

On *Nachträglichkeit*, or a Certain Blindness of the “Now:” Time, Self, and Self-Responsibility in Derrida’s Analyses of the Husserlian account of Temporality

Abstract

Derrida’s analysis of Husserl’s work on time-consciousness has been rejected by many phenomenologists as a misreading, and as entailing an inconsistent account of temporality. Specifically, Derrida attributes a kind of “*nachträglich*” to self-presence, and with this, a purported “blindness,” notions which are ostensibly antithetical to any adequate phenomenological account. However, an examination of the relevant Derridean and Husserlian texts makes it clear, firstly, that these notions *have* to be included in any adequate account of time-consciousness; and secondly, that in his later work on temporality, Husserl himself comes to anticipate Derrida’s objections, and in fact, reworks his account significantly in response. After demonstrating both these points, I conclude by examining the ultimate implications of Derrida’s analysis for our self-understanding as conscious subjects – some of which, but not all of which, Husserl comes to appreciate himself.

KEYWORDS: Time-consciousness, self-consciousness, phenomenology, deconstruction, self-responsibility

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Introduction

Who’s afraid of Derrida, exactly, or more precisely, of the writings that have been produced under his name? Or who has any *reason* to be? Ostensibly, *phenomenologists* do, given what has been called the “disturbing implications” of Derrida’s reading of Husserl. In his works on Husserl’s analyses of time-consciousness, to be specific, Derrida raises the specter of a certain “*nachträglichkeit*” of self-presence, which leads to the posit of a sort of “blindness,” or at least, a “blinking of the eye,” that would by necessity afflict any conscious life’s presence to itself; whereas apparently, Husserl’s analyses demonstrate that, in its incessant self-presence, conscious activity should in-

stead have to be seen as akin to an unrestricted “vision” of itself. The constellation of concepts that Derrida introduces here would thus seem totally out of place – even before considering the ethical implications of his notion of an “arche-violence,”¹ or of a pre-original subjection of sorts, whose trace, insinuating itself within the heart of self-presence, would produce itself precisely as this “blindness” and “*nachträglichkeit*.”

But what can we say, then, about this “*nachträglichkeit*” of self-presence, and also, the “blink of an eye” ostensibly associated with it? How are these notions to be understood – assuming, of course, that we refuse to rule out the possibility that they may *need* to be included, for essential reasons, in any acceptable account of time – and self-consciousness? Or why, conversely, might we want to claim that they ought to be *excluded* from any such account? In order to investigate the matter, we’ll obviously have to turn to Derrida’s writings on Husserl’s analyses of time, which is exactly what I’ll do in the first section of this paper. After going over the implications of Derrida’s reading and arguing in support of his problematization of Husserl’s position, however, I’ll then try to demonstrate, in the second part of my paper, that in his later work, Husserl acknowledged many of the qualms that Derrida would later express, and in fact, reworked his account in light of them. In my paper’s final section, then, I’ll try to work out exactly how far Husserl moved in this direction, in order to figure out what the contemporary phenomenologist ultimately does, or does not, have to fear from Derrida’s phenomenological interventions.

Derrida on Husserl on Time

Before beginning, however, it will be instructive to engage with one of Derrida’s detractors, so as to head off any misunderstandings in advance. For this purpose, I’ll turn to the critique of Derrida’s reading that we find in several of Dan Zahavi’s published works, since Zahavi is surely one of the most notable of contemporary phenomenologists to have railed against the “disturbing implications” of Derrida’s view (the words in inverted commas are Zahavi’s own, to be precise²). And as we’ll see below, Derrida’s position is apparently subject to a very simple refutation, if we assume that Zahavi is correct when he claims that “the flowing self-manifestation of consciousness takes its point of departure in an immediate impressional self-manifestation.”³ At issue, of course, will be whether or not Zahavi is actually licensed to make this claim.

In any event, we can begin by noting that Zahavi engages with Derrida’s reading in a number of distinct works. When we turn to the passages in which he does so, however, we quickly discover that they all contain a very similar critique of Derrida’s reading – focusing, specifically, on Derrida’s “Signs and the Blink of an Eye” – and also, are all apparently motivated by the same concern. In each case, Zahavi criticizes Derrida’s reading immediately after arguing that the self-temporalization of conscious life belongs *inherently* to all its experiences or moments of living.

But what does it mean to say that self-temporalization is inherent? What is self-temporalization at all? “The experiences I live through are characterized by mineness,” Zahavi writes in *Subjectivity and Selfhood*; “when I consciously perceive an object,” he explains, “the perceptual experience itself is, at least tacitly, *given* as my experience.”⁴

But according to Husserl, Zahavi tells us, this givenness is a function of *temporalization*, i.e., our consciousness of time:

Husserl's analysis of the structure of inner time-consciousness serves a double purpose. It is meant to explain not only how we can be aware of objects with temporal extension, but also how we can be aware of our own fluctuating stream of experiences. In short, it is not sufficient to understand how we are able to be conscious of temporal objects; we also need to understand how we are able to be aware of the very experiences that intend these temporal objects.⁵

Likewise, Zahavi writes in "Inner Time-Consciousness and Pre-reflective Self-awareness" that:

the retentional modification does not only permit us to experience an enduring temporal object, it does not merely enable the constitution of the identity of the object in a manifold of temporal phases, it also provides us with temporal *self*-awareness.⁶

All this just expresses Husserl's descriptions of time-consciousness, which are meant to demonstrate that the manifestation of time necessarily involves the primordial awareness of *self*; or put differently, that for transcendent or "worldly" beings to be given as enduring realities, or to be "temporalized," as it were, the streaming conscious life to which they are given must be "*self*-temporalized,"⁷ as Husserl will say, or must be constituted for itself as such. And since *all* conscious activity involves, by necessity, some sense of time – or correlatively, since objects are only made manifest to us as things that are "in" time in some way – *self*-temporalization has to be conceived of as the very "being" of consciousness, or as the inner self-constitution of any possible accomplishment of subjectivity.

It remains to be seen, though, how this consciousness is to be characterized. How *are* the experiences of an ongoing conscious life "there" for it *as such*, exactly – however tacit or "pre-reflective" this may be? Zahavi attempts his description of this awareness in passages such as the following, in which he both advances a reading of the analyses making up Husserl's *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (or HUA X) and argues for its cogency:

when Husserl claimed that the experience is constituted in inner time-consciousness, [Zahavi says,] he was not saying that the experience is brought to givenness by some other part of subjectivity, as if one part took the other as its object. Rather, to say that an experience is constituted in inner time-consciousness is to say that it is brought to awareness by its *own means*. It is called inner time-consciousness because it belongs *intrinsically* to the innermost structure of the experience itself.⁸

If this is correct, then there is a kind of power that is possessed *innately* by every experience that emerges in the course of conscious life – namely, to immediately manifest

itself to itself. In no way would this givenness come from *without* the moment of experiencing, Zahavi insists.

It is at this point that the Husserlian account Zahavi advances quite clearly comes into conflict with the one that Derrida arrives at in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye.” And evidently aware of this fact, Zahavi thus pauses – in several of his works, again – to critique Derrida’s re-interpretation, so as to safeguard his own position thereby. In *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, for example, Zahavi begins this critique by restating the basic thrust of Derrida’s analysis:

according to Derrida, it would be impossible to understand the relation between retention and primal presentation, and to comprehend the perpetual retentional modification, if the primal presentation were a simple and completely self-sufficient ground and source.⁹

This is because, Zahavi tells us, “retentional modification is,” on Derrida’s account, “an *integral part* of the primal presentation. Rather than being a simple, undivided unity, self-awareness is consequently characterized by an original complexity, by a historical heritage.”¹⁰ But since, according to Zahavi, this “original complexity” or “historical heritage” is thus a *necessary condition* of primal presentation, if Derrida is correct, then on Derrida’s account, “the present can only appear to itself as present due to the retentional modification,” as Zahavi writes; and “for this reason,” he concludes, “it is necessary to ascribe a transcendental or constitutive significance to a nonpresence in self-awareness.”¹¹

We’ll see below that these claims about “Signs and The Blink of an Eye” are more or less accurate. We’ll also see that Zahavi seems on target as well when he claims that “Derrida argues that Husserl failed to draw the full implications of his discovery of the retentional modification.”¹² But we may start to have misgivings when, beginning his actual *criticism* of Derrida’s understanding, Zahavi claims that:

these reflections...have the rather disturbing implication that consciousness appears to itself, not as it is, but as it has *just been*. To put it differently, there appears to be a blind spot in the core of subjectivity...: initially consciousness is nonconscious, and it gains self-awareness *nachträglich* through retentional modification.¹³

