Phenomenology and Imagination in Husserl and Heidegger

Of all movements and schools of thought in twentieth-century European philosophy, it is undoubtedly phenomenology that has proved the most pervasive and influential. Following its founding by Edmund Husserl at the end of the nineteenth century, this seminal school of thought was profoundly reformed through the work of Husserl’s young assistant, Martin Heidegger. Heidegger sought to transform his teacher’s idea of phenomenology as a rigorous science of immediate experience into an analysis of historical human existence. Within this reformulation, the efforts of phenomenology become directed towards art as the pre-eminent sphere of human understanding.

In order to account for this development of phenomenology, this book focuses on the theme of the imagination and attempts to show that it is this power of the mind, rather than any strictly intellectual power, that stands at the centre of both Husserl’s and Heidegger’s account of human experience. Following this basic claim, Husserl’s notion of consciousness as ‘intentional’ is extensively interpreted in light of his writings on imagination which remained largely published decades after his death in 1938.

Explicitly identifying the imagination as the fundamental power of human understanding in the context of his Kant interpretation in the late 1920s, Heidegger subsequently adopts an explicitly political register within his theory of imagination in line with the mythological constructions of German National Socialism. Brian Elliott suggests that, despite such erring, Heidegger succeeded in pointing the way towards an appreciation of artworks that makes the legacy of phenomenology one of abiding contemporary interest. Beyond this, he also locates phenomenology within the broader context of a philosophical world dominated by Kantian thought, arguing that the positioning of Husserl within the Kantian landscape is essential to an adequate understanding of phenomenology both as a historical event and as a legacy for present and future philosophy.

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Brian Elliott
To the memory of my grandparents, Corella and James Elliott

Dark men in mien and movement, flashing in their mocking mirrors the obscure soul of the world, a darkness shining in brightness which brightness could not comprehend.

James Joyce
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Abbreviations

Husserl

Hua
Husserliana (collected works) edited under the auspices of
the Husserl-Archive in Leuven, Belgium (dir. R.Bernet)
(1950 ff.)

LU
Logische Untersuchungen (1900/1)

Ideen
Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und
phänomenologischen Philosophie (bks. 1–3:1913/52)

VPZ
Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren
Zeitbewußtseins (1905/28)

EU
Erfahrung und Urteil (1925/38)

Heidegger

GA
Gesamtausgabe (complete works) under the general
editorship of Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (1976 ff.)

SZ/BT
Sein und Zeit (1927)

KPM
Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik (1929)

H
Holzwege (1935/50)

IM
Einführung in die Metaphysik (1935/53)

Kant

KRV
Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Critique of Pure Reason)

Note
Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the German are my own. The pagination
of English translations is given only where this is not already indicated in the translations.
Significant divergences from published translations are highlighted in the appended
notes.
Introduction

The immediate theme of the following analyses will be the position and characterization given to the imagination in the phenomenological philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger. The aim of the investigation is to show the sense of phenomenology in light of the treatment of imagination by each thinker. In the first part, detailed consideration will reveal that Husserl’s concept of imagination and the role it is accorded within the ‘economy’ of conscious life is far from univocal. In order to account for this equivocal sense of the imagination Husserl’s thought will be grasped as a sustained attempt to break down the concept/intuition dichotomy that underpins Kantian epistemology. Accordingly, the supposition underlying the approach adopted here is that Husserl’s sense of phenomenology, although certainly not assimilable to contemporary neo-Kantianism, is articulated within a broadly conceived Kantian conceptual terrain. In this way discussion of the role of imagination in phenomenology can be entered into within recognized parameters, something that is of the first importance when dealing with a notion as protean as the imagination.

Approaching Husserl’s project of phenomenology as a negotiation with Kantian epistemology also allows for a fluid transition to Heidegger and the significance of the imagination within the phenomenological phase of his thinking. For it is in fact with Heidegger that the Kantian transcendental or productive imagination is explicitly acknowledged as the ‘ontologically basic faculty’. While a principal problem confronting the analysis of Husserl resides in the fact that he says comparatively little that allows for situating his sense of phenomenology within a broader philosophical context, the opposite problem faces any interpretation of Heidegger. In his lectures and writings on Kant after the publication of his magnum opus, Being and Time, in 1927 Heidegger integrates his philosophy of existence into the Kantian landscape to such an extent that one is often liable to lose sight of the basic strategy of alienation employed. In order to grasp, therefore, the fundamental ideas that Heidegger brings to bear in his interpretation of Kant, his own sense of phenomenology is clarified through consideration of his earliest lecture courses from 1920 to 1924. The texts of these lecture series, many of which have been published in German for the first time within the last ten years, reveal in detail how Heidegger at once appropriated and fundamentally transformed Husserl’s idea of phenomenology.

The most conspicuous aspect of Heidegger’s opposition to the Husserlian sense of phenomenology is his anti-rationalism. Heidegger rejects neither the intuitionism nor the dynamic dualism of authenticity/inauthenticity central to Husserl’s project. In fact, it is not so much anything relating to the detailed analyses offered by Husserl that Heidegger contests, but rather the broader context in which Husserl places phenomenology within his self-interpretation. According to this interpretation phenomenology is scientific, rationalist, idealist and humanist. Though Heidegger often insists on the Kantian notion of recognizing essential limits to human understanding in an apparent opposition to German Idealism, his elevation of the imagination above reason in his reading of Kant
follows the well-established pattern of idealist critiques of Kant in Schelling, Fichte, Hegel and Schiller. The motif of the limit in Heidegger signifies not the confines of knowledge but rather the finitude or mortality of concrete human existence. It will be shown how Heidegger relates the imagination first to time and then more concretely to ‘lived time’ in the sense of the finitude of human existence.

In the wake of his comprehensive appropriation of Kant Heidegger’s efforts to complete the envisioned whole of the project announced in *Being and Time* lead to an abandonment of the transcendental standpoint that at once announces a definitive departure from phenomenology in any genuine sense. With this move Heidegger aligns his thinking with art and poetry rather than the scientific paradigm urged by Husserl. Paradoxically, however, this approach to philosophical poetics is accompanied by the silent retreat of the imagination in Heidegger’s thought. The few cursory remarks made by Heidegger in his lectures on the artwork from the mid-1930s dismiss the notion of the imagination as irrelevant to the aesthetic ontology he has embarked upon. Contrary to this combination of silence and dismissal of imagination, consideration of his overtly political writings shows that in fact the imagination remains central to Heidegger’s thought after the ‘turn’ of 1930 but is transformed from the transcendental to what I call the ‘mythopoetic’ imagination.

In a concluding section it is shown to what extent, despite all manifest differences, the senses of phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger coincide, namely, insofar as both hold to a basic regulative idea of *unification* with respect to human experience. Such an idea prejudices their respective concepts of the imagination, such thatimaginative activity can be granted positive significance only insofar as it serves to integrate experience. For Husserl as for Heidegger, this imperative of unification is applied at the level of concrete individual consciousness and with respect to human community—for Husserl as ‘transcendental consciousness’ and the humanist project of collective enlightenment, for Heidegger at first as individual ‘conscience’ and then later as the mythic community of individual nations. Thus, the treatment of imagination in phenomenology is confronted with a final question that is political in nature: what is the basis of genuine human community? Heidegger’s transition from the transcendentally aesthetic to the empirically aesthetic consideration of imagination with respect to concrete historical artworks raises the question whether artworks can be effectively understood as operations of unification. What I call the ‘ab-sence’ of phenomenology is briefly worked out at the end of this study in connection with Foucault’s idea of ‘heterotopias’. The sense of phenomenology named there is deliberately left as a mere indication. Accordingly, the result of this enquiry must be considered largely negative in character insofar as it attempts to show the inadequacy or at best one-sidedness of the sense of phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger. The purpose of this negative clarification, however, is to indicate the extent to which the phenomenological project is not simply dead but how it might live on in a vital communication with its own ‘image’.
Part I
The sense of phenomenology
(Edmund Husserl, 1893–1925)
Intuition and expression in the early epistemology

1

Intention and intuition

The basic problem in Kant with which both Husserl and Heidegger are fundamentally concerned is the issue of an adequate articulation of the relationship between the transcendentally ideal and empirically real aspects of knowledge. In Husserl it is his extension of the concept of intuition in the *Logical Investigations* to include what he calls ‘categorial intuition’ that marks the decisive break with the letter of Kant’s philosophy. This move that lies at the heart of Husserl’s breakthrough to phenomenology appears to render otiose the basic function of what Kant calls the ‘transcendental imagination’ in bridging the divide between the conceptually ideal and the sensibly real. Having ‘deduced’ the *a priori* validity of the pure concepts of the understanding or categories (cf. KRV, A95 ff./B129 ff.), Kant is faced in the *Critique of Pure Reason* with the task of showing how such concepts are ‘realized’ in actual experience. In order to account for such ‘realization’ Kant posits a mental operation that he calls the ‘schematism’ of the transcendental imagination (op. cit., A137 ff./B176 ff.). However, this putative operation of productive imagination bears a troubling resemblance to Plato’s notion of methexis, that is, the ‘participation’ or inherence of intellectual forms within individual empirical objects.¹

Despite the Platonism apparent in Husserl’s strict distinction of empirical reality and logico-mathematical ideality,² his epistemological stance may be far more fairly described as Aristotelian. From the 1890s onwards Husserl’s central preoccupation in his ‘critique of knowledge’ (*Erkenntniskritik*) is to offer an adequate description of how ‘logical’ structure is adumbrated and predelineated at the most basic level of conscious life. Arguing as he does against a hypostasization of conscious acts in terms of a faculty psychology, Husserl is at pains to avoid any supposition of general ‘powers’ in his elucidation of the foundations of human knowledge. Accordingly, rather than running up against Kant’s pivotal problem of explaining how the radically heterogeneous impressions of the sensibility on the one hand and the concepts of the understanding on the other can be brought together, Husserl attempts to articulate a dynamic relationship between what he calls acts of signification or intention and acts of intuition or fulfilment. Each term of this relationship is intrinsically bound to the other. Consequently, any act of intention intends something and the ideal of that thing’s being given as ‘bodily present’ in intuition. Conversely, any act of intuition is the fulfilment of an intention that necessarily precedes it as an ‘empty intending’ of the object meant.
The intention/fulfilment dynamic articulates the basic insight underlying Husserl’s breakthrough to phenomenology. If as a consequence of this basic idea there no longer appears to be a need to identify a third term to unify the empirical and the conceptual, then, as indicated, anything like the Kantian transcendental imagination would be excluded from the sense of phenomenology from the very moment of its inception. It will be argued here that this is crucially not the case. It will be contended that, in fact, the imagination plays a pivotal role—in one case implicitly, in the other explicitly—within two areas of Husserlian phenomenology. First, at the most basic level of conscious life where the fundamental temporal synthesis is effected. Although Husserl goes to some length to distinguish the conscious processes that stretch lived time beyond the immediate present from any reproductive activity, the interpretation offered here will argue that the sense of intentionality worked out by Husserl requires that the repetitions of ‘retention’ and the projections of ‘protention’ be regarded as the workings of something essentially akin to the Kantian transcendental imagination. Second, Husserl himself expressly acknowledges the methodological role of the imagination or ‘free fantasy’ in phenomenological investigation. This role initially becomes explicit in the first volume of the Ideas (1913), where Husserl speaks of the primacy within phenomenological analysis of free fantasy over and against perception and goes so far as to claim that ‘“fiction” is the vital element of phenomenology, as of all eidetic sciences’.

