, but they are affectively powerless; they may however regain their vivacity through their connection with present impressions. Such a connection is an affective associative connection. In temporal terms, the unity of the present and the past can only be formal as an experience of something past in the present, which still maintains their formal separation as “now” and “then.” This unity is preceded, genetically speaking, by the affective awakening, which is a content-related unity, functioning, in Proustian terms, extra- or rather a-temporally. The allusion to the a-temporal character of affective awakening entails no mystery, but simply indicates that the rules of conscious connectivity at stake here are those of association and of affective structuration rather than those of formal temporal syntheses. This view suggests that the totality of the subjective experience can be seen not only as a continuity of conscious becoming, but also as a throughout interrelated affective nexus.