Why does Zahavi claim *this*? According to Zahavi, once again, Derrida contends that the retention of conscious life has to serve in some sense as a necessary condition of its self-presence, which leads Zahavi to conclude that on Derrida’s account, its self-presence has to be characterized by a kind of “*nachträglichkeit*.” And rightly so: for Derrida refers to this very notion in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye,” albeit obliquely, and he deals with it explicitly in a similar context in his well-known essay “*Difference*.”¹⁴ But what would it mean to speak of a *nachträglichkeit* of self-presence? For his own part, Zahavi believes that it is to indicate that the “now” of conscious life only becomes manifest “*subsequently*,” or as we can also say, after the fact.¹⁵ But as such, Zahavi is able to dismiss Derrida’s account without further ado, since as Zahavi insists, the

self-temporalization of conscious life “does not merely concern the elapsing phases;” it also, and most importantly, makes the *current* phase of experiencing manifest, precisely as the “now” of consciousness. Were it *not* to do so, then of course what is “now” of the *objects* of consciousness – or put otherwise, of the “transcendent” time of the world – would not come to be given to consciousness either, except, correlatively, only “*nachträglich*” also; but certainly, we are more than all else conscious of things as they *now* are, and not as they have just been, as everyday perception should make plain.¹⁶ And furthermore, as Zahavi will regularly point out, a moment of conscious life could hardly be given in retention as its “just-passed” moment or experience if it had never been given as “now” in the first place; in fact there would be nothing to account for the sense we have of the ongoing *unity* of our experiences, or better, of the life of which they are a part, were the “now” of our experiencing to remain unmanifest to us, “out of sight,” only to be given belatedly (assuming it should then come to be given at all). We would have only an essentially fractured sense of our own lives, that is – one of disparate or disconnected experiences – which obviously isn’t how things stand either.¹⁷

Derrida’s account is thus subject, via *reductio ad absurdum*, to a very simple refutation – or assuming that Zahavi is right, and his analysis does imply that a conscious life’s “now” only comes to be “there” for it after it has already passed and is retained. As Zahavi points out, in fact, Husserl already addresses this sort of issue in HUA X:

if it [“the beginning-phase of an experience that is in the process of becoming constituted”] were intended *only* by retention, then what confers on it the label “now” would remain incomprehensible....It is just nonsense to talk about an “unconscious” content that would only subsequently [*nachträglich*] become conscious. Consciousness is necessarily *consciousness* in each of its phases. Just as the retentional phase is conscious of the preceding phase without making it into an object, so too the primal datum is already intended – specifically, in the original form of the “now.”¹⁸

Zahavi puts it thus:

Husserl’s analysis is not meant to imply that consciousness becomes aware of itself only through retention. On the contrary, he explicitly insisted that the *retentional* process and modification presupposes an “impressionally ‘inner consciousness.’”¹⁹

Zahavi thus concurs with Husserl in HUA X, and concludes that the “impressionally” given “now” must be simple after all, and in this way, must serve as the *source* for retention, rather than presupposing the latter as its condition:

this seems to be what is required if one is to avoid the Scylla of an instantaneous, *non-temporal* self-awareness [a matter I’ll be discussing below], and the Charybdis of a completely fractured time-consciousness that makes the consciousness of the present and of the unity of the stream [of conscious life] unintelligible.²⁰

The “fracture” here would be the necessary result of a life at each moment only ever conscious of its retained past, perhaps along with its “protained” or anticipated future, but never its own “now.” And if Derrida’s account implies this, again, then so much for his account.

But does it really? Does Zahavi, that is, actually grasp Derrida’s meaning correctly at this point? Or when he writes of a sort of “blind spot in the core of subjectivity,” as Zahavi puts the matter, does Derrida really just mean that some particular bit of information pertaining to conscious life – i.e., what it currently or at present *is* (and so correlatively, what it’s currently conscious-*of* or takes as its object) – is simply withheld from consciousness until some later point in time, when in retention, ostensibly, this factum would then come to be given? Or rather: does Derrida have something else in mind *entirely*, when he makes mention of a certain self-blindness of conscious life, or of a closing of the eyes, as it were? Perhaps we might suspect – since Derrida’s position, or purported position, is susceptible to such an easy refutation – that Zahavi instead opposes a straw man rather than Derrida himself.

Zahavi, as we just saw, singles out “Signs and the Blink of an Eye” for his criticism, so I’ll turn now to this essay – one which makes up a single chapter in a larger work, of course, Derrida’s *Speech and Phenomena*. This is a work, we will recall, that contains several more or less independent analyses of Husserlian phenomenology, which each mean to demonstrate, in its own way – and despite Husserl’s insistence to the contrary – that indication has to be conceived of as an irreducible part of expression, and furthermore, of *all* intentional constitution, or sense-making, in general.²¹ By all appearances, *Speech and Phenomena* is not, as a whole, a work on time-consciousness, unlike “Signs and the Blink of an Eye” itself: for here, Derrida contends that “the present of self-presence is not *simple*,” rather, he continues, “it is constituted in a primordial and irreducible synthesis.”²²

What does Derrida mean by this, and how does he argue for it? Derrida opens the essay at issue with a series of remarks on Husserl’s analyses of temporality and the ongoing self-constitution of consciousness, and notes that, *on the one hand*, Husserl explicitly posits that the “now” of conscious life, which is always present *as such*, in each case contains nothing *nonpresent* within it. Husserl does write, of course, that the streaming of consciousness “is not severable into parts which could be by themselves,”²³ but when he then claims that “a punctual phase is actually present *as now* at any given moment, while the others are connected as a retentional train,”²⁴ we are given to understand, according to Derrida, that that which is given as “now” in the *strictest* sense, or as *actually* present in the streaming, bears nothing of the nonpresent within it – and thereby serves (as Zahavi wants to say, too) as the “source-point” for the self-constitution of any “immanent temporal Object”²⁵ (or of anything that comes to be manifest of conscious experiencing, that is). This “*Urimpression*,” as Husserl of course calls it, would thus make manifest a moment of life uncontaminated by anything external to it in the sense of being passed-by or to-come of the same streaming; and according to Derrida, “it is to this selfsame identity of the actual now that Husserl refers”²⁶ when he claims that “‘mental acts’...are ‘lived by us in the same instant’ (*im selben Augenblick*),”²⁷ or literally, in the same “blink of an eye.”

On the other hand, however, Derrida tells us that Husserl's descriptions of the phenomena attest to a much different state of affairs. "Despite this motif," that is, "the body of the description in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* and elsewhere prohibits our speaking of a simple self-identity of the present," Derrida writes; rather, we discover that:

the presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch as it is *continuously compounded* with a nonpresence and nonperception, with primary memory and expectation (retention and protention). These nonperceptions are neither added to, nor do they *occasionally* accompany, the actually perceived now; they are essentially and indispensably involved in its possibility.²⁸

A moment of experience, that is to say, is present to consciousness only insofar as it is given in relation to the past and future of what is thereby manifest as the selfsame conscious living, or insofar as it gets "put in its place" in the streaming or ongoing totality: which is why self-consciousness (or the being "there" of our own experiences) does not come to pass except as the temporalization of time. But this is then to say that the experience given as "now" gets brought to consciousness or is made manifest as such to itself only because its *other* moments – what is "passed-by" and "to-come" of the selfsame life – weigh upon it, as it were; Derrida thus writes that:

the process by which the living now... must, in order to be a now and to be retained in another now, affect itself... – this process is indeed a pure auto-affectation in which the same is the same *only* in being affected by the other, only by becoming the other of the same.²⁹

The "trace" of retention and protention (or more precisely, of the retained and protentional moments of consciousness) is thus a necessary condition of the "now's" *very self-presence* – and so, in Derrida's words, "cannot be thought out on the basis of a simple present whose life would be within itself."³⁰

Zahavi, we've seen, does not want to affirm this. However, it is a point he cannot help *but* affirm, in fact: for when he describes "the relation between retention and primal presentation" on his own preferred account, he has to insist that "impressional self-manifestation *stretches* to include the retentionally given,"³¹ calling to mind Husserl's claim in HUA X that "perception and nonperception *continually blend into one another*"³² – which Derrida quotes in order to pinpoint the precise moment that Husserl fully gives up the game. What Husserl means by this, of course, is that impression only makes an experience manifest *as* present in tandem with retention and protention, so that to the moment of living that comes forth experiences that are no-longer and not-yet present necessarily *also* belong. In a similar vein, Zahavi means to assert here that the purportedly simple, intrinsic self-awareness of the current moment of conscious life nevertheless "stretches," or is somehow broad enough, as it were, to come to pass as a retentional consciousness of its just-past moments *also*. (We'd imagine that Zahavi thinks this goes for its protentional awareness too – though he doesn't

explicitly mention that here.) Yet like Husserl, Zahavi thereby concedes that the “now” of conscious living can *only* be manifest as such when it is put into relation with its outside, via a trace of the moments of the selfsame life that are not yet and no longer “living” – those which have already lapsed or passed away, as it were. And the moment he concedes *that*, he concedes the very crux of Derrida’s contention. Now of course, Zahavi could conceivably deny the point, were he to claim instead that the current moment of conscious life is given in an “instantaneous, non-temporal self-awareness,” but this is obviously not how Zahavi thinks it is given, and rightly so.