The initial task of the present enquiry will be to show that this explicitly announced preference for imaginary presentations in phenomenological description is intrinsically linked on the one hand to the analysis of inner time consciousness and, more fundamentally, to the basic sense of the intentional worked out by Husserl before the publication of his Logical Investigations. According to this sense intentionality signifies that the meaningfulness of mental acts is essentially independent of the empirical existence of what is intended or signified by such acts. Thus intentionality as the ‘mark of the mental’ is essentially characterized by Husserl as independence from empirical reality. Clarifying the sense of the intentional arrived at by Husserl before the publication of the work that officially inaugurates phenomenology will offer initial indications as to the sense of phenomenology in Husserl. Accordingly, the enquiry begins with an examination of several short texts, some published, others unpublished, composed in the mid-1890s in the wake of Husserl’s first major publication, the Philosophy of Arithmetic (1891).

In a series of short writings from 1893 to 1898 Husserl steadily progressed in his working out of the underlying structures of mental life that came to be articulated in detail in his Logical Investigations (1900/1). In an article entitled ‘Psychological Studies for Elemental Logic’ and published in the Philosophische Monatshefte in 1894, Husserl focuses on a distinction between ‘authentic’ (‘proper’) and ‘inauthentic’ presentations (eigentliche und uneigentliche Vorstellungen). After an initial consideration of some contemporary philosophical psychologists such as Wundt and Meinong, Husserl characterizes all authentic presentations as intuitive:

Intuition is not a ‘presentation’ in that inauthentic sense of mere representation (Stellvertretung) by parts, images, signs and such like; nor in the sense of a mere determination by characteristic marks (Merkmale)—by means of which what is presented is in truth not at all
placed before us. Rather, it is a presentation in a more authentic sense that really places before us, so that it is itself the substrate of the psychic activity.

(Hua 22, p. 103)

This sense of the full intuitive givenness of what is intended by mental acts will come to assume pivotal significance in Husserl’s inauguration and working out of phenomenology. Though he will go on to speak of it in terms of a regulative ideal that in most cases remains a distant goal in actual mental life, this notion of intuition as ‘fulfilment’ remains the encompassing telos of intentional consciousness in all of Husserl’s phenomenological investigations.

It is notable, given this decisive significance of intuitive presentations in Husserlian phenomenology, that what directly follows the passage cited is an examination of imaginative presentations (Phantasievorstellungen). Such presentations, Husserl remarks, should also be considered a species of the authentic even though they share with sense perception the fate of being for the most part inadequate representations of the object meant. By ‘inadequacy’ Husserl means the necessarily one-sided or discontinuous givenness of something in perception or imagination. Generally speaking, I take all sides of an object to be potentially available for viewing, though I would seldom be sufficiently motivated to pursue the maximum actualization of this potentiality. Even if I were to survey an object successively from any number of perspectives there could only ever be one side or profile (Abschattung) of it given at any one time. In normal circumstances I do not have an unhindered view of things: I must reorientate myself or remove other things in order to reveal the object of interest. Beyond such spatial limitations to perceptual givenness there is an equally essential aspect of temporal discontinuity insofar as any one thing can be an object of attention for only a certain period of its existence, for example, for as long as I wish to use it.

However, though such a description may possess a rather obvious, indeed almost trivial validity with respect to sense perception, whether it holds in the case of imagination is questionable. Later phenomenologists, notably Sartre, have claimed that the intended objects of imaginative presentations lack any genuine spatiotemporal localization and that this invalidates in advance any talk of perspective or observation in imagination. If the lack of such characteristics is linked, as seems plausible, to the idea that any act of imagining takes place at one remove from bodily orientation, then perhaps notions such as elaboration or focusing in imagination could at best be granted metaphorical significance. However, such a move could only be justified if intuitive or ‘authentic’ presentations were restricted to sense perception. As we shall see, however, what is characteristic of Husserl’s approach is precisely the fact that he insists on the necessity of extending the idea of ‘perception’ to include non-sensory modes of intuitive givenness.

In Husserl’s early essay currently under consideration the imagination proves refractory to precise psychological characterization. If it is taken to include memory as well as pictorial presentation, the imagination is manifestly a type of inauthentic presentation in the sense of offering a representative (Repräsentant) for something not actually present. Husserl is unwilling, however, to deny that imaginative presentation contains any essential intuitive element whatever due to the fact that his primary concern
is with the intuitive content of conceptual presentation (begriffliches Vorstellen) (cf. op. cit., p. 104). Still very much in the shadow of his mathematical studies, he conceives of the imagination at this stage principally in terms of the act of illustrating or ‘constructing’ mathematical objects in the form of perceptible characters and figures (cf. op. cit., p. 107). Here we find Husserl engaged with the Kantian problematic of the relation of concepts and intuitions already alluded to, namely, how to realize general concepts in particular acts of direct apprehension. Thus Husserl remarks: ‘[…] this is, however, the meaning of all constructing: to posit as an intuition that which is only inauthentically thought and indeed only by means of conceptual determinations, and thus to “render evident” (veranschaulichen) the concept’ (ibid.). Such intuitive realization is not achieved, as Husserl underscores, by the mere inscription of arithmetical notation. Accordingly, the relation of the sign to the signified is essentially distinct from that of the image to what is imagined.

Despite this distinction of signification and imagination and the inclusion of ‘imaginative presentation’ within the category of the authentic and intuitive, Husserl continues to vacillate throughout this early article when it comes to assigning the imagination a definite place within mental life. Thus when he reaches the cardinal distinction of representation (Repräsentation) and intuition and characterizes the latter as a type of presentation whereby the intended object is truly contained in the act of presentation (cf. op. cit., p. 108), it would appear that imaginative and conceptual forms of presentation are grouped together as figurative, mediated and so inauthentic. It is noteworthy that Husserl is also at pains here to point out the degree to which his treatment is in harmony with Kant (cf. op. cit., p. 109), as this goes some way in explaining the uncertainty evinced by Husserl’s treatment of imaginative presentations. For, as will emerge at various stages in the present investigation, this wavering in relation to the imagination follows the pattern of Kant’s own failure to offer an unambiguous characterization of this basic mental ‘faculty’ within the broader context of his critical analysis of the basic sources of knowledge.

As stated, Husserl’s principal concern in the present context is with the intuitive realization of conceptual presentations. Presumably taking his cue from Kant’s famous saying that concepts without intuition are empty, Husserl labels the realization of conceptual consciousness ‘fulfilment’ (Erfüllung) (ibid.). Here Husserl’s tendency to grasp the relation of representation and intuition as something basically static in nature involves the danger of viewing this relation in terms of two distinct classes of objects rather than of mental acts, that is, in terms of the immanent objects of intuition on the one hand and the merely intended objects of representation on the other (cf. op. cit., p. 112). The characterization of intuition also lacks the breadth that this notion will come to enjoy by the time of the Logical Investigations. In restricting intuitive consciousness to what he calls ‘a particular concern with (Beschäftigung mit), a peculiar attention (eigentümliche Zuwendung) to a content which is noticed in its own right’ (op. cit., p. 114), Husserl expressly rules out the idea of intuitive co-givenness of an object’s environment. Only when the concept of intuition has been made more accommodating will Husserl be able to adequately account for the particular presence that characterizes the intuitive horizon. In subjecting the phenomenon of background or ‘horizonal’ presence to a detailed analysis below it will become apparent to what degree a key achievement of the imagination is thereby indicated.
In the closing section of his article Husserl attempts to clarify what for him is the significance of the representation/intuition distinction. Here he speaks of nothing less than astonishment in the face of the psychological function of representations: ‘In and for itself it is really quite remarkable that a psychic act can refer over and above its immanent content to something else which is in no way consciously given’ (op. cit., p. 120). A trace of what might be called the ‘fundamental experience’ motivating Husserl’s inauguration of phenomenological philosophy is present here, namely, a sense of the wonder of meaningfulness in the absence of what is actually meant. In the specific area of Husserl’s interest—scientific knowledge—it is our reliance upon mere intentions for the most part (upon knowledge by description) that strikes him so forcefully. Such a tendency towards the inauthentic is by no means a matter of chance. It is rather a key characteristic of human cognition—the mark of its limitations—that necessitates the recourse to representation, particularly in the domain of highly complex, abstract thought. Yet this necessity in turn refers back to a possibility that grounds any genuinely free pursuit of knowledge: ‘Scientific knowledge—one thinks of [such knowledge] in the first instance—rests absolutely on the possibility of resigning oneself to the greatest extent to a merely symbolic or otherwise highly inadequate mode of thought or to intentionally prefer it (with certain reservations) to a more adequate mode’ (op. cit., p. 121).

Thus, while intuition is identified as the ultimate goal of all mental life—as it is in Kant’s first Critique (cf. KRV, A19/B33) Husserl at once recognizes the necessity of inauthentic presentations. Later this recognized need for the inauthentic will be elaborated on when dealing with Husserl’s analysis of inner time-consciousness. For just as mental life is seen in the 1894 article as a core of actual, adequate intuition surrounded by inauthentic presentations, so too is the temporal flow of conscious life centred for Husserl on the absolute position of the ‘originary impression’. Similarly, Husserl’s indications relating to the peculiar role of the imagination in bridging the divide between absolute presence and absence in presentations show themselves to be at work again in his account of the ‘distention’ of time-consciousness outwards from its core of pure presence. For the time being, however, it is a matter of arriving at a further clarified sense of the basic dynamic of intentionality in the immediate pre-phenomenological period.

**Representation and fulfilment**

A further short unpublished writing dating from the same period as the article already considered (1893) takes up once again the conceptual pairings of intention and intuition, representation and fulfilment. Whereas the 1894 essay displayed a preoccupation with the problematic realization of conceptual thought, Husserl’s principal concern here is with the unity and continuity of mental life. Using the example of apprehending a continuously sounding melody that will feature centrally in his 1905 time lectures, Husserl begins with the following question:

> How is the presentation of the unity of a more extensively continuous process of change arrived at, of a unity that is effected and developed in succession, for example, the unity of a melody? Only quite small parts of temporal successions and extensions can be surveyed in one glance, in a
momentary intuition; and so only quite small parts of a melody can be intuited at any moment.

(Hua 22, p. 269)

Faced with this problem of continuity in presentation Husserl sees the necessity of distinguishing between a narrower and a broader sense of intuition. The criterion employed is that of time: intuition in the narrower sense pertains to momentary presentation; in its broader sense it refers to ‘the content of a unitarily enduring act of attention’ (op. cit., p. 273).

As with the overriding concern of the 1894 article to account for meaningfulness in the absence of any direct givenness of the thing meant (the dichotomy of significance and intuition), the central problem tackled in the 1893 text will also become a focus of Husserl’s later investigations. This problem is the following: If intuition is taken to make up only a relatively small part of conscious life how is the sense of continuity and integrity manifest in human experience actually achieved? As indicated, Husserl approaches this problem by considering intuition in relation to time. In allowing for a broader sense of intuition, what counts as direct givenness of something to consciousness is correspondingly extended. Yet such an extension undoubtedly leads to complications with respect to the crucial conceptual distinction of intuition and representation. If one considers the most readily accessible form of intuition, namely sense perception, it might seem at first glance that distinguishing direct apprehension from indirect representation is unproblematic. For as long as I actively attend to something it is intuited. But what is attention? For the most part I do not adopt an attitude of disinterested examination of perceptual objects: I cast an anxious eye over the table to see whether a certain book is there; I stretch out to switch on the desk-lamp; I glance at my watch. In each case there is no ‘resting’ with the object of attention but rather a transitory perception of it within the continuous flow of experience. Recognizing this manifest dynamism of perception, Husserl is obliged to extend his notion of intuition so as to be able to encompass not only the givenness of things in momentary attention but also the broader field of surrounding presence. Yet, in order to allow for this extension a third term mediating between the poles of pure intuition and mere intention must be introduced. This third term is nothing other than the imagination.

In the 1893 paper Husserl struggles, as was manifest in the text considered above, to assign the imagination any ‘proper place’. Thus, whereas the empirical thing as a manifold is merely intended and only the momentary act of apprehension is to be thought of as intuition proper, the characterization of imaginative presentation as mere intention proves problematic. As Husserl remarks: ‘Just so [as in the case of the intuited manifold] do things stand in the case of imaginative presentations, whose inauthenticity is more mediated insofar as they directly refer back to corresponding perception. All presentation rests, however, upon intuition’ (op. cit., p. 275). As the analysis develops, the motivation for recognizing a dual nature in imagination becomes more evident. The close relationship between time and intuition is grasped by Husserl, following the centrality of his examples taken from sense perception, in terms of spatial extension. Referring explicitly to William James’ notion of ‘fringes’ making up the perceptual horizon, Husserl notes that any content is given in intuition with a background (cf. op. cit., p. 278). As he will go on to say in later works, this background constitutes the perceptually co-
given as a field of potential acts of singular attention. But just as Kant insists in the first Critique that the temporal form of intuition can only be presented with recourse to spatial representation (cf. KRV, B154), Husserl’s initial binding of intuition and time appears to be in danger of succumbing to a ‘spatialization’. Such a tendency to represent time in terms of space brings with it a remarkable ‘elimination’ of time at the heart of Husserl’s notion of the authentic:

The process of intuition is a temporal process. Nevertheless the temporal moment plays thereby no role whatever. It is eliminated and comes, on the basis of the particular circumstances, in no manner to attention. In now this part, now that becoming clearly apparent to the momentarily given total intuition—resulting thereby in a corresponding alteration for the whole [intuition]—it occurs time and again that the old intuition with its privileged past returns. Thus, the stages of the process of intuition flow over cyclically into one another, yet without any fixed cycle, without any determinate order.

(Hua 22, p. 280)

This remarkable passage illustrates well a number of the key claims that will emerge explicitly in Husserl’s later phenomenological analyses of time consciousness. First, that the temporal dimension of experience is not directly accessible to perception itself but can only be accessed through reflection. Second, that any continuous act of intuition has a privileged moment within it whose ‘repetition’ preserves the vitality of the act as a whole. Lastly, that it is precisely this repetition of the intuitive core—Husserl will go on to call it the ‘primal impression’ (Urimpression)—that lends to the process of intuition its appearance of being non-temporal. However, if the broader sense of intuition for Husserl involves repetition does this not point to some kind of reproductive activity at the heart of immediate givenness and is not Husserl thereby opening a space for the imagination within intuition itself?

The cyclical return that characterizes the intuitional process according to Husserl indicates at once ‘the lived experience of recognition (Erlebnis des Wiedererkennens) in the overflowing of an intentional presentation into its intended intuition’ (op. cit., p. 281). This description of the unity of consciousness as brought about by recognition recalls Kant’s account of the ‘threelfold synthesis’ taken to underlie all possible knowledge in the A Edition of the first Critique. Significantly, Kant speaks here of ‘the apprehension of presentations as modifications of the mind in intuition, the reproduction of the same [presentations] in imagination and their recognition in the concept’ (KRV, A97). Whereas Kant restricts his notion of recognition to explicitly conceptual activity, however, Husserl’s notion indicates a mental process that goes on at the most basic, pre-conceptual level of experience, that is, in direct intuition. Indeed, by locating recognition (Wiedererkennen) within the very act of immediate intuition Husserl’s description refers to something essential foreign to Kant’s mental economy, namely to a pre-objective unity already effected at the level of sensibility. Thus, though the terms in which Husserl articulates the problem of intentionality indicate a basic affinity with the dominant neo-Kantianism of his day, the sense of this early analysis points towards what will later mark the decisive break from the horizon of Kant’s thought towards phenomenology proper,
namely, a concept experience as characterized *already at the level of ‘sensibility’* by an achievement of synthetic unity. In light of such a concept Kant’s postulation of a pre-synthetic manifold of sensible givenness must be placed outside the proper sphere of phenomenological analysis. The common starting point for Kant and Husserl is the recognition of intuition as the beginning and end of all knowledge. The crucial difference lies in the fact that for Husserl in contradistinction to Kant the raw data of sensibility already exhibit structure. Only if this is so can the radical problem of the objective validity of concepts be avoided, a problem which led Kant into what many commentators consider one of the least perspicuous sections of his first *Critique*, namely the doctrine of the ‘schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding’ (cf. KRV, A137/B176 ff.).

Husserl makes clear in his writing from 1893 that for him a group of intuitions hangs together thanks to a foregoing act that intends the group as a whole. In this way every presentation necessarily intends more than is intuitively given of the presented object at any one point in time. Such intending is not reducible to expectation or anticipation insofar as I may have only the most vague idea of what will be given prior to the actual unfolding of the process in intuition. The crucial point here is that the intuitable whole is ‘pre-hended’ as such in the initial intention: the coin is intended with its non-given obverse, the painting as possessing perceptible details of brushwork, the colleague as having an accessible personal history. Husserl is at pains to distinguish the intending of intuitable structured wholes from conceptual unities. As pre-conceptual intuitive unity is at once pre-objective: ‘Objective unity is thus a unity by means of judgement, [that is,] not by means of mere intuition, but on the basis of intuition’ (Hua 22, p. 282). In confining his inquiries to the conditions of possible experience as objectively known, Kant was concerned solely with what Husserl calls here the ‘objective unity’ of conceptual presentations. Although Kant touched upon the *a priori* structures of sensibility in his transcendental analyses of space and time (cf. KRV, A19/B33 ff.), from the critical perspective the synthetic unity of experience is achieved solely by means of the spontaneous activity of combination on the part of the understanding. In this respect, Kant’s thought tends towards a Platonic position according to which structure is not inherent within but rather, through some ultimately obscure process, imposed upon what is immediately given in intuition. Over and against this position, Husserl evinces, as indicated above, a much closer affinity with the Aristotelian view that structure is from the first immanent within the immediate data of experience. This Husserlian doctrine of what we might call ‘the preinscription of conceptual order within the sensible manifold’ at once opens up a dimension of truth prior to that ascribed to judgements and traditionally privileged in western philosophy as the most genuine phenomenon of truth. For if intuition is an apprehension not merely of the raw data of experience but in each case of something *already* somehow articulated, then in every case an intuition is at once a ‘confirmation’ (*Bestätigung*) or ‘cancellation’ (*Durchstreichung*) of a foregoing intention. Thus the ‘sense’ of the given for Husserl is always informed by an intentional ‘pre-sense’. According to this basic idea Husserl can bring together his concern for the source of continuity in experience with his fundamental conceptual pairing of intention and intuition:

If an intuition of the thing enters in subsequently [to representation] then there follows an identification of what is ‘presented’ as confirmed in its
existence with the intuited thing. Thus we attain intuitive knowledge of existence; we grasp the ‘correspondence’ between ‘presentation’ and ‘thing’.

(Hua 22, p. 290)

Intuitive truth is accordingly a movement from the presentation of something intended as a structured whole to the direct self-presentation of that same thing. Such truth is always the fulfilment of an intention or ‘prehension’: The experience of transition from restraint to release, from unease to familiarity, from lack to fullness characterizes (as we saw above) the intuited as the intended’ (op. cit., p. 298). Here Husserl’s description of the basic experience of truth exhibits the sort of psychologistic tendency he came to firmly reject in the Logical Investigations. Nevertheless, it has the virtue of driving home the point that the phenomenon of truth in its immediacy is here grasped as nothing other than the actual appearance of something prefigured in intentional consciousness, as though something ardently desired were suddenly to realize itself.

**Intentional existence**

The two early writings of Husserl considered so far are united by a shared problem: *How does the mind meaningfully grasp something in its absence?* The basic contention informing the account given thus far is that the fundamental conceptual opposition of representation and intuition at work in Husserl’s thought in the mid-1890s is complicated by his equivocal characterization of imaginative presentations. Allied to the merely representative function of signs and symbols on the one hand, such presentations are, on the other hand, held to have an affinity with intuition as the ‘fulfilment’ of abstract thought in mathematics. In a longer paper from 1894 entitled ‘Intentional Objects’ Husserl attempts to resolve the tensions present in his account of the fundamental opposition between intentional and intuitive acts. Once again the discussion obviously arises out of Husserl’s immediate area of concern up to this time, namely mathematics and logic. And again the effort to maintain the independent ontological status of mathematical and logical objects and yet simultaneously uphold the empiricist primacy of direct intuition is in evidence.

The guiding question of ‘Intentional Objects’ concerns ‘the paradox of so-called objectless presentations’. The paper attempts accordingly to address the issue of how our mere ‘ideas’ gain some kind of purchase on a ‘corresponding reality’. Husserl is quick to dismiss what he considers a widespread and deep-rooted misconception in modern epistemology: ‘That every presentation relates to its object by means of a “mental image” (geistiges Abbild) we consider a theoretical fiction’ (op. cit., p. 305). This attack on the ‘picture theory’ (Bildertheorie) of consciousness is something of a constant in Husserl’s writings and crucially informs his thinking on the imagination. As shown below, Husserl later upholds a threefold distinction in this connection, namely that between signification, pictorial consciousness (Bildbewuβtsein) and imagination in its proper sense (Phantasie). Signification refers without resemblance; pictorial consciousness refers with resemblance (a picture resembles the original); imagination or fantasy is taken to be a form of intuitive givenness whereby the existence of what is intuited is held in
abeyance. At the time of ‘Intentional Objects’, however, Husserl has arrived at clarity only on the point that pictorial representation is not to be conflated with signification, whereas, as we shall see, his insights into a properly intuitive form of the imagination are only reached in the years immediately before and after publication of the Logical Investigations.