Husserl, for his part, has a subtler tactic ready to try to escape the “disturbing implication” here at issue. And Derrida alerts us to this when he tells us that “Husserl admittedly says [in HUA X, that is] that retention is still a perception,”³³ by which Husserl means that, unlike actively remembered or expected experiences – i.e., represented ones – he retained, just-passed moments of conscious living, along with the protained ones to-come, are, *in a sense*, present *as well*, or are still somehow “living” in the “now.” Thus, while the “now” cannot be called simple in the strict sense – given, again, that it is always given with temporal “extension,” or as a “transition” of sorts, which implies an inner complexity no matter how little extended we take it to be – it is still, on Husserl’s account, conceivable as simply *present*, or as bearing no indication of nonpresence within it, given that the retained and protained phases that are always “there” with it, and which must be, again, if the “now” phase is to be given at all, are not absent in the way that a *represented* (recollected or expected) experience is. As Derrida puts it, then, Husserl tries to keep retention and protention “in the sphere of primordial certitude,”³⁴ or to exclude them from what Derrida calls “the radical difference...between perception and nonperception.”³⁵

However, this move only *apparently* prevents Husserl from having to admit “constitutive significance to a nonpresence” (as Zahavi again puts the matter), since as Derrida continues:

without reducing the abyss which may indeed separate retention from representation...we should be able to say a priori that their common root – ... the constitution of a trace in the most universal sense – is a possibility which not only must inhabit the pure actuality of the now but must constitute it.³⁶

After all, however much they are part of the sense or givenness of the experience given as “now” – and that they are is exactly the point, really – the retained and protained phases of conscious life are *not* simultaneous with what is actually present of this life, and so, cannot be given as what is truly and presently “lived through” of it, without collapsing the distinction and, with it, our sense of time. And so despite the important phenomenological distinction that has to be made between retention and recollection, or protention and expectation – which Derrida, again, does not deny – we still must recognize that what is now living of conscious life, since “compounded” with the retained and protained, nonetheless is given as such only insofar as it bears the trace of what is *not* now living of it: the “givenness” of what is *not* present, again, is required for what *is* present to be given at all. A point which becomes all the more pointed when

we recognize that, as Husserl tells us, the retained phases that are “closest” to the “now” always bear within themselves a retention of the more “distant” past of consciousness yet, and so on, back to what Husserl calls the “nil”³⁷ of conscious life – for at this point we are *certainly* dealing with a totally nonpresent or lapsed experiencing: “we say of the elapsed extent that it is intended in retentions,” Husserl writes, and “the more remote phases – those lying further back in the past – are entirely obscure and emptily intended.”³⁸ Thus, as Derrida says:

as soon as we admit this continuity of the now and the not-now, perception and nonperception, in the zone of primordially common to primordial impression and primordial retention, we admit the other into the self-identity of the *Augenblick*; nonpresence and nonevidence are admitted into the blink of the instant.... This alterity is in fact the *condition* for presence, presentation, and thus for *Vorstellung* in general.³⁹

And conceding this, we are forced to call into question the very consistency of Zahavi’s attack on Derrida’s position.

I think it is important to note, in this regard, that *contra* Zahavi’s claim, Derrida does not claim in “Sign and the Blink of an Eye” that the “now” moment of conscious life only comes to be “there” for it *after the fact*, nor does his actual argumentation seem to imply this. Perhaps Zahavi is led to believe that it does given Derrida’s approving reference to, in his own words, “the structure of temporality implied throughout Freud’s texts,” which Derrida then calls “the ‘after-event’ of the becoming conscious of an ‘unconscious content.’”⁴⁰ Later on, we’ll have to try to understand this point more clearly; and yet it should be evident enough already that Derrida cannot mean by this what Zahavi *thinks* he means by it, given that, as we just saw for example, Derrida claims that the *nachträglichkeit* of which he writes “is in fact the *condition* for presence, presentation, and thus for *Vorstellung* in general;” and as if to underscore this point, he then adds that “this relation to nonpresence neither befalls, surrounds, nor conceals the presence of the primordial impression; rather it *makes possible* its ever renewed upsurge and virginity.”⁴¹ By insisting that Derrida’s reading implies an absurd implication that it does not actually imply, then, Zahavi thus only prevents himself from recognizing the profound implications that Derrida *is* able to glean from Husserl’s findings on temporality, along with the peculiar urgency that does result from these considerations, namely, to reconceive subjectivity on their basis.

What is it, then, that results from these considerations? Derrida’s essay, once again, belongs to a study concerning the relationship between indicative signs, expressive signs, and consciousness (or sense-constitution) in general. We will recall that Husserl refuses to accept that indication plays a primary role in the constitution of sense; and yet the moment we call into question Husserl’s claim that the “now’s” self-presence is *simple* – and so, his exclusion of indication from the self-presence of conscious life (or put better, his denial of its necessity *for* a life’s self-presence) – we have to call into question Husserl’s marginalization of indication *vis-à-vis* sense-constitution *en toto*. Why? Surely, we presuppose that indication is in play, the moment that com-

munication with *another* is at issue, given the irreducible non-appearance of the other, whose experiences can only be *indicated* through his or her utterance or expression –

when I listen to another [Derrida tells us], his lived experience is not present to me “in person,” in the original.... The subjective side of his experience, his consciousness, in particular the acts by which he gives sense to his signs, are not immediately and primordially present for me as they are for him and mine are for me. Here there is an irreducible and definitive limit⁴²

– but surely, a conscious life’s *presence to itself* presupposes *nothing* like this. Or does it? The so-called uselessness, here in self-presence, of indications – or rather, of signs, and discourse, in general – would constitute what Derrida refers to as its supposed “silence,” a “phenomenological silence.”⁴³ No indication in any *usual* sense – which always “takes its point of departure” in something present, and points towards what is *not* present – could be anything but redundant here.⁴⁴ But if the “now” of consciousness is never “a simple present whose life would be within itself,” but instead already bears within itself retentional and protentional indications, and does so as a *necessary condition* of its givenness – or if, as Derrida fancifully puts it, “there is duration to the blink, and it closes the eye”⁴⁵ – then it would seem that the “phenomenological silence” of self-presence is *not* the most primordial of phenomena, or rather, that “being-primordial must be thought on the basis of the trace, and not the reverse.”⁴⁶ An absolutely exceptional trace of nonpresence would condition the very givenness or presence to self of conscious life, and with it, all its sense-making, or its presentation of being in general.

Husserl’s Pre-Derridean Struggle with “Deconstruction”

What this means for our conception of subjectivity will have to be examined. Derrida only broadly indicates the path that is opened in the essay we’ve been examining, and it will be instructive to examine these gestures in some detail if we want to understand the real significance of his contentions regarding temporality. But in this regard, it will be especially helpful to turn back to *Husserl’s* analyses of temporality. After all, Derrida insists that Husserl’s analysis in HUA X is an “admirable”⁴⁷ one, and that it is his “fidelity to experience and to ‘the things themselves’”⁴⁸ that ultimately allows us to see that primal presentation (or the “*Urimpression*”) is constituted in a “primordial and incessant synthesis,”⁴⁹ as Derrida puts it. Why, then, was Husserl unable to draw any of the conclusions that Derrida later discovered when he remarked upon HUA X several decades after its publication?

In his later work on time-consciousness, in fact, Husserl *was* able to draw many of the same conclusions – beginning with his “Bernauer” manuscripts, Husserl’s next major foray into temporality, which he began writing in the summer of 1917 as he collected the material that would become HUA X for its eventual publication. It seems that Husserl started to have second thoughts about many of his descriptions of time-consciousness as he handed off these manuscripts to his assistant Edith Stein; nagging doubts he had put aside seemed to resurface, and Husserl must have thought it wise to

go over his descriptions once more to see if he could put these doubts to rest.⁵⁰ But as he did this, Husserl would soon discover that, due to the way that he had privileged the “now” of consciousness, his earlier account was not really able to clarify the way that a streaming conscious life continually constitutes itself *as* a streaming life of conscious activity at all.

What were the problems that Husserl discovered about his earlier view? Husserl puts one of the major flaws this way:

So we would have to say further that this primally present consciousness, concretely with its content, is constantly transformed into a different consciousness, which is a “modification” of the former...The modified...consciousness is itself a present: a new presence, a relative primal presence over against the modification of it, which follows after it in the primal process. Then one will ask why the modified consciousness should still be the content of an *unmodified* one, but not the unmodified one [itself]...Whereby the difficulty, again, <is> how something which is not consciousness is transformed into a consciousness-of.⁵¹

Husserl again affirms that moments of conscious life that have passed away, along with what they had made manifest while still “living,” are “there” for the current consciousness, or are made manifest *as such*, as part of a new consciousness of the “now.” But how, Husserl now wonders, is this “new” consciousness given as such *itself*? How does *it* get given, and precisely *as* “now?” What Husserl in fact discovers at this point is that, if his earlier view were correct, it wouldn’t get given as such *at all*. Unlike, that is, the retained and protained (i.e., nonpresent) moments of experience, which are of course made manifest through the retentive and protentive consciousness, no consciousness, on his earlier view, intends the “now” moment. And then we are left wondering how the current experience could possibly remain unconscious until, in retention, it would first come to be manifest.⁵²

Hopefully, the reader is able to grasp the irony of all this. Zahavi, after all, criticizes Derrida’s account for implying that the “now” of consciousness is never given as such: and yet it is *Husserl’s* account in HUA X that actually implies this, as Husserl *himself* discovers. Conversely, it now appears that in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye,” Derrida is able to *avoid* implying this, *precisely* given his recognition that the absent moments of conscious life are complicit in the “now’s” manifestation, or are responsible in an essential way for the continual “being there” of conscious life. And in his Bernauer manuscripts, Husserl will ultimately recognize this as well, and will try to describe, in some detail, the structure of this complicity – or rather, of the ongoing dynamic produced thereby – in order to thoroughly account for the “now’s” continual manifestation.

Interestingly enough, Husserl discovers in his Bernauer manuscripts that he can describe this dynamic quite well just as soon as he considers the phenomenon of *protection* more seriously than he did in his earlier work. This is because in any given case, the previous moments of conscious life have awaited what is to-come, the “new,”

as the coming of the selfsame. And what Husserl comes to discover, to be precise, is that the primal presentation of conscious life thus continually comes to pass as the *fulfillment* of its earlier protentional consciousness:

each protention as primal-protention fulfills itself through the entrance of the new....If, now, the primal-protention fulfills itself in the process, we precisely thus have, in the first place, an unfulfilled intentionality, which passes over into a consciousness-*of* that has the character of the fulfilled.

Husserl, calling the current moment of experience the “core,” continues:

the core here... becomes conscious, as *itself*, in the fulfillment; and this absolute-being-conscious-as-“itself” is its being-conscious-as-*now*. This core can in principal *never* arise <otherwise>..., i.e., than as the core-phenomenon of a consciousness of *fulfillment*.⁵³

By taking the protentional tendency of self-temporalization into account in his descriptions, then, Husserl is thus able to make sense of the manifestation of a conscious life’s “now:” it gets given as the “new” moment of the selfsame living, or as what is current in the streaming, via the protentional consciousness that held out in advance for its own continuation – or to be more specific, by means of the *fulfillment* of this consciousness, which gets produced again and again, just so long as another moment of experience does in fact arise in its wake.⁵⁴

These considerations, in fact, lead Husserl to conclude that, in a certain sense, self-temporalization just *is* protention, or rather, protention fulfilling itself. This is because it is not just the primal presentation of conscious life that is produced in the fulfillment, but in the same stroke, its *retention* also:

That every phase, thereby, is at the same time retention of the previous one is *eo ipso* given with this. [This is] because fulfillment bears in itself retention of the preceding [protentional] intention. The previous one is retained as such in a new consciousness..., and this consciousness is, on the one hand, characterized in itself as a fulfillment of the previous one, and, on the other hand, as a retention of it.⁵⁵

We thus have to conceive of a conscious life’s protentional openness as that which continually “drives” its ongoing self-temporalization, and thus produces, in its fulfillment, the other two “orientations” of time-consciousness. And with this, we must also understand the primal presentation thereby produced as a kind of “*mediated*” consciousness,⁵⁶ as Husserl puts it, given that the “now” is thus continually constituted, in a sense, only through its retention of the preceding lived-experience, whose protentional aim the current one has come to fulfill. This is a point that Toine Kortooms, for example, makes explicit when he notes that “an actually present phase of consciousness is conscious of itself *as* an actually present phase... because it is conscious of itself as the actualization of a preceding anticipation of what is to come.”⁵⁷

It should be evident, in any event, that Husserl does nothing other here than provide a detailed description of what Derrida, in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye,” will refer to as an “auto-affection” bearing the trace of the nonpresent. And his description should thus allow us to thoroughly clarify the “*Nachträglichkeit*” of self-presence, in the sense of its deferral or subsequence, along with the “blindness” of the *Augenblick* associated with this. How? Despite Zahavi’s claim, we’ve seen that an account of self-temporalization that takes into account the mediacy of its auto-affection does *not* imply that the “now” remains a sort of “blind spot” or that, as “now,” an experience must remain “out of sight,” given that this is precisely what comes to *appearance* through protentional fulfillment (or in a “primordial and irreducible synthesis,” as Derrida again writes); instead, there is a kind of “blindness” here precisely inasmuch as each moment of consciousness comes to be so only *extrinsically*. Lacking an inherent “vision” of itself, that is to say, the “now” only “sees itself” as “reflected” from *without*, via the other, nonpresent moments of what is thereby given as the selfsame: thus, Derrida’s assertion that in Husserl’s work, we ultimately find that “the presence of the present is thought of as arising from the bending-back of a return.”⁵⁸ And in connection with this, we discover that a more profound “blindness” yet is implied, given that, as should now be apparent, the “now” moment *itself* cannot have begun the process of self-temporalization in which it comes to take its place, and which it thereby only *repeats* or continues; instead, the moment of living is subject, as it were, to the ongoing process. But since its “auto-affection” is always a being affected that originates *outside* itself – even if, evidently, from the other moments of the selfsame, namely, the passing-away moment that has awaited it – the self-present moment of living thus always arrives “too late” to ever “see” the non-intrinsic origin of all this for itself. To see itself only as reflected is to remain blind to the source of this borrowed vision: the “bending-back... is always older than presence, and procures for it its openness,” Derrida writes.⁵⁹

This goes some way towards clarifying the “blink of an eye” that Derrida invokes in the title of his essay. But having grasped this, we should be able to return to the notion of unconsciousness that, as we saw earlier, Derrida broaches in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye:” for having discovered that the manifestation of each “now” moment is “mediated” or comes to it from without, it should be obvious now that the ongoing self-temporalization of consciousness thus presupposes a “stream” of *non-self-temporalized* experiences, or put otherwise, of life lived without “yet” being “there” for itself as an ongoing existence. Elsewhere, but in a similar context, Derrida makes this point explicitly, writing that:

for the source [or “pure I,” as Derrida also writes⁶⁰]... to see itself as the glance of the origin, it must divide itself.... Before the mirror it does not come back to itself, its consciousness is still a kind of unconscious.⁶¹

And in his Bernauer Manuscripts, Husserl explicitly recognizes that this is so also:

the core-data... never arise unless as a fulfillment of protentions, excepting the *input-point*..., which in a peculiar sense is “unconscious,” and first comes to “consciousness” mediately through retention [or again, as “already expected,” or “welcome,” Husserl says].⁶²

But thus, “one has to assume a hyletic process in the primal stream without the constitution of time yet taking place,”⁶³ as Kortooms writes – which is just to say that experiences of a purely *sensory* sort provide the “material” presupposed by a life’s ongoing self-constitution, and are thus produced without any support from it. After all, an experience could not arise as the fulfillment of a prior protentional openness, and so, come to be given as the “now” moment of the selfsame streaming, unless, for its own part, it actually did arise in *some* way – namely, through thoroughly nonconscious processes, taking place “before” the experience, emerging as fulfillment, becomes manifest as this life’s “now” or its present consciousness of this or that thing. And perhaps: even *irrespective* of whether it *does* actually become manifest in this way? This is something Husserl ultimately allows for, when in his C-manuscripts, he insists that “not every prominence is affective.”⁶⁴

In fact, it is in his C-manuscripts, Husserl’s final work on time-consciousness, that he really begins to understand the radical implications of the development of his account that he had begun in Bernau. Husserl is even able to write in these manuscripts that “the stream of experiences accomplishes no authentic temporalization and is no corresponding performance of consciousness;”⁶⁵ rather:

the functioning ego with its acts and all its authentic affections – correlatively the universe of the thematic – is, in the streaming primal present, thus streamingly, constantly “raised up” [abgehoben]..., distinguished from the night of the unconscious.⁶⁶

Conscious experience, Husserl concludes, is therefore “two-sided,”⁶⁷ given that on the one hand, it has to be characterized as “egoic” (or *ichlich*⁶⁸) precisely insofar as it gets given, through the self-temporalizing process, as a moment of “my” life of ongoing engagement with an enduring world thereby made manifest too; but on the *other* hand, the experience, insofar as it has a “hyletic” element, has to be understood as having a “non-egoic” (or *nicht-ichlich*⁶⁹) aspect also, since although it is “raised up” or brought to light and lived as “my” sensory affection, it was not generated, *qua* sensory experience, thereby.⁷⁰

Husserl’s *later* work on time thus would appear to allow for the kind of *rapprochement* between the Husserlian and Freudian accounts of subjectivity toward which, as we saw earlier, Derrida gestures in his reading.⁷¹ That this is so seems especially evident when we take into account Husserl’s claim, in his *Lectures Concerning Active and Passive Syntheses*, that in

a constant broad horizon of background lived-experiences to which the ego is not present and “in” which it does not reside..., tendencies, lived-experiences of drive, may be rooted... which for instance incline away from discontentment, but the ego is not present there.⁷²

Sensory experience, we saw, must be understood as a nonconscious production; and yet, “driven,” we see, it already involves the body in behavior or in a response to the

stimuli. Which allows us to catch sight of what is *ultimately* at stake when Derrida claims that a trace of nonpresence must always condition the self-presence of conscious life, or that the manifestation of the “now” necessarily always admits “the other into the self-identity of the *Augenblick*,” as he puts it: for the “now’s” manifestation thus presupposes the breakout of a kind of self-opposition, or of a “loss of the proper, of absolute proximity,”⁷³ which will allow it, through its incessant self-identification or what Derrida will later call an “auto-immunity,”⁷⁴ to return to itself as a moment of the selfsame in the first place. This is to say that, assuming it *is* able to be lived as a moment of the selfsame, an experience must have become “self-alienated” or made “other” to itself, and precisely in the sense of having been robbed of the immediacy in which it might otherwise have been able to live itself out, or of the instinctual and habitual drivenness that can now always be lived as something foreign. The self-temporalization of conscious life thus bears the trace of a kind of pre-original subjection, which the continual “bending back” of its “return” would efface; and if we are to characterize Derrida’s critique in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye” as an attack on Husserl’s privileging of the present, then we have to recognize that, in the first place, it means to confront us with precisely the kind of subjection or “arche-violence” that must somehow be engendered in the current moment of living if, *as a moment of living*, it is to be “there” for itself at all.