The rejection of the picture theory of consciousness involves two distinct claims: first, that pictures or images are not in every case the means of presenting something to ourselves; and second, that the problem of objectless presentations is not solved by positing images as the real objects of every presentation. The first claim arises out of Husserl’s concern to retain a space for pure abstract thought; the second is motivated by a desire to combat what is seen as a confusion of pre-reflexive and reflexive consciousness. On this latter point, Husserl recognizes that presentations do not normally have themselves as their objects, but are rather geared toward something to be given in immediate intuition. Just as the word on the page is apprehended only as a reference to something quite other than the visible marks on the paper, so too our presentations have the sense of ushering in the appearance of something entirely different in nature to the presentations themselves. Here we touch upon the basic character of intentional consciousness as this is understood by Husserl, namely its unmediated directedness towards the objects of experience. In this connection, Husserl’s use of the notions of immanence and transcendence is liable to confuse. For if it is in intuition that the object is ‘contained within’ the presentation as its immanent content, then it is the non-intuitive act that is properly characterized as transcendent, in the sense of its aiming at an object which it precisely does not contain within itself. Accordingly, Husserl claims that both signification and pictorial consciousness are characterized by such transcendence and adds that ‘this reference of the image beyond itself (dieses Über-sich-Hinausweisen des Bildes)—which first makes it an image and distinguishes it from the mere content that we grasp intuitively as it is—is a plus that must be considered as essential’ (op. cit., p. 306). Despite aligning the imagination with inauthentic presentation, Husserl here at once indicates a dynamic of transcendence that will be taken up as a clue for the present analysis of his idea of imaginative consciousness.

In addressing the paradox of ‘objectless presentations’ Husserl turns his attention to a distinction between objects with mere ‘intentional existence’ and those possessing ‘true existence’. Such a differentiation had been recently proposed and defended by Twardowski and, as Husserl notes, followed Brentano’s lead. On the basis of this distinction Twardowski attempts to overcome the paradox by claiming that although not every presentation relates to a truly existing object, there is in every case a presentation of something as intentionally existing. Though this aspect of Brentano’s thought came to have momentous significance for Husserl’s development of phenomenology, he goes to great lengths in the paper currently under consideration to reject Twardowski’s interpretation of the intentional. Husserl’s objections hinge, once again, on his understanding of immanence. If talk of the immanence of an object within an act or presentation is held to be legitimate only in the case of intuitive, authentic presentation, then all forms of non-intuitive or representative consciousness must be said to essentially lack all indwelling of what is meant. As Twardowski speaks of the intentional object precisely as immanent he is, in Husserl’s terms, ascribing the mark of authentic presentation to all acts of presentation. As we have seen, Husserl’s own concept of the
intentional act is quite opposed to such an interpretation: to ‘merely’ intend is precisely to present something in its absence, that is, to mean or aim at something with a view to its possible self-presentation. Thus the contrast between these two contending views on the nature of the intentional act and object could not be starker: for Twardowski the intentional object is given in the act, for Husserl it is that which the act must reach out to, as something yet to be realized in the form of genuine self-presence within the immanence of consciousness. According to Husserl, therefore, one can only speak of the immanence of the intentional object as intended in an improper sense. He goes on to offer an account of such improper talk of the immanent by identifying a basic confusion of the objectively ideal and the psychologically real. This putative confusion will later resurface in Husserl’s critique of logical psychologism in the first volume of the Logical Investigations, Prolegomena to Pure Logic (1900).

Yet the true significance of ‘Intentional Objects’ does not reside in Husserl’s negative critique of Twardowski, but instead in his positive appropriation of the notion of the intentional. Rather than marking a dichotomy that applies in the first instance to objects presented, the intentional existence vs. true existence distinction is viewed by Husserl in terms of modes of presentation. The truly existing object is given as such in intuition. But only what has been ‘merely intended’ in advance can thus give itself through acts of intuition. This proto-phenomenological solution to the problem of ‘objectless presentations’ thus involves a shift from a concern with the ontological status of the thing presented to the character of the acts of presentation. Such a transition from the what to the how of conscious life permits Husserl the following insight: any authentic experience of things in direct givenness can arise only on the basis of foregoing acts of articulated intentionality. Conscious life is certainly geared up for an encounter with ‘truly existing objects’, that is, to attaining a direct intuition of things; but such an encounter is in every case prepared by a determined act of prior meaning. To speak the language of transcendental philosophy, any ‘givens’ of intuition are subject to an a priori ‘pre-delineation’, just as the artist makes sketches of the subject in advance, or the architect prepares a plan of the building to be constructed.

If any intuitively given thing must be adumbrated in advance of its actual appearance as such to consciousness, then the opposition of the intentional and the truly existing as concepts distinguishing different types of objects cannot be upheld. Thus Husserl claims: ‘As the extension of the concept “intentional” also contains the real objects one can no longer speak of a division’ (op. cit., p. 315). If anything given intuitively is at once intended and yet not every case of intention finds itself realized in intuition, then the solution to the paradox must take account of the different values the term ‘object’ can have. Accordingly, Husserl concludes that all presentations present an object in the sense of intending or meaning something; and yet, conversely, not every representation corresponds to an object in the sense of a truly existing thing given in direct intuition. While being the universal telos of conscious life, intuition is not realized in every act of consciousness, and this with necessity.

In the remaining section of his paper Husserl attempts to apply and expand his concept of intentional objects within the fields of mathematics and logic. In moving from singular to general acts of presentation it should be clear, Husserl argues, that the validity of the latter does not rest upon a mere aggregation of singular presentations. If conceptual thinking were to operate on an inductive basis then its evident complexity would be
rendered inexplicable. We have seen how Husserl’s concept of intention allows for meaning in the absence of direct intuition of the intended object. If such intentionality is basic to consciousness then the foundation is at once furnished for an explanation of ‘higher level’ acts of cognition. The validity of conceptual thought rests accordingly upon the ‘indifference’ of meaningful acts of presentation to the concrete existence or reality of what such acts mean or aim at: the ‘sense of being’ for consciousness is not essentially that of empirical reality. This fundamental insight into the non-empirical source of meaning for intentional consciousness in turn grounds for Husserl the validity of logical and mathematical theory in its treatment of hypothetically existing objects: Thus one refrains from all judgement concerning the existence or non-existence of the related objects and extensions, provided the domain of hypothetical relations is not transgressed’ (op. cit., p. 322). The significance of this insight into the non-dependence of intentional meaning upon empirical reality is not restricted for Husserl to the question of the validity of generalized representation. Rather, the ‘inauthenticity’ is taken to extend to thought processes universally and essentially and thus not to be dismissed as some sort of corrigeable human weakness or shortcoming. Accordingly, all thought must trust itself to operate in the absence of its object:

This inauthenticity of thought (Diese Uneigentlichkeiten des Denkens)—this fact that we make countless judgements which we ‘basically’ do not mean; that there is representational judging (stellevertretendes Urteilen) just as there is representational presentation, the one being inseparable from the other—is a principal part of the ‘economy of thought’. Science as a human achievement of thought is incomprehensible without it.

(op. cit., p. 324)

It is significant for the consideration of imagination that in these early writings the ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ are terms applied by Husserl to a way or manner of relating to a unitary form of existence. This indicates that there is a basic assumption of a singular sense of being at work here. This ‘univocity of being’ is essentially connected to a refusal to view intentional objects as somehow different in kind from the objects of intuition. Could it not be maintained, however, that whereas concrete individuals are given in sensible intuition, ‘general objects’ are given in self-presence by some kind of imaginative presentations? More fundamentally, if the inauthentic for Husserl signifies meaningful presentation of something in its concrete absence, could there be any name more apt for it than that of imaginative presentation? Yet, once again, Husserl resists this line of argument that would recognize in the imagination the key to all inauthentic presentations, including those involved in conceptual thought. Returning to the example of geometry, he holds to his position that although imaginative presentations may act as a vehicle for geometrical thought (in ‘construction’), they are not to be confused with the unique achievement of such thought itself (cf. op. cit., pp. 326 ff.). To accept that the imagination could achieve direct givenness of the objects of general presentation would amount, in Husserl’s view, to positing a radical dichotomy between a world of perception and a world of the imagination. But objects, either singularly or collectively, are not to be confused with modes of presentation:
There is only one truth and one world, but manifold presentations, religious or mythical convictions, hypotheses, fictions. And the entire distinction leads back to the fact that we often speak, presumably for reasons of practical convenience, as though the judgements which we make were unconditional, whereas the logically correct expression would demand hypothetical propositions.

(op. cit., p. 329)

For Husserl it is only the purely theoretical sciences that truly attain to universal validity in their judgements. Such sciences reveal in rationally motivated intuition the fundamental organization of one world. Opposed to such scientific rationality, for Husserl the presentations of the imagination intend a manifold and in no way lead to a revelation of universal structures of a unitary reality. This determination constitutes what will emerge as the basic sense of imagination in Husserl’s phenomenology. Such a sense at once constitutes a limited or one-sided concept of imagination and indicates the limits of Husserl’s sense of phenomenology.

From Husserl’s perspective the question of the ‘objective relation’ of a presentation is ultimately connected to that of its truth. As will become apparent in the next section when considering the Logical Investigations, the phenomenological idea of truth grasps this phenomenon as nothing other than the event of an intended object’s appearing directly in intuition. However, this ‘realization’ of a presentation is the exception rather than the rule, so that it cannot be thought of as essential to the act of presentation as such. If intuition is thus excluded from the essence of presentation then meaning (Bedeutung) must constitute this essence: The meaning alone is the inner and essential determination of presentation, while the objective relation refers to certain relations of truth or judgement into which the intention is incorporated’ (op. cit., p. 336). If meaning constitutes the essential determination or ‘sense’ of presentation, then truth and objective relation obtain as a basic possibility of intentional acts that have such intrinsic meaning. Here it must be noted that what is called ‘meaning’ (Bedeutung) is understood as radically distinct from the intentional act as act (i.e. Meinung). Husserl identifies meaning (Bedeutung) with the ‘objective content’ (objektiver Gehalt) of the intentional act, so that he can assert: The relation to the object is in the case of every (subjective) presentation mediated by its content (Inhalt), i.e. its meaning’ (op. cit., pp. 337–8). The meaning (Bedeutung as intentio) as thus constitutive of a presentation’s objective content should be privileged, Husserl insists, over and against the domain (extentio) of objects presented. The key to this intensional and non-extensional analysis of presentations lies in the recognition of meaning as an ideal moment within the act of presentation that mediates between subjective mental activity and the objective world aimed at (cf. op. cit., p. 338).