The Remainder of Pure Presence in Husserl’s Later Thinking:

Everything turns on how we understand this notion of a pre-original subjection. And this brings us to the final and, I think, most important claim in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye,” which Derrida articulates only very evocatively at the end of his essay, but which, if I am right, his detractors fear more than all the other implications of the text. Derrida comes to this claim by means of a question; noting, specifically, that “this bending-back [of a return] is irreducible in presence or in self-presence,” and that it “revent[s] us from speaking about a simple self-identity ‘*im selben Augenblick*,’” Derrida then asks:

does this not compromise the usage Husserl wants to make of the concept of “solitary mental life,”... does not everything that is announced already in this reduction... appear to be stricken in its very possibility by what we are calling time?⁷⁵

Is our consciousness of self and time fundamentally a “solitary” venture – or to say the same, a “self-sufficient” one? Zahavi, for one, regularly argues that it is, insisting that, as the most basic accomplishment of subjectivity, the self-temporalization of conscious life “is in fact solitary,” or put otherwise, “is not first brought about by way of others.”⁷⁶ “We are *not dependent* upon others at this level,”⁷⁷ Zahavi claims – and though he also claims that subjectivity necessarily involves intersubjectivity, in the sense that “we are, in our primordially temporalizing uniqueness, already *open* towards others in their primally living co-presence,”⁷⁸ Zahavi can thus only mean by this that this intersubjectivity or consciousness of others is, with self-temporalization, a sort of inherent and always operational power belonging to the subject. Yes, the consciousness we have of our own enduring life, our own subjectivity, is *at once* a consciousness of others as

other subjects; but this, according to Zahavi, emerges, again, from a capacity that is “intrinsic” to each being we call subject, and in fact, to each moment of its living.⁷⁹ It is not as though some prior or “more primordial” form of “intersubjectivity” would serve as a condition of the constitution of both one’s streaming sense of self and of others, Zahavi maintains.

Zahavi claims that this was Husserl’s position also. He says the same about temporality, we’ll remember, although we’ve seen by this point that the account of time-consciousness Zahavi articulates and defends was not, in fact, Husserl’s *ultimate* position on the matter. In this case, however, I think that Zahavi is right when he claims that Husserl not only adopted, very early on, the same position on intersubjectivity that Zahavi has adopted, but furthermore, never really altered it.⁸⁰ After all, Husserl advances a similar position even in the *Crisis*, claiming, in regard to the “primal I, the ego of my epoché,” that “starting from itself and in itself, it constitutes transcendental intersubjectivity,” and this, from out of its “already enduring in the enduring primordial sphere.”⁸¹ And of course, had Husserl never abandoned his earlier account of temporality, he could never have consistently contemplated changing his tune about intersubjectivity: for one could hardly hold that temporalization is “intrinsic” to each experience while *also* claiming that it is “first brought about by way of *others*.” Yet abandoning his earlier account of self-temporalization does not require some affirmation of its “social” origin, or at least not *prima facie*, and despite the fact that Husserl eventually *did* lose faith with this account, it does not seem to have led him to seriously consider the position that, as I’ve just noted, Derrida advances at the end of his “Blink of an Eye” essay.

It would require a barbaric sort of reading, in fact, or a monstrosity of interpretation, to support the claim that ultimately or at long last, Husserl became a kind of “post-structuralist,” and posited a sort of “relationship to the other” that would make the self-temporalization of conscious life possible (rather than the reverse). Nonetheless, I’m going to argue in the final section of this paper that – anticipating Derrida’s analysis in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye” even further – Husserl’s thought did at least *begin* to move in this very direction. In order to try to demonstrate that it did, however, I’ll have to rely on a number of manuscripts that have only recently been published, and that, in all honesty, are pretty “sketchy” even as Husserl’s working manuscripts go, which will force me to speculate quite a bit about the meaning of the passages I turn to, as well as about the kinds of alterations that Husserl may thus have been contemplating for his account. To speculate in this manner, surely, is to go where angels fear to tread. But that may just mean that this author is no angel – and perhaps, then, that Derrida wasn’t either – since for whatever it’s worth, I won’t be afraid to follow this path myself, in order to better understand where Derrida’s musings on the Husserlian account of temporality ultimately lead us.

In any event, this (somewhat tenuous) demonstration of the eventual drift of Husserl’s thought will be made up of two distinct analyses. In the first of these, I’ll try to show that, in Husserl’s later work, he came to understand the self-temporalization of consciousness as the basic form of a life’s *self-responsibility*. This is a point that I hope will not appear *too* outlandish – for along with other similarly “existentialist”

themes, the notion of responsibility is surely significant in Husserl's *Crisis*;⁸² while earlier, in his "Kaizo" articles, Husserl had begun to tie this notion to that of history.⁸³ What is rarely recognized, however, is that in his later work on time-consciousness, Husserl connects responsibility with self-temporalization *per se*.

How does he do this? Of course protention had already taken the fore in Husserl's later accounts of temporalization, in which, we've seen, Husserl had come to conceive of protention as a kind of aiming at *fulfillment*; but as such, he finds that to really understand self-temporalization, he must understand its basic "tendency"⁸⁴ (as Husserl will say) as being the future-directedness of a specific sort of "aim."⁸⁵ Thus, in a manuscript from 1932 – specifically, text no. 7 of his C 2 manuscript, which is titled "[The] Ego Thought through on the Basis of the Living Present" – Husserl begins to conceive of the self-temporalization of life as its continual striving for "unanimity"⁸⁶ with itself, as he puts it there, or put otherwise, as a striving to become and to remain "consistent"⁸⁷ with an "idea" of its "true being"⁸⁸ that thus animates all egoic striving. And as such, self-temporalization in general has to be understood as the carrying forth of a "telos,"⁸⁹ Husserl says – specifically, one which is continually "projected" into the open expanse of the future in determining how possibilities are "there" for the life thereby made manifest to itself, and which thus gets continually assumed or taken over through that life's self-retention as the striving it is and has been:

I am, I have implicit in me, an exhibitable past as my streaming "earlier" life, how it "in fact" was.... In my stream-temporality, I am as the identical persisting ego of personal habitualities, of the respective interests which, in the succession, are and were mine; [and have] before me, the horizon of the future (interest).... I, the interest-ego which I now actually am, am in a unanimous coincidence of interest with my past ego; I am the same so far as I still accept my interests as valid..., [or] am otherwise in a coincidence of conflict, the same in the modalization of its being-directed.

What Husserl comes to discover, we'll then have to say, is that the protention that drives a life's self-temporalization onward ultimately must be understood as that life's concern over what it is to-be, or as we could also put it, its own being's being an issue for itself.

As the passage just quoted indicates, further, there thus exists the constant threat of "inner strife." For a conscious life's presence to itself thus has to be understood, at least in part, as an ongoing struggle to keep all of its drives and strivings, bar none, "in line" with the *telos*, or *ultimate* "tendency" or "striving," that in this life's continual identification, holds sway over the ongoing totality:

But I am soon... inconsistent, am soon the ego that... constantly "should be" otherwise, ultimately and totally with regard to that which was and is my constant total telos; soon in conflict against my "true" being- and life-"will."