In a second part of the analysis under consideration, written in 1898 and subsequently appended to the section from four years earlier, Husserl expands upon the idea of truth introduced at the end of the earlier part. In this later section Husserl appears to be dissatisfied with his earlier tendency to emphasize the separation of meaning in intention and givenness in intuition of the intended object, and so underscores the essential unity of meaning, object and truth. As noted above, whereas every presentation is taken by Husserl to intend something, not every intentional act finds fulfilment in direct intuition
of the intended thing. Husserl will constantly insist, however, both before and after the breakthrough to phenomenology, on the ideal relationship that essentially holds between an intention and its corresponding intuition. Accordingly, every intention for Husserl wants, so to speak, to undergo conversion into a corresponding intuition, that is, every presentation aims at self-presentation of the thing meant. From this ideal unity of intention and intuition, meaning and givenness, it follows that ‘one can say in a certain sense: the object is nothing “outside of” the truth that belongs to it and the truth nothing “outside of” the object that belongs to it’ (op. cit., p. 339). But this essential relation of being and truth combines radically different things: Truth is something ideal, something super-temporal (ein Überzeitliches), whereas the object can certainly be something real’ (op. cit., p. 340). Despite this apparent heterogeneity Husserl insists on an underlying affinity of meaning and object by pointing to the ‘ideal unity’ of the object itself as at once the ‘intentional point of unity for subjective acts’ and as the bearer of ‘an infinity of true propositions’ (op. cit., pp. 341–2).

It is notable that as Husserl enters more deeply into the understanding of truth that will come to assume such a pivotal role within investigation six of the Logical Investigations, his emphasis shifts from objective truth and its ideal status to the lived experience of truth or what he calls ‘evidence’ (cf. op. cit., pp. 344–5). The ‘ideal relation’ of meaning and object is thereby revealed to be the theoretical articulation of the more fundamental, pre-theoretical experience of the ‘realization’ or fulfilment of the intention through the intuitive givenness of the intended. Only through reflection upon such an experience can we arrive at a theoretical or philosophical expression of the phenomenon of truth. Such reflection requires in turn a representation (Vergegenwärtigung) of the experience:

In order to clarify what it signifies for a meaning (Bedeutung) to mean this or that thing, a proposition (Aussage) to relate to a state of affairs, a name to name something, and, more generally, for a presentation (Vorstellung) to present an object, we can do nothing other than form (bilden) for ourselves an intuition of a fulfilment. We represent (vergegenwärtigen) to ourselves an evident proposition and experience its evidence or an evident nominal fulfilment, as when we say, for example, ‘red’ and at once intuit (anschauen) this red.

(op. cit., p. 345)

If Husserl has explicitly ruled out a role for imaginative presentations with respect to the basic relationship between meaning and object, he would appear to be rehabilitating it here in the field of ‘descriptive psychology’. The methodological role of the imagination in phenomenological ‘eidetic seeing’ is the primary task explicitly assigned to this ‘mental power’ in Husserl’s mature phenomenology. Following the indications of the early writings considered, however, Husserl’s pre-phenomenological thought suggests two further possible functions of the imagination in relation to the very sense of the intentional and to the constitution of time-consciousness. At this point in the development in Husserl’s thought these connections remain obscure. Accordingly, the indications gleaned do not allow the formulation of a definite position but rather suggest two basic questions. First, if the intentional act is an articulated presentation of something in its absence, how is this basic achievement of mental life to be further characterized? Second,
what is it that produces and maintains the unity of the temporal flow of ‘impressions’ prior to all acts of reflection that ‘objectify’ lived time?

The preconception that guided this initial analysis of Husserl’s early writings on intentionality was that imagination holds the key to explaining both the basic sense of consciousness as intentional and to identifying the source of time-consciousness. It must be noted, however, that this preconception is employed here as a hypothesis and not as some general conclusion. The validity or otherwise of the hypothesis is what must be tested in what follows. Equally, it would be a fruitless task to attempt a ‘blind’ reading of Husserl; such an analysis could at best offer a sophisticated paraphrase of Husserl’s position. Again, it cannot be a question here of merely identifying certain key phenomena and linking them in some way to imaginary activity. Rather, the task at hand is to show how Husserl’s own articulation of phenomenological thought points in itself to the centrality of the imagination. Beyond that, the present investigation consciously contests Husserl’s tendency to insist on the radical novelty of phenomenology as a way of thought. Without in any manner wishing to deny the genuine insights and progressive aspects of Husserlian phenomenology, recognizing the place of imagination within phenomenological philosophy at once offers the possibility of identifying its inherent limits. Such limits are manifested both in terms of inherited figures of thought (most notably Kantian) that remain at work within phenomenology and with respect to the ‘infinite task’ of future thought projected by Husserl in the name of his own philosophical project. Assessing the life and death of philosophical figures and movements undoubtedly requires interpretation that is scrupulous with respect to detailed analysis. But it equally requires the acknowledgement that philosophy does not in any real sense make history, but rather that history makes philosophy into something relevant and so ‘living’. In this sense, the current investigation is at once engaged in an effort to dispel responsibly certain ghosts of philosophical history rather than to insist that the body of phenomenological thinking either has long since decayed or currently enjoys a state of unimpaired animation.
The extended sense of intuition in the *Logical Investigations*

The sense of phenomenological epistemology as transcendental aesthetics

The *Logical Investigations* was the culmination of a decade of sustained work on the origins of knowledge. It also marked according to Husserl himself the ‘breakthrough to phenomenology’. The initial volume of the *Investigations* (LU), *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, offers a closely argued rejection of any position that attempts to derive logical laws from empirical-psychological generalizations and stands in a relation of relative independence from the six investigations themselves. The organization of the *Investigations* proper is ordered according to a movement from what has been outlined above as the inauthentic presentations of signification to the authenticity of adequate intuitive givenness. For present purposes consideration will be focused upon the last two investigations, dealing respectively with the concept of ‘the intentional lived experience and its “content”’ and ‘the phenomenological clarification of knowledge’. Ostensibly epistemological enquiries, investigations five and six of LU make evident that the breakthrough to phenomenology is at once an attempt to give a fundamental characterization both of what it means to say that something is an object of consciousness and conversely what the basic character of consciousness’ relation to things is.

Through the concrete analyses of LU Husserl inaugurates phenomenology not so much as the ‘science of science’ announced in the *Prolegomena* but rather as a type of ‘restricted ontology’, that is, an elucidation of things insofar as they are ‘of’ or ‘for’ consciousness. Such ‘being for consciousness’ constitutes things in their appearance, that is, insofar as they give themselves to consciousness as phenomena. In accord with a Kantian understanding of the phenomenal, things as given to consciousness are by no means to be referred to a reality beyond or behind them but are taken in the phenomenological attitude to be exhaustively describable as ‘givens’ of consciousness. Such a view can only defend itself against the charge of radical subjectivism and relativism if appearance is understood to signify not some kind of inner presentation or impression of the mind, but rather the event of something quite other than consciousness presenting itself in some manner to consciousness. This relation of radical alterity between consciousness and what it is in the first instance conscious of is the basic mark of the intentional, a relation whose miraculous nature Husserl often remarks upon.
What is most striking about the Husserlian ‘epistemology’ of LU is that it removes the basis for posing that most central problem of modern epistemology since Descartes, namely, whether the human mind may have any certainty that its presentations actually correspond to ‘external reality’. External reality is generally taken as meaning what is apprehended in sense perception, so that the question becomes: do the objects of perception exist in the manner in which we perceive them? Those modern philosophers not espousing a form of thoroughgoing scepticism tend to resolve this problem by playing one set of presentations off against another, typically the precision of scientific analysis against the vagueness of everyday observations. Yet such a move does little more than repeat the Platonic gesture of granting epistemological primacy to mathematical knowledge, though generally without postulating separate realms of mathematical and sensible entities. In opposition to traditional epistemology, Husserl’s phenomenology is motivated by the effort to find at the most basic level of conscious life the ‘acts’ or ‘lived experiences’ (Erlebnisse) that make possible the exact figuration of the perceived world in logic and mathematics. Phenomenological philosophy thus runs directly counter to the tendency of much modern epistemology. Rather than offering a static account of higher-level conceptualization and its primacy over ‘confused’ lower-level apprehension, it attempts to discover ‘before’ perception itself the ‘achievements’ of consciousness that essentially prefigure sensible given-ness. It is accordingly in the form of such a ‘transcendental aesthetics’ that phenomenology can attempt to give an adequate account of the genesis of scientific conceptualization. Only if perceptual phenomena themselves are shown to possess an immanent structure or ‘sense’ can the explicit a priori and universal knowledge of logic and mathematics be rendered explicable. It is this eminently Kantian proposition, so I contend, that regulates generally Husserl’s elucidation of intentional consciousness in LU.

The sense of intentionality

Consideration of Husserl’s early writings has revealed a threefold structure of conscious life: act—content—object. According to Husserl, while the act is of an entirely different nature to that of content and object, these latter exceptionally coincide in the event of adequate intuitive givenness. Thus, the basic three-way distinction in fact indicates two manners in which the mental act relates to something: first in the mode of ‘mere intention’ (as ‘content’) and second as what is directly given in intuition (as ‘object’). Further, as the former manner is in every case achieved— whereas authenticity is seldom realized—it is essential to the mental act as such that it ‘have’ content. However, if every mental act has content this would not appear to rule out the possibility of such contents being merely gratuitous constructs or productions of the mind. Here the crucial point is reached. For to have content is not for Husserl to find an image of something literally present within the mind, it is rather for the act to refer to something quite other than itself and to the possibility that the referent be given in direct intuition. Accordingly, the opposition of content and object is not a distinction implying two quite distinct ontological regions, the psychologically immanent and the objectively transcendent. Instead, the having of content in intentional consciousness is at once having the object in its (intuitive) absence. So conceived the intentional act is nothing other than the initial
phase of the basic movement of consciousness outward, towards the immediate presence of the object intended. In a word, the ‘sense’ (directedness) of all intentional consciousness is the possibility of direct intuition of the intended.

In Investigation five where the essential structures of intentionality are to be elucidated this basic dynamic of consciousness is called ‘objectivation’. Early on in this Investigation Husserl makes clear that his observations take their methodological point of departure from the claim ‘that the concept of lived experience (Erlebnisbegriff) may be grasped purely phenomenologically, that is, in such a way that all relation to empirical-real existence remains excluded’ (LU II/l, pp. 347–8 [vol. 2, p. 82]). Here we find a characterization of what Husserl will later call the ‘phenomenological attitude’, that is, a manner of grasping experience that runs counter to the ‘natural attitude’ according to which all ‘reality’ is taken to simply obtain without an active engagement on the part of consciousness. Grasped phenomenologically, by contrast, reality is an ‘achievement’ of acts of conscious ‘constitution’. In order to gain access to constitutive consciousness, however, a freely performed mental operation that places empirical reality at one remove is necessary. Such distancing in no way signifies a negation of such reality but rather has the positive effect of rendering manifest the acts of ‘objectivation’ that characterize at the most basic level the relation of consciousness to its object. Husserl’s preliminary description of objectivation grasps it as an ‘animating apprehension of impressions’ (beseelende Auffassung der Empfindung) (op. cit., p. 351 [p. 84]). For Husserl, this animation of the ‘sensible manifold’ represents at once the most fundamental act of unification of conscious content by intentional consciousness (cf. op. cit., p. 350 [ibid.]).

Building on the insights gained in his earlier treatment of the distinction between the intentional object and the really existing object, Husserl makes clear in the present context that recognizing objectivation as the fundamental act of intentional consciousness in no way entails positing the real existence of what is intended. Accordingly he remarks: ‘And naturally such lived experience can obtain in consciousness with this its intention without the object existing at all or perhaps even being able to exist. The object is intended, that is, the intending of it is the lived experience; yet it is then merely intended and in truth nothing’ (op. cit., pp. 372–3 [pp. 98–9]). Such ‘indifference’ to empirically real existence characterizes for Husserl the entirety of lived experience, and thus holds even in the case of perceptual consciousness. Husserl’s position does not imply, however, that actual instances of sense perception leave open the possibility that what is actually perceived might in fact not exist. Rather, it points to the fact that something can only be given in sensible intuition thanks to foregoing acts that merely intend the thing as something-to-be-perceived. In terms of conscious acts it is this mere intention that constitutes the essence of perceptual consciousness. In other words, only for the object itself is its existence essential; for consciousness the empirical-real existence of its object is radically inessential. The objectivating apprehension or ‘apperception’ of the sensible impression (Empfindung) constitutes at once the essential transcendence of the intentional act. As Husserl notes: ‘Apperception is for us the supplement (Überschuß) which obtains in lived experience itself, in its descriptive content, as opposed to the raw existence of the impression. It is the act-character which animates so to speak and accounts for the fact that we perceive this or that objective reality’ (op. cit., p. 385 [p. 105]).

As in his earlier writings, Husserl underscores in Investigation five the necessity of rejecting the theoretical position which makes of all our presentations mere mental
representations or impressions that at best refer to non-mental objects on the basis of resemblance. The object as intended and as intuited does not mark a difference in kinds of objects, but rather in manners of intentionally relating to things. Thus it is basic to adopting the phenomenological attitude or position that one recognize ‘that the intentional object of the presentation is the same as the presentation’s real and, in given cases, external object; and that it is absurd to differentiate between them’ (op. cit., p. 425 [p. 127]). In a manner which conspicuously resembles Descartes’ assertion of the self-evident existence of the act of presentation over and against the object of presentation, Husserl avers: The object is something “merely intentional” does not of course mean that it exists, though only in the intentio (thus as its real (reell) component), or that there exists in it some shadow of the object. Rather it means that the intention, the “meaning” (Meinen) of such an object exists, but not the object’ (ibid.). Husserl accordingly formulates the distinction basic to a proper understanding of intentional consciousness in the following terse manner: The appearance of the thing (the lived experience) is not the appearing thing (that which seems to “stand over against” us in bodily selfhood)’ (op. cit., p. 350 [p. 83]). In accordance with the phenomenological attitude an object is to be considered only insofar as it gives itself to consciousness. Within this reduced field of inquiry Husserl asserts the ‘greatest certainty’ of phenomenology to be ‘that objectivity (Gegenstand-sein), phenomenologically speaking, resides in certain acts in which something appears and is thought as an object’ (op. cit., p. 362 [p. 93]). As noted above, Husserl’s generic title for the ‘act’ that constitutes the intentional being of the object is ‘objectivation’.

The account of the fifth Investigation given so far raises the following principal objection: what are the grounds for accepting Husserl’s phenomenological elucidation of experience, that is, what is the criterion of truth employed here? At first glance the answer would appear quite straightforward. Husserl’s analysis appeals to the data of ‘inner experience’ for its rational grounding. Accordingly, the criterion of truth in phenomenology would be the putative self-evidence of experience when reflected upon. Such a response to the question raised would suggest that something analogous to Cartesian method is being implicitly employed by Husserl. Despite the comparisons that Husserl himself makes with such a method, it would be a fundamental mistake to interpret Husserlian phenomenology in this way. The sense of phenomenology in Husserl in no way entails the claim that there can be valid truths about ‘external reality’ only on the basis of the indubitable certainty of the mind’s presentations for itself; nor does it consist in the task of offering a coherent account of the basic relation of the mental to the physical. It is rather an effort to arrive at a systematic conceptual articulation of how objects are given in experience. But does not this characterization expose phenomenology as a philosophical banality? Is not experience precisely that from which genuine philosophical investigation should begin and not its envisaged goal? An answer to this objection might echo St. Augustine’s famous dictum concerning the experience of time: ‘When no one asks me, I know what it is; if I wish to explain it to an enquirer, I do no know’ (Confessions, Bk. XI: 14, 17). Initial and unquestionable familiarity concerns the objects of experience, but not how experience itself takes place, that is, what it is in precise terms to experience something. But if the proper ‘object’ of phenomenological philosophy is nothing other than experience itself, there can be no question of somehow abstracting it from its objects. It is thus the manner of experience in its essential
transitivity or object-relatedness (‘intentionality’) that forms the general matter of concern for phenomenological enquiry. If the criterion of truth in phenomenology ultimately consists in something similar to Wittgenstein’s imperative to ‘look and see!’,
then the basic sense of phenomenology is to offer a method whereby one can ‘learn to see’.

In light of Husserl’s concept of experience a seeming paradox appears to remain at the heart of his phenomenological project. For by insisting ‘that the real being or non-being of the object is irrelevant for the proper essence of the perceptual lived experience’ (op. cit., p. 382 [p. 104]), is not that species of mental act which is held by Husserl to mark the indubitable self-presence of the intended object—intuition—denied this very function? How can the intentionality of consciousness be maintained when even intuition offers no guarantee of the reality of that to which consciousness in each and every case relates? However, we have seen how for Husserl the intentional character of lived experience does not denote a relation between factually existing mental acts and physical things. Intentionality in Husserl is rather the name for an ideal relation holding between acts of consciousness and their objects. The ideality of intentionality resides in the a priori universality of its status as the essential act of conscious life (i.e. as ‘intention’). That is, intentionality constitutes precisely what it is to be conscious and therefore not some kind of attribute qualifying a more basic underlying reality.

Despite Husserl’s efforts to sever any supposedly essential ties of lived experience to empirical reality he nevertheless holds to the Kantian thesis that intuition is the beginning and end of all genuine knowledge (cf. KRV, A19/B33). As noted, Kant’s efforts in the first Critique to account for the validity of pure concepts led him to identify what he calls the transcendental or productive imagination as the connecting medium of concepts and sensible impressions. Husserl’s position, by contrast, holds that conceptual thinking merely makes explicit structures that implicitly prefigure experience at its most basic level of sensible givenness. However, within the development of Husserl’s thought from the 1893/4 essays to LU a new element in his account of lived experience begins to emerge. The talk of objectivation as an ‘animating apprehension of impressions’ is liable to be misunderstood as an idea that a form is in some way imposed upon an originally formless manifold of sensible data. Such a misconception would align phenomenology too closely with German Idealism, including that of Kant. As opposed to this view, what is distinctive about Husserl’s phenomenology is the fact that it grasps conscious life not in terms of the granting of form to an inherently formless matter but rather as the revelation of immanent form. In a word, intentional consciousness is not what produces but rather what reveals the basic structures of the world as experienced. And it is here that the imagination returns—albeit in a form seemingly quite dissimilar to the Kantian transcendental imagination—to assume central significance within the phenomenological elucidation of the basic conditions for the possibility of knowledge.

Running parallel to the theme of objectivation in the fifth Investigation is that of perception or intuition. Perception, as Husserl remarks early on, is characterized by its presenting (gegenwärtigen) an object in its ‘bodily selfhood’ (leibhaftige Selbstheit) (op. cit., p. 355 [p. 86]). Husserl is quite unequivocal in his identification of perception as the source of all evidently true knowledge claims: ‘What is adequately perceived…constitutes the epistemologically primary and absolutely certain domain of that which, at the relevant moment, allows for the reduction of the phenomenal and
empirical ego to its purely phenomenologically graspable content (Gehalt)’ (op. cit. p. 357 [p. 88]). This somewhat tortuous expression indicates that the basis of all phenomenological analysis is nothing other than perception. At the same time, Husserl’s talk of reducing out the empirical in a movement towards the ‘purely phenomenological’ makes clear that the phenomenological way (method) is marked by a shift away from sensible intuition. When Husserl notes later that ‘for consciousness, what is given is in essence the same, whether the object presented exists or is imagined ( fingiert ) or even nonsensical ( widersinnig )’ (op. cit., p. 373 [p. 99]), then it should come as no surprise that the initial point of departure in phenomenological analysis favours imaginative as opposed to perceptual intuition.

What, in more precise terms, is the role of intuition as the point of departure for phenomenological analysis? Here Husserl’s original work on theoretical mathematics appears to exert influence in his later thought insofar as the initiating acts of intuition are thought of as exemplifications in the singular of general structures characteristic of mental life. Accordingly, just as the geometrical ‘construction’ in the form of a perceptible figure upon the blackboard or the working out of a mathematical proof through symbolic notation acts as an illustration to aid theoretical comprehension, so too is the concrete lived experience apprehended as an instance or token of a phenomenological genus or type. As Husserl remarks:

We grasp what is internally experienced or otherwise internally intuited (for example, in mere fantasy) with respect to its pure experiential existence ( Erlebnisbestand ) and as a merely exemplary substrate for ideation; we extract from it by ideational inspection general essences and essential connections.

(op. cit., p. 398 [p. 112])

The parenthetical allusion above to the use of imaginative presentations in arriving at intuition of the essential structures of conscious life becomes by the time of Husserl’s mature phenomenology as articulated in Ideas I nothing less than a leitmotif. This point is well illustrated by a remark appended to the second edition of the second volume of LU from the same year as the publication of the Ideas (1913). Here Husserl insists that the point of departure for ideation or the intuition of essences need not be some kind of ‘inner experience’ ( Erfahrung ) or perception, rather that ‘any inner fantasy, constructing in the freest of fictional modes, would serve just as well, provided it possesses sufficient intuitive clarity: indeed, it serves preferably’ (op. cit., p. 440 [p. 136]). In order to be able to account for the growing significance of imagination in Husserl after LU, however, a basic exposition and clarification of his phenomenological concepts of perception and imagination employed at the time of the breakthrough to phenomenology is necessary. For this I turn to the sixth Investigation where many of the decisive insights of Husserl’s phenomenology are articulated for the first time.
The being of the phenomena and the phenomenological concept of truth

The Aristotelian resonances of Husserl’s thought are not restricted to his ‘immanentalism’ with respect to the a priori structures of lived experience. Though I have ascribed to Husserl the claim that even at the most basic level of experience, namely that of the ‘sensible manifold’, such structures obtain, it was also pointed out that any such ‘sensible pre-structuring’ is in no way immediately explicit. If phenomenological elucidation of experience is a movement from the implicit to the explicit manifestation of structure, this marks at once a transition from the singular to the universal. As ever in phenomenology, there can be no suggestion of two separate worlds, one composed of concrete singularities the other of abstract generalities. Instead, the distinction turns on different modes of givenness of one and the same basic reality. But if this is so, in addition to different manners of intending the objects of experience there must be analogously differing ways of intuiting them. For this reason Husserl calls for ‘a thoroughly indispensable extension of the originally sensible concepts, intuition and perception, an extension which allows for talk of categorial and, more particularly, of general intuition’ (LU II/2, pp. 5–6 [vol. 2, p. 186]).