For as Husserl continues:

I bear in my present life my unholy, untrue, contradictory existence, facticity – but also in me, the idea of my true being, my should-be and, precisely with it, the ideal capacity of self-criticism, or the critique of this facticity.⁹⁰

It will be important for us to understand this in relation to the “arche-violence” or “pre-original subjection” that I hope to clarify by examining Derrida’s evocation of the other at the end of “Signs and the Blink of an Eye.” And while it would be easy to identify the “facticity” of which Husserl speaks with “the” unconscious – or put better, with all those instinctual and habitual, and certainly non-egoic, drives or tendencies which, in any given case, may unfold *contra* one’s prevailing overall *telos* – this interpretation oversimplifies things greatly, since in the manuscripts we’ll turn to just below, a kind of complicity between “conscious” and “unconscious,” or “rational” and “irrational,” tendencies comes to light – one which, in his own works, Derrida remarks upon often enough.⁹¹ Husserl, recognizing this complicity himself, thus writes in these manuscripts of something “irrational in the *absolute ought*.”⁹²

In any event, we should recognize that on the account that emerges in Husserl’s later writings, a self-temporalizing life has to be understood as one made *responsible* for what it is to-be – a life that has to “look after” itself, as it were, and that thereby becomes an “I.” But why should a life ever find itself responsible for itself? How does it come to pass, that is, that a life is made to “watch over” itself at all? What is interesting in this respect is that when Husserl investigates the origin of self-temporalization, he will usually speak of *god*;⁹³ but when he investigates the origin of responsibility, he comes back again and again to the *other*.

In the second part of this final demonstration, I’ll thus have to consider the notion of the other that emerges in Husserl’s later works on ethics, along with Husserl’s descriptions of a kind of “call,” coming from another, that leads us to our ethical obligations.⁹⁴ In manuscripts only recently published as *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, to be specific, Husserl comes to understand ethical obligation as ultimately a matter of an “absolute ought.”⁹⁵ In his *earlier* account of ethics, by contrast, Husserl concentrated his analysis on what he called “*Wertnehmen*,” or the sorts of perceptual accomplishments that constitute objects as being good or bad, useful or harmful, relative to or in accordance with the ideals and values that move us or that concretely guide all of our conscious activity. However, Husserl later recognizes that this focus completely ignored what is most fundamental in ethics – namely, the way in which we are moved by values and ideals in the first place – which leads him to distinguish two senses in which we can speak of a “value:”

with the one sort of values, I have choice: the choice only ought to be a reasonable one, I should choose what is best among the practical “goods.” With values that receive their personal sense from the depths of the personality and its personal love, there is no choice and no “quantitative” distinctions, namely, no distinctions of weight.⁹⁶

An analysis of “objective values,” that is, or of value in an objective sense, leads to an account of calculation, or the way we weigh possible “goods” against one another, precisely insofar as they further or hinder the realization of the various goals towards which we find ourselves striving. But what can we say about our *commitment* to these goals, or of values in the “deeper” sense – namely, those that determine what it is for something, relatively speaking, to count as a goal for us at all? This is the notion of “*subjective values*” that Husserl finds he must examine if his account of *Wertnehmen* is not to be without ground.

So what then of “subjective values,” or those that “receive their sense” from “personal love?” In his later work on ethics, Husserl uses the term “*absolute value*” to refer to value in this sense, precisely because, as we’ve just seen, the sort of values at issue do not lend themselves to comparison and weighing, as do values of the “objective” kind. But an absolute value is thus determined by what Husserl calls an “absolute *ought*” or demand – “deciding oneself for values of love follows from the individual call of an absolute ought,”⁹⁷ he writes – and the call of love, in the most original sense, comes from *another* – thus, Husserl’s claim that “the pure and genuine love” is “from person to person.”⁹⁸ This love of the other, on Husserl’s account, ensues from the call of another “I” or “ego” (from “*Ich-rufe*,” Husserl will say), and as that through which, as Husserl at one point writes, I win my first “access to a foreign interiority,” it is not “an esteeming of another on the basis of his [or her] spiritual beauty, education, professionalism, etc.,” rather, this love is the way that the other’s “life, all his [or her] doing and not-doing, is personally significant for me.”⁹⁹

It would seem that with this notion (personal love inspired by an “I-call”), we come across something akin to an absolute affection of subjectivity, in the sense of a kind of subjection to responsibility, whose production would not be accomplished through the powers of the one made subject to it. The reality is far more complex, however; and Husserl puts it thus:

The sense of personal valuation is ambiguous. Each is accomplished by the ego, but only the loving [valuation] is originally rooted in the very source of the ego as that which I am, and at the same time, is rooted in the counter-ego in another correlative way.¹⁰⁰

This lends weight to Anthony Steinbock’s claim that, on the level of ethical commitments or its fundamental vocation, the ego is not “self-grounding.”¹⁰¹ We ought to note, however, the fundamental ambiguity of Husserl’s statement: for with these words, Husserl seems to indicate, on the one hand, that the call that makes a demand on the subject *does* come wholly from without; and yet on the other hand, that the decision or commitment that brings it into “*my*” personal valuation is the subject’s *own* affair – whether or not, and how, I *respond* to the call, or perhaps, to the demand into which the call places me: this is precisely what makes up the personality of the person on Husserl’s emerging account. In fact, there is a sense on Husserl’s reckoning in which *every* other subjects each subject to an absolute ought, or in which, as Derrida would put it, “*tout autre est tout autre*”¹⁰² – “does not each human become for each the theme of an absolute ought?,” Husserl asks us¹⁰³ – which implies that there is a crucial

role to be played by the subject's own decision, regarding that for-the-sake-of-which it is to-be – even if this commitment is “uncomprehending,” Husserl claims, or one “assumed [or taken over, *übernommen*] in an empty indeterminacy.”¹⁰⁴

But can we say, then, that what emerges in Husserl's text at this point is a sense in which the others' call subjects the one made subject to it to an unbearable burden, or to a responsibility to which the subject cannot possibly measure up? What is interesting here is that in the very same passages, Husserl seems to both admit as much, and yet, to take steps to conceal the unbearable weight that his discourse on the “absolute ought” brings out into the open. We thus see, on the one hand, that immediately after recognizing, as we just saw, that *every* other subjects the subject to an absolute responsibility, Husserl then acknowledges that “I cannot dedicate myself to all; the practical impossibility here sets divisions” – and thus, Husserl says, that “therein hides an irrationality of the absolute ought.”¹⁰⁵ There is a dangerous complicity between the rational and the irrational, then, insofar as my answer or response to the others' call immediately establishes a kind of *irresponsibility* on my part, a forgetting, or at least, marginalization of the absolute obligation demanded of me by all those who fall outside what Husserl repeatedly calls my “circle” or “sphere.”¹⁰⁶ And in fact, Husserl indicates that the loves to which we have committed ourselves become “acquired instincts”¹⁰⁷ for us, as if the decision to commit oneself, which becomes a kind of habit (love, Husserl claims, is an address in which “this other wins, and in general habitually retains, a unique-value for me”¹⁰⁸), were to “re-form” the sensibility of the one made subject to the ought, and as such, become a kind of second nature. But the “ought is to be justified,” Husserl says, or can become “*rational*,”¹⁰⁹ only insofar as it is reckoned in relation to a total “value-nexus,”¹¹⁰ or, as Husserl will in fact indicate, to an infinite plurality of other absolute oughts – or answered for before the “other others,” we could say – which thus, in Husserl's words, “always leaves the instinctive ought with an invisible [*unsichtigen*] content.”¹¹¹ We may recall, here, Derrida's claim in *Rogues* that “it is reason that throws reason into crisis” (a crisis whose “cause or foundation,” not incidentally, is “located in the very structure of the present and of life, in the temporalization of what Husserl called ‘the Living Present,’” Derrida claims).¹¹² And perhaps with this, we come to a deeper understanding of the “blindness” of subjectivity, given that, as we just saw, one's valuing and ethical commitments are, on Husserl's understanding, brought “into the light” or “made visible” (i.e., are rationally justified) only by answering for them, again, before “other others” in turn—which always implies that, in the end, something remains “in the *dark*” about them, which I am commanded once more to illuminate.

So the others call me to a kind of unbearable love, Husserl indicates, or to a responsibility in comparison to which my every response must be deemed inadequate. Husserl, again, seems to readily concede that this is so. And yet on the other hand, though, he seems to *deny* that this is so in the very same stroke, and instead attributes to the subject the resources necessary to support the weight of this absolute obligation, or to measure up to what, by all appearances, it should be impossible for the subject to measure up. Husserl thus writes of the “concept of a teleological world” and the *telos* of an “absolute striving,”¹¹³ and claims that:

with the awakening of the sense for an absolute ought, ethical self-consciousness also arises. <With> the opening of the glance [*des Blickes*] for the universality of one's own life and then the life of the community, the absolute ought, the circle of absolute calls is expanded and, ultimately, embraces the entire world of values and the personal world together in the unity of one synthesis.¹¹⁴

Now here, it would seem that Husserl is attempting to describe the sort of impossible ideal that, as we just saw, cannot but haunt our individual vocations or ethical responsibility more generally. Yet *now*, there is no question of the ideal's impossibility at all or any kind of *aporia* of obligation. Shouldn't we be surprised by this? After all, Husserl not only recognizes the kind of limit that "practical possibility" places upon us, we discovered, but also, we may note, that responsibilities can sometimes become *irreconcilable*:

The tragedy of personal conflicts:... if in the case of irreconcilability, I decide myself for the one, so I sin against an absolute ought. The preferred may be "evident" and something absolutely required, and yet, I must sin, I must, for the sake of a higher right, do something which yet it is not right for me to do.¹¹⁵

But Husserl will not allow this anxiety to linger. For he soon has recourse to a certain "idea of god,"¹¹⁶ and writes that, despite "all the irrationality of my *Umwelt*," I can

be holy... if I believe that god *is*, and that this world is god's world. And will I hold fast to the absolute ought with the whole power of my soul—and this is an absolute willing—then I must absolutely believe that he exists. Belief is the absolute and highest demand.¹¹⁷

Steinbock, in fact, tells us that at this point, Husserl becomes positively Kierkegaardian:¹¹⁸ for Husserl's idea here seems to be that, even when faced with an impossible demand or a conflict of duties that leave me certain to "sin," I may always do what I can and rest easy with my "belief in divine providence," as Husserl puts it, or as he also says, in my belief that "everything turns to the good, and all will be good ultimately. I trust in it."¹¹⁹ This notion of God's providence recurs repeatedly in the *Grenzprobleme*, and ultimately seems to serve as the lynchpin of Husserl's later account of responsibility—but precisely, it seems, because it would limit the weight of our responsibility as much as, or more than, it would increase it. And evidently, then, the worries that Derrida poses about the "knight of faith" in a work like *The Gift of Death* would thus apply here as well.¹²⁰

How, in any event, does this come back to time? Perhaps because of this theological underpinning in his account of ethics, Husserl doesn't seem to have been able to put two and two together, as it were, and recognize that if, on the one hand, the self-projection of conscious life does have to be understood as a continual striving to determine its existence in accordance with what will count as absolute values for it, while on the other hand, it is precisely the *other* who inspires a life to its responsibility

by reaching it with “the individual call of an absolute ought” and making it decide itself for these values, then it must be the case that the *self-temporalization of conscious life* begins in the others’ entreaty, or that my ongoing sense of self – the very “being” of subjectivity, we will remember – is no “solitary” affair. Clearly, though, Derrida was able to see this, which explains the meaning of the passage with which he closes “Signs and the Blink of an Eye:”

is not the concept of pure solitude – of the monad in the phenomenological sense – undermined by its own origin, by the very condition of its self-presence, that is, by “time,” to be conceived anew on the basis now of difference within auto-affection..., within the “sameness” of the *im selben Augenblick*? Husserl himself evoked the analogy between the relation with the alter ego, constituted within the absolute monad of the ego, and the relation with the other present..., constituted in the absolute actuality of the living present.¹²¹

This passage is somewhat thin on details, admittedly, but we should now be in a position to start to spell these all out. For on the one hand, we’ve seen that in the “living present” of conscious life, the “now” constitutes itself together with the other moments of the selfsame streaming (i.e., those that it retains and protains) only insofar as the other moments reflect it back to itself, as it were; herein lies its *Nachträglichkeit*. But it should now be apparent that in the very same way, a self-temporalizing, conscious life, taken as an ongoing totality – or the “monad in the phenomenological sense” – can be, in the “solitude” of its immanence, both present to itself as well as the constituting source of its others in their “nonpresence” (i.e., as other subjects) only insofar as it has been thrown back on itself by the others, or rather, affected by the other *as such* and made subject to the other’s gaze. This thus implies that the “now” gets continuously thrown back upon itself by the other moments of the selfsame only because the *other person* has done the same to the life of which that moment is a part¹²² – but as such, consciousness, as primordially temporalizing self-constitution, must come from without that life itself, impressed by the gaze of the others.

We have to see this point as one on which Husserl and Derrida will ultimately differ, even *given* Husserl’s later movement in a kind of “Derridean direction.” For as I hope we can now see, Husserl, through it all, was never in a position to assent to Derrida’s assertion that:

with the alterity of the “unconscious,” we have to deal not with the horizons of modified presents – past or future – but with a “past” that has never been nor will ever be present, whose “future” will never be produced or reproduced in the form of presence.¹²³

For to assent to this, he would have had to admit that, in the first place, the relationship to “alterity” that comes to light in his discourse on responsibility has in fact come to pass as a kind of “arche-subjection,” prior to the primordial temporalization of consciousness that gets called forth within the life of the one made subject thereby – and so, prior to any “past” that I could ever call my own. And with this, Husserl would also

have needed to admit that this thus calls the subjected one to a responsibility that can never be exhausted in any given *telos* – as if to be truly responsible to the other’s call, or more precisely, to the call of every other in turn, I would need to throw myself towards a future “beyond” any that I could ever give myself to be realized in my own life’s self-projection. And however ideal, that is, that my conception of this future may be: thus, Derrida’s claim that “the decision, if there is one, must advance towards a future which is not known, which cannot be anticipated.”¹²⁴ But as such, the “phenomenological silence” that, even in his later work, Husserl was never *really* able to question – the immediate self-identification of the selfsame and its being at home with itself in this presence, outside of all *discourse* with the other – must always thus get constituted only through the exclusion or reduction of this subjection, or of “the relation to the other within me,” as Derrida finally puts it.¹²⁵ And so, the blindness of the *Augenblick* must thus be, before all else, just this “closing of the eyes” to the other, or to the summons or decree, coming from without, that delivers a living being up to itself in the first place: for it is only through this “closing” that, in the blink of an eye, the one, identical life can be given to itself and lived as such, self-present.

Conclusion

I’ve just examined the implications of Derrida’s reading of Husserl on time; what, then, does the phenomenologist have to fear from it? Surely in a certain sense, very little, if not nothing: for we saw that Husserl was able to anticipate many of Derrida’s concerns in “Signs and the Blink of an Eye,” and his response to this was fruitful, to say the least. It thus seems that Derrida’s reading opens up an apparently unlimited field of problems for the phenomenological method, which implies that there will be no shortage of work to occupy the practicing phenomenologist. But perhaps it is the nature of this work that causes such consternation: for if what is at issue is the concrete understanding of *ourselves* that results from phenomenological analysis, then we should have to say that Derrida’s reading has thrown everything up into the air. To reconceive subjectivity from the ground up, as a response to, and at once, *concealment* of, a pre-originary subjection: this is what Derrida’s reading would call on the phenomenologist to do, to the point of becoming a sort of “transcendental psychoanalyst,” if you will. Obviously some initial steps have already been taken in this direction (a thinker like Emmanuel Levinas comes to mind, for example), but the task remains in its nascency. And we ensure that it will go no further if we shrink from the “troubling implications” for phenomenology of Derrida’s work, or see his analyses as something to be refuted rather than to be taken as an impetus.

Endnotes

¹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 112.

² Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood; investigating the first-person perspective* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 70 (see fn. #13).

³ Dan Zahavi, "Inner Time-Consciousness and Pre-reflective Self-awareness," in *The New Husserl; a critical reader*, ed. Donn Welton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 173.

⁴ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 61.

⁵ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 58.

⁶ Zahavi, "Inner Time-Consciousness," 170 (emphasis mine).

⁷ See, for example, Edmund Husserl, *Späte Texte Über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934): die C-Manuskripte*, ed. Dieter Lohmar (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 33.

⁸ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 65 (emphasis altered).

⁹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 69.

¹⁰ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 69 (emphasis mine).

¹¹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 70.

¹² "Subjectivity and Immanence in Michel Henry," in *Subjectivity and Transcendence*, ed. Arne Grøn, Iben Damgaard, and Søren Overgaard (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 140.

¹³ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 70.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 152.

¹⁵ Which incidentally, seems to ignore the other meaning of "Nachtrag," an addendum or supplement. On the double meaning of this term, incidentally, see, e.g., Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 266-267.

¹⁶ Zahavi, "Inner Time-Consciousness," 172.

¹⁷ Dan Zahavi, "Time and Consciousness in the Bernauer Manuscripts," *Husserl Studies*, 20 (2004): 114 (see also fn #20).

¹⁸ Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, trans. John B. Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 123.

¹⁹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 70. Zahavi is quoting Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time*, 115.

²⁰ Zahavi, "Time in the Bernauer Manuscripts," 114 (my emphasis).

²¹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 3-5, 69.

²² Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 61.

²³ Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time*, 29-30. Quoted in Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 62.

²⁴ Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time*, 40. As before, quoted in Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 62.

²⁵ Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time*, 29. Quoted, once more for good measure, in Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 62.

²⁶ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 62.

²⁷ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 59. Derrida here quotes Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time*, 191.

²⁸ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 64.

²⁹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 85 (my emphasis). Derrida continues immediately after the second ellipsis I've inserted with the words "but with a new primordial actuality in which it would become a non-now, a past-now" – which would apparently give credence to Zahavi's contention (see p. 7-10) that the "blindness" in the heart of the au-

to-affectation of which Derrida speaks here *is* in fact intended to refer to a purported non-consciousness of the “now.” Yet it seems highly unlikely that this is what Derrida truly means with these words, since on the bottom of the very same page, he goes on to write that “the living present springs forth out of its nonidentity with itself and from the *possibility* of a retentional trace [my emphasis],” and *not* – as Zahavi’s reading of Derrida would have it – from the *actuality* of a retentional trace, in which the moment of consciousness will then be kept held of (or ‘retained’) precisely as past, as no longer truly living present. See also p. 16-17.

³⁰ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 85.