Although Husserl’s assertion of general intuition is undoubtedly problematic and runs counter to a principal thesis of all empiricist philosophy in extending the notion of perception beyond the apprehension of concrete individuals, Investigation six is initially troubled instead by the relation of the imagination to the extended sense of intuition. At first, Husserl’s affirmation of an affinity between acts of perception and imagination as opposed to acts of signification (i.e. the use of signs and symbols as means of reference) would appear well founded. Of the various relations to the intended object he remarks: ‘While sign and signified “have nothing to do with one another”, there obtain between adumbrations (Abschattungen)—whether they be of a perceptual or imaginative nature—and the thing itself inner connections (Zusammengehörigkeiten) contained in the sense of these words’ (op. cit., p. 59 [p. 222]). Although he insists here on ‘inner connections’ of act and object as common to perception and imagination, Husserl at once posits a certain inauthenticity of imaginative presentations not evinced by perceptual acts. Thus, whereas perception achieves a self-presentation of the intended object, imagination renders the object manifest only by means of pictorial resemblance. Accordingly he states:

As opposed to the imagination, perception is, as we are wont to express it, characterized by the appearance in it of the object ‘itself and not merely ‘in the image’ (im Bilde) […] Imagination fulfils itself by means of a peculiar synthesis of pictorial resemblance (Bildähnlichkeit), perception by means of the synthesis of objective identity: the object is confirmed through ‘itself in appearing from various sides and is thereby one and the same.

(op. cit., p. 56 [p. 220])
This opposition of imagination and perception leads Husserl, despite his insistence upon their essential affinity, to group imaginative presentations together with signitive acts, thereby indicating the inauthenticity of the former:

On the side of intentions there thus remain as the sole ultimate differences those between signitive intentions as intentions by contiguity, and imaginative intentions as such by analogy, each pure and simple in its type. On the side of fulfilsments there function as components partly intentions of the one and the other kind again. In certain circumstances, however (as in the case of perception) also such components which can no longer be called intentions, that is, those which only fulfil and no longer aim at fulfilment, self-presentations of the object meant by them in the strictest sense of the word.

(op. cit., p. 63 [p. 224])

Yet, for all his efforts to place the imagination on the side of the ‘mere thought’ of something as achieved in symbolic representation’ Husserl is drawn back to the affinity between imagination and perception. The reason for this would appear to be, once again, recognition on Husserl’s part of the indispensable methodological role played by the imagination in phenomenological analysis. This role hinges, as we have seen, on the initial separation from empirical reality granted by imaginative presentation. As Husserl will later make explicit: to imagine is to apprehend the concrete particular without positing its existence. In this way imagination constitutes what Husserl later calls the ‘neutralized modification’ of perceptual consciousness. Such neutralization is taken to represent a basic possibility of conscious life, one that can be freely realized in phenomenological reflection upon lived experience. Correspondingly, if the extension of the concept of intuition is carried out simultaneously to account for and make possible the goal of phenomenological research in terms of the direct grasping of the general structures of experience, then this extension must at once admit the inclusion of imagination as that mode of intuition with which phenomenological description is best initiated. Accordingly, Husserl states, when addressing the conceptual pairing of intention and fulfilling intuition, ‘by intuition is to be understood by no means mere outer intuition, the perception or imagination of outer, physical objectivities. “Inner” perception or imagination can also…function as fulfilling intuition’ (op. cit., p. 72 [p. 231]).

By means of these initial considerations of Husserl’s concept of intuition as articulated in Investigation six it becomes apparent that the prima facie appeal of extending intuitive consciousness to include a direct grasping of generalities in experience in no way allows us to dispense with all forms of mediation between concepts and intuitions. Despite asserting an ideal relation or essential connection between the two principal modes of intentional consciousness—signification and intuition—Husserl must still account for the ‘realization’ of the former in the latter. In attempting such an explanation he is once again inspired by the manner of thought with which he was most familiar, namely that of mathematical and logical inference. In such cases a chain of inferences leads to a culminating act of direct intuition. Correspondingly, Husserl posits the following principle: ‘Every mediate (mittelbar) intention requires a mediate fulfilment which
naturally ends, after a finite number of steps, in immediate intuition’ (op. cit., p. 71 [p. 230]). When he speaks in the following section of realization through ‘construction’, the mediation of imaginary presentation in geometrical thinking once again shows itself to be at work in Husserl’s descriptions.

The signs of influence from mathematical thinking should not, however, obscure the basic problem which motivates Husserl’s initial phenomenological inquiries in LU, a problem which addresses a broad field of phenomena wherein mathematics constitutes a mere subgroup. That problem, as stated at the beginning of Chapter 1 above, concerns the grounds for the meaningfulness of symbolic presentations. As I hope to have made apparent, the very idea of intentional consciousness arises in response to this problem. We have seen how Husserl attains his ‘thesis of intentionality’ through the insight that the meaningfulness of a presentation does not rest upon the empirical existence of the referent. Genuine referentiality of conscious acts is rather granted already at the level of the ‘mere thinking’ of something. Nevertheless, the act of intention is recognized as having an essential connection to a possible act of intuition whereby the intended object is given to consciousness in direct ‘self-presentation’.

Yet, just at the point where Husserl would appear to be guilty of manifest self-contradiction in falling back upon the necessity of the empirical existence of the referent to guarantee the meaningfulness of acts of intention or signification, he postulates an ideal correspondence of perception and imagination. Accordingly, the a priori connection of an intention to a realizing intuition relates indifferently to perceptual or imaginative fulfilment. Thus, it may be said that the bounds of intentional sense are determined by the measure of possible imaginings. Couching this in Kantian terms, Husserl is asserting that the limits of possible experience are the limits of our capacity to imagine.9 Along with phenomenology’s indifference to empirical reality, therefore, goes a primacy of the imaginary as opposed to the perceptual when accounting for the foundations of lived experience. As Husserl puts it:

> It is always the case that the proposition is ‘possible’ if the concrete act of propositional meaning (Bedeuten) permits the fulfilling identification with an objectively complete intuition of the same material. Equally, it is irrelevant whether this fulfilling intuition is a perception or a mere imaginative formation (Phantasiebildung) or something of the kind. (op. cit., p. 115 [p. 259])

The combination of an ideal correlation of perception and imagination on the one hand and the manifestly greater freedom of imaginative as opposed to perceptual presentation on the other, means that the domain of meaning spontaneously realizable in imagination constitutes at once the region of possible experience.10 This connection of freedom and possibility to the acts of imagination is something that characterizes Husserl’s phenomenology throughout the course of its development. As will be shown in the second part of the present inquiry, it is precisely this connection of imagination and freedom that is later taken up by Heidegger in his attempts to account for the underlying dynamic of human understanding. In broader terms, viewing the imagination as a function of human freedom not only makes evident its role in the attainment of knowledge but at once signalizes its presence within deliberation and choice. Thus, it is
not by chance that Kant thematizes the transcendental imagination not only in his archaeology of knowledge in the first *Critique* but also in the *Critique of Judgement* where the appreciation of the aesthetic height of sublimity is shown to reveal to us the dignity of free human rationality.\(^\text{11}\) For now, however, it is a question of searching in Husserl’s sixth Investigation for further clues for understanding the pivotal role of the imagination in characterizing his sense of phenomenology.

The object of the sixth Investigation is, as Husserl states, a clarification of the general relations that obtain between thought and intuition. It was noted above how Husserl’s treatment of the imagination wavers in aligning it at times with signification at other times with perception. Despite such vacillation the overall affinity of imaginative and perceptual presentations as modes of intuition emerges with sufficient clarity. However, the ideal correlation of these two basic types of intuitive consciousness should not obscure what Husserl takes to be their radical difference in kind. In mental life, he insists, we find a primitive distinction between acts of imagination and perception; even the most vivid of imaginings delivers the intentional object over to us in a manner quite different to that of the least distinct perception. Accordingly Husserl remarks:

\[
\text{Yet no matter how great the perfection of an imagining (\textit{eine Imagination}) there remains a difference in opposition to perception: the object itself is not given nor any of its parts, but only its image which, as long as it is an image, is never the thing itself. For we have this thanks to perception. (op. cit., p. 116 [p. 260])}
\]

Here we find another constant in Husserl’s thinking on intuition, namely, the claim that *perception and imagination are different in kind and not simply in degree*.\(^\text{12}\) Attempts made in empiricism to uphold the distinction on the basis of the greater ‘intensity’ of sensory impressions ignore what Husserl takes to be an evident truth of conscious life. To place imaginary and perceptual presentations on one continuous scale is at once to admit the possibility that an act of imagination might, given an unusually high level of ‘vivacity’, be mistaken for a perception. Conversely, a perception possessing little clarity and distinctness might lead us to doubt whether what we took ourselves to perceive was in fact a mere imagining of something. As ever, Husserl’s quarrel here is with any running together of the act of presentation and the presented object. To use his own example from Investigation five,\(^\text{13}\) in unusual circumstances I may initially take a dummy to be an actual person, before further experience reveals that I was mistaken. In such a case the object presented has in no way changed but rather the manner in which I apprehend it. In realizing my mistake I do not cast in doubt the fact that I had previously grasped the perceived object as a person. Instead, further perceptual revelation of the object ‘contradicts’ or ‘cancels out’ this interpretation and so motivates a re-identification of what is perceived as a lifeless dummy. Should I then say that what I took to be a perception of a person was really an imagining? To say this would be wrong because I was for the duration of the experience engaged in perceiving, an operation which eminently allows for the kind of re-identification in question. As Husserl puts it, a shift in the ‘quality’ of the intentional act has occurred while the intentional ‘material’ has remained identical:
The same material (Materie) is in the one case material for a perception and in the other case material for a mere perceptual fiction. Evidently, both cannot be combined at once. A perception can never be a fiction of what is perceived, a fiction never a perception of what is imagined (das Fingierte).

(LU II/1, p. 444 [pp. 138–9])

Husserl distinguishes conceptually between the two basic modes of intuitive consciousness by characterizing perception in terms of acts of ‘presentation’ (Gegenwärtigung) and imagination in terms of acts of ‘representation’ (Vergegenwärtigung). The standard translation of Vergegenwärtigung is the somewhat clumsy neologism ‘presentiation’. This rendering has the disadvantage of obscuring what is for Husserl the inauthentic character of imaginings that, as shown, reveal the intended object not in the manner of a self-presentation but as image. While such inauthenticity is indicated by speaking of imagination as ‘representative consciousness’, this should not be thought of in the phenomenological context in terms of a reproduction that imitates what has already been given in perception. The ‘re’ is to be grasped not in the sense of ‘presenting again’ but rather as an aiming at the intended object by projecting the intention towards or ‘against’ its imagined representative. Furthermore, such ‘inauthenticity’ does not preclude genuine givenness of the object itself. On Husserl’s view ‘bodily self-givenness’ (leibhaftige Selbstgegebenheit) is ruled out in the case of imaginative presentations, but not givenness of the intended object in the form of its present representative.

Within the phenomenological elucidation of the general relations between thought and intuition in Investigation six is to be found the idea that the complexity of conceptual thought must be realizable in corresponding acts of intuitive fulfilment. As noted, the chief novelty of Husserl’s approach to this issue resides in an extension of the concept of intuition to include the apprehension of generalities by what he terms ‘categorial intuition’. Since Plato the categories have been a central part of any philosophy with idealist sympathies, most notably in the thought of Aristotle and Kant. I have already alluded to the latter’s doctrine of the imaginative ‘realization’ of the categories of pure understanding, something that will be examined in detail below. A crucial section of the sixth Investigation (§ 45) is entitled: ‘Extension of the concept of intuition, in particular of the concepts of perception and imagination. Sensible and categorial intuition’ (cf. LU II/2, pp. 142 ff. [pp. 280 ff.]). In its immediate context the proposed extension is motivated by Husserl’s response to the question: ‘Do there correspond to all parts and forms of meaning (Bedeutung) also parts and forms of perception?’ (op. cit., p. 129 [p. 272]). The one-to-one correspondence between reference to empirical individuals or facts and possible acts of concrete perception is unproblematic. But what of mathematical and logical propositions referring to numbers, geometrical forms and quantifiers? Husserl’s contention is that one must grant intuitive fulfilment as an a priori possibility for the entire domain of intentional acts. Thus, whatever can be thought can also, according to ‘ideal necessity’, be intuited. Accordingly, with reference to Husserl’s own illustrative example, the perception of a piece of white paper is at once an immediate apprehension of the paper’s being white. Such a state of affairs would be correctly expressed by the proposition: ‘this paper is white’. In this statement the ‘is’ certainly possesses meaning
over and above that of the other words and yet such meaning obviously does not allow for realization in sensible intuition. Once again, as in his description of the intentional apprehension or ‘animation’ of sensible impressions, Husserl speaks here of an essential ‘surplus (Überschuß)’ of meaning (Bedeutung), a form which finds nothing in the appearance itself wherein in might be confirmed’ (op. cit., p. 131 [p. 273]).

The ‘transcendence of being’ here identified does not in any sense denote some form of reality beyond all possible experience. Rather, the excess stands for the movement of intentional consciousness itself towards the object intended. As previously noted, the ‘being’ of the intentional object, its objectivity (Gegenstand-sein) as something existing for consciousness, is constituted by the very act of intention itself. Explicitly evoking the spirit of Kant and his dictum that ‘being is not a real predicate’ Husserl remarks:

Being is nothing in the object, no part of it, no immanent aspect. It is not quality or intensity; neither is it a shape (Figur), nor any inner form whatever, nor a characteristic feature however it is grasped. Being is, however, also nothing pertaining to an object (an einem Gegenstande): it is nothing like any real inner or outer characterizing feature (Merkmal) and therefore not a ‘feature’ in any real sense.

(op. cit., p. 137 [p. 277])

Being is not a real predicate for Husserl because the sole phenomenological sense of being is that of the ideal relation of intentional consciousness to its object. Following Husserl’s basic division of lived experience into acts of intending and of intuition, there arises a corresponding twofold sense of being: being in the broader sense of consciousness’ intentional relation to something and in the stricter sense of the intended object being given in direct self-presentation or intuition. But if the intention of something’s being in such and such a manner is essentially correlated to a possible intuition of the same thing, then intuitive realization can no longer be restricted to sense perception. Consequently, the necessity of postulating a form of ‘super-sensible intuition’ means that ‘any act of fulfilling in the manner of confirming self-presentation must be designated as perception, any fulfilling act whatever as intuition and its intentional correlate as object (Gegenstand)’ (op. cit., p. 142 [p. 280]).

It is important to note here immediately that such an extension of the concept of intuition affects equally the notions of perception and imagination. Thus to speak of categorial or ‘super-sensible’ perception is at once to allow for the possibility that any part of the domain of categorial objectivities may be grasped in imaginative intuition (cf. op. cit., p. 144 [p. 281]). Would this then mean that categorial intuition is just as well carried out in the imagination as in general perception? Indeed, in the absence of any necessity for sensible givenness, does not the distinction of imagination and perception collapse in the case of the intuition of generalities? Husserl is quick to notice this possibility and to uphold the ‘adequacy’ of categorial perception as opposed to its imaginative counterpart (cf. op. cit., p. 163 [p. 293]). He is also alive to the potential misinterpretation of categorial acts as the subjective figuration of some kind of formless matter, a putative operation that would make of categorial apprehension something akin to a productive power of imagination. Against this interpretation Husserl holds that ‘categorial functions, in “forming” the sensible object, leave it untouched in its real
essence. The object is intentionally grasped by the intellect and, more particularly, by
cognition (Erkenntnis) (which has itself a categorial function), but not falsified” (op. cit.,
p. 185 [p. 308]). Thus, categorial acts exhibit the universal in the sensible particular
without subjecting the latter to any real alteration. Here we find a thought which no doubt
impressed Heidegger during his intense engagement with LU throughout his early
philosophical development, that is, the idea of thinking as a revelation of what things are
that leaves beings to themselves. The last citation from Husserl also makes clear that
de spite his explicit rejection of all ‘faculty psychology’ he counters the suggestion that
categorial intuition might be a function of the imagination by ascribing such intuition
instead to the intellect or understanding. In opposing this Husserlian position a central
task of what follows will be to show that what Husserl identifies as the work of
categorical acts points back to the more basic ‘achievement’ of imagination in opening
the very field of ‘general intuition’.

It is no coincidence that Husserl returns before the end of Investigation six to a
consideration of that thinker with whom he has shown himself to have a peculiar affinity,
namely to Kant. In assessing the significance of his own inquiry into the origins of
knowledge Husserl charges Kant with attempting to ground the exact sciences ‘before
subjecting cognition (Erkenntnis) as such—the entire sphere of acts in which pre-logical
objectivation and logical thought operate—to an elucidating essential analysis and
critique’ (op. cit., p. 203 [pp. 318–19]). By failing to address the problem of signification
Kant evinces, according to Husserl, a blindness to the basic act of meaning something in
its actual absence in the sense of an act whereby the objects of exact knowledge are
necessarily prefigured. But is this a valid criticism of Kant? Certainly it is true that the
extension of the notion of intuition put forward by Husserl runs counter to the
fundamental distinction of concept and intuition in Kant’s critical philosophy.18 However,
Husserl speaks as though Kant identified only purely intellectual sources of knowledge.
Yet, already in the transcendental aesthetic19 the a priori forms of sensibility—time and
space—are recognized as necessary foundations for any possible experience and thus for
any knowledge of the world. Even more tellingly, according to Kant it is ultimately in
what he calls the temporal ‘realization’ of the pure concepts of understanding through the
schematism of the transcendental imagination20 that the origins of human experience are
to be found. Accordingly, Husserl’s account of inner time-consciousness from 1905
affords the opportunity to crucially amplify the account of the significance of imagination
for his sense of phenomenology given thus far.
The primal impression as the absolute source-point of conscious life

The principal task of this third chapter will be to set out and evaluate Husserl’s thought with respect to the essential relations between the imagination and time. Coming as it does in the midst of the present examination of Husserl’s concept of imagination, from this point onwards a more direct attempt to follow the sense or direction of Husserlian phenomenology towards its transformation in Heidegger will be made. As noted at the end of Chapter 2, Husserl too readily criticizes Kant for a putative restriction of his archaeology of human knowledge to purely cognitive sources. From the breakthrough in LU to the mature account of phenomenological philosophy in Ideas I Husserl fails to grant any positive significance to Kant’s transcendental aesthetic and the pivotal doctrine of the schematism.1 As a result, precisely those sections of the Critique of Pure Reason in which Kant articulates the dynamic relations between sensibility and cognition are left out of the Husserlian account. Considerations in the current section, however, will make clear that the phenomenological critique of knowledge is much closer to the Kantian perspective than Husserl was initially willing to acknowledge. According to the basic thesis advanced here, it is the theme of the imagination that makes this affinity of Husserl and Kant most readily apparent. Thus, precisely that mediating power which Kant recognized as binding together concept and intuition is by no means—as might at first seem to follow from Husserl’s postulation of non-sensible categorial intuition—made redundant in phenomenology. As will emerge, rather than dispensing with the need for the imagination, Husserl inherits the very problem of identifying its ‘proper place’ within the economy of conscious life that persisted throughout Kant’s critical period of thought. Indeed, the central thesis of the present enquiry is that the ‘homelessness’ of the imagination (as Heidegger would go on to speak of it) indicates nothing other than a radical fissure in the phenomenological edifice, a split in mental life that will be taken up by those who follow in Husserl’s footsteps and ‘repeat’ his phenomenological moves in one form or another.

Husserl gave an initial presentation of his thoughts on a ‘phenomenology of inner time-consciousness’ in the context of a set of lectures on phenomenological epistemology delivered at the University of Göttingen in the winter semester of 1904/5.2 Although he was well acquainted with the theories of the most prominent contemporary thinkers on time, namely William James and Henri Bergson, the only explicit references Husserl makes in his original time lectures are to his teacher Brentano and to St. Augustine. Of
the latter Husserl remarks at the beginning of his lectures: ‘Chapters 13–28 of Book XI of
the *Confessions* must still be read thoroughly today by anyone who concerns himself with
the problem of time’ (VPZ, p. 368). The significance of Augustine’s recognition of the
difficulty of giving an explicit account of our experience of time for the problem of
attaining the phenomenological attitude has already been indicated above. Beyond this,
the attraction the Augustinian analysis of time holds for Husserl is not difficult to account
for. Expositions of time in western philosophy have tended to be dominated by
Aristotle’s reflections on this phenomenon in Book 4 of the *Physics*. By positing time as
a natural phenomenon while excluding it from his theory of the soul Aristotle appears to
have left no space for anything like a treatment of the subjective temporality of
consciousness. However, the question posed towards the end of his time analysis in the
*Physics* as to ‘whether or not there could be time if there were no soul’ (223a21–22)
clearly indicates that reflection upon the relations between consciousness and time was
by no means utterly foreign to Aristotle’s thought. Nevertheless, Augustine’s
preoccupation with an inner time-consciousness and his basic characterization of it as a
manner of mental stretching or *distentio* offers the most promising historically given
point of departure for Husserl’s analysis.

The Husserlian exposition of temporal consciousness is concerned with time as it is
immediately experienced and thus with the time of conscious life and not with the time of
natural change. The phenomenological investigation is directed towards an identification
of the absolute source of temporal consciousness or the origin of ‘lived time’ as such.
Husserl’s account or critique of knowledge as traced so far has shown itself to be
characterized by two key features: first, the extension of the field of originary givenness
or intuition to include non-sensible modes; second, a basic division of mental acts into
presentations and representations. Both features essentially inform Husserl’s thinking on
time. The time lectures begin, as is common in Husserl’s earlier phenomenology, with an
exposition and subsequent rejection of Brentano’s position. What is so striking in this
case is that the doctrine of Husserl’s teacher identifies the imagination (*Phantasie*) as the
ultimate source of time-consciousness:

> The imagination shows itself here to be productive in a peculiar manner. Here we find the unique instance where it truly creates a new feature of presentations, namely the temporal feature. Thus, we have