³¹ Zahavi, “Inner Time-Consciousness,” 173.

³² Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time*, 41 (my emphasis). Derrida quotes this passage in Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 65.

³³ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 64.

³⁴ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 67.

³⁵ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 104.

³⁶ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 67.

³⁷ Edmund Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Syntheses; lectures on transcendental logic*, ed. and trans. Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishing, 2001), 218.

³⁸ Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time*, 27.

³⁹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 65.

⁴⁰ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 63.

⁴¹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 65-66 (emphasis mine).

⁴² Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 38-39.

⁴³ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 70.

⁴⁴ A claim Husserl affirms, for instance, in Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. John N. Findlay (New York: Routledge, 1970), 190-191 (Investigation I, §8); quoted in Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 41-42.

⁴⁵ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 65.

⁴⁶ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 85.

⁴⁷ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 61.

⁴⁸ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 67.

⁴⁹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 152.

⁵⁰ R. Bernet and D. Lohmar, “Einleitung der Herausgeber,” in: Edmund Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte Über das Zeitbewusstsein (1917/18)*, Band XXXIII, ed. Rudolf Bernet and Dieter Lohmar (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), p. XIX.

⁵¹ Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 220-221.

⁵² Shaun Gallagher recognizes this difficulty in Husserl’s earlier account also (notwithstanding the fact that he does not satisfactorily present the changes that Husserl later makes to the account in response, nor Derrida’s position either); see Shaun Gallagher, *The Inordinance of Time* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 80.

⁵³ Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 226 (my emphasis). See also *ibid.*, 20-27.

⁵⁴ Now in any given case, of course, this protentional consciousness is concretely determined or has to be understood as such, insofar as by holding out for what is to come of the selfsame conscious life, it is always given to anticipate, usually with a very high degree of definiteness, what it soon is to-be. In the case of surprise, the arising experi-

ence comes to fulfill the prior protentional consciousness more or less “discordantly,” as Husserl will say, or as we may want to say, fulfills it less “fully.” But so long as the new experience comes to pass at all—assuming that it does now come to pass for the streaming life at issue—then at the very least, it fulfills the prior protention in this basic or essential way, and thus gets given, again, as that life’s current experiencing, or is “there” for itself as such. It is for this reason that Husserl uses the term “general fulfillment” to refer to this phenomenon (see, e.g., Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 29).

⁵⁵ Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 25.

⁵⁶ Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 62 (my emphasis).

⁵⁷ Kortooms, specifically, uses the word “interwoven” to describe this mediation; Toine Kortooms, *Phenomenology of Time; Edmund Husserl’s analysis of time-consciousness* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 163 (my emphasis).

⁵⁸ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 68. This is the kind of structure, no doubt, that motivates Derrida’s frequent discussions of “mirroring” and “speculation.” For a work dedicated to these notions in the work of Derrida, see Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

⁵⁹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 68.

⁶⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 280.

⁶¹ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 285.

⁶² Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 17-18.

⁶³ Kortooms, *Phenomenology of Time*, 179.

⁶⁴ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 189. By “prominence,” Husserl means a unity in sensing; but by “affective,” Husserl means that, as sensory “stimulus,” it becomes part of my consciousness of things.

⁶⁵ Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 181.

⁶⁶ Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 184-185.

⁶⁷ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 183.

⁶⁸ See e.g., Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 199.

⁶⁹ See e.g., Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 200.

⁷⁰ In one of his earlier works, in fact, Zahavi comments on Husserl’s evocation of this “two-sidedness,” writing, specifically, that “the self-aware experience possesses both an egoic and a non-egoic dimension.” Zahavi goes so far as to call this an “inner fracture,” (Dan Zahavi, “Self-awareness and Affection,” in *Alterity and Facticity*, ed. Natalie Depraz and Dan Zahavi (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 220), and thus, claims that a sort of “reflexive scissiparity exists already in nuce” (*ibid.*, 221) in the self-temporalization of consciousness. Yet Zahavi does not connect this theme to that of the unconscious, or perhaps put better, of a non-conscious layer of experiencing, despite his claim that “inner time-consciousness presupposes a hyletic content, an affection by something not generated by consciousness.” Or if there is a notion of non-consciousness here, it seems impossible to square with Zahavi’s acceptance of the Husserlian position in HUA X, namely, that self-awareness is inherent in every experience, and not brought to it from without.

⁷¹ I make this claim in the broadest sense possible (which means leaving aside Freud's biologicistic claims, surely, along with some of his more peculiar psychosexual theories). See, in this regard, Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow... A Dialogue*, trans. Jeff Fort (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 171-172.

⁷² Edmund Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Syntheses; lectures on transcendental logic*, ed. and trans. Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishing, 2001), 364.

⁷³ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 112.

⁷⁴ See, e.g., Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 18.

⁷⁵ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 68.

⁷⁶ Dan Zahavi, *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity: a response to the linguistic-pragmatic critique*, trans. Elizabeth A. Behnke (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 84.

⁷⁷ Zahavi, *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity*, 84 (emphasis altered).

⁷⁸ Zahavi, *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity*, 84.

⁷⁹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 205.

⁸⁰ See, for example *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity*, 16-24, and 79-84.

⁸¹ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 185.

⁸² See, e.g., Husserl, *Crisis*, 17.

⁸³ See, for example, Donn Welton, *The Other Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 313-317.

⁸⁴ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 17.

⁸⁵ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 19.

⁸⁶ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 18.

⁸⁷ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 17.

⁸⁸ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 18.

⁸⁹ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 18.

⁹⁰ Husserl, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 17-18.

⁹¹ See, for just one example, Derrida, *Rogues*, 118-140; also, fn #110 below.

⁹² Edmund Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie: Analysen des Unbewusstseins und der Instinkte. Metaphysik. Späte Ethik (Texte aus dem Nachlass 1908-1937)*, ed. Rochus Sowa and Thomas Vongehr (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 383 (my emphasis).

⁹³ See, for instance, Edmund Husserl, E III 1, p. 7, F I 22, pp. 35-36, F I 24 p. 41b (unpublished manuscripts), and James G. Hart, "I, We, and God: Ingredients of Husserl's Theory of Community" in *Phaenomenologica Vol. 115: Husserl-Ausgabe und Husserl-Forschung*, ed. Samuel Ijsseling (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 125-149, at 126.

⁹⁴ See, e.g., Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 354-356.

⁹⁵ E.g., Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 356.

⁹⁶ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 356.

⁹⁷ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie* 356.

⁹⁸ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 354; see also 377.

⁹⁹ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 354; see also 297. Interestingly enough, Husserl comes to conclude that there are two senses of "empathy," one of which seems

to be equivalent to his notion of the other's summon or "I-call," and so apparently, which is a kind of affection that is not constituted by the conscious subject itself (see, e.g., 468). He does not seem to work out the relationship between these two senses of empathy in any detail, however.

¹⁰⁰ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 354.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Anthony J. Steinbock, *Limit-Phenomena and Phenomenology in Husserl* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 130.

¹⁰² Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 76-77.

¹⁰³ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 384.

¹⁰⁴ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 268.

¹⁰⁵ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 384.

¹⁰⁶ E.g., Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 384.

¹⁰⁷ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 384.

¹⁰⁸ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 354.

¹⁰⁹ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 386 (my emphasis).

¹¹⁰ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 385.

¹¹¹ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 385.

¹¹² Derrida, *Rogues*, 127. Here, Derrida is speaking, specifically, of theoretical reason; yet as the passage in *Husserl, Grenzprobleme* which I have been quoting, among others, makes clear – and which Derrida notes in the section of *Rogues* at issue) – theoretical projects are, for Husserl, commitments taken up as part of one's ethical vocation, and, especially so far as the sciences are concerned, are unthinkable outside of a certain ethical orientation.

¹¹³ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 408.

¹¹⁴ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 377.

¹¹⁵ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 352.

¹¹⁶ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 378.

¹¹⁷ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 203 (emphasis mine). We should note that *selig*, "holy," can also be translated as "saved."

¹¹⁸ Steinbock, *Limit-phenomena*, 140.

¹¹⁹ Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 242.

¹²⁰ For example: "Abraham... sees that God gives back to him, in the instant of absolute renunciation, the very thing that he had already, in the same instant, decided to sacrifice. It is given back to him because he renounced calculation. Demystifiers of this superior or sovereign calculation that consists in no more calculating might say that he played his cards well." Derrida, *Gift of Death*, 96-97.

¹²¹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 68-69.

¹²² What this implies is that, through "empathy" or "intersubjectively," the other person is always *given* as the other of the same; we form a totality, a "my people," etc., so that the given other is thereby one to whom I owe this or that *concretely*; or else, the other is given as being on or beyond the margins of this totality (which can always mean, someone I owe nothing). But before the ego can direct itself to its others in this way, and as condition of its very self-presence, the other is "given," or perhaps better revealed, as *purely* other – and without there being yet, or any longer, some common horizon given to bind "us," in accordance with which the one made subject can re-

spond (which is perhaps precisely what always has to be discovered, instituted, and “justified” thereby).

¹²³ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 152.

¹²⁴ Jacques Derrida and Richard Beardsworth, “Nietzsche and the Machine,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 7 (1994): 38.

¹²⁵ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 70.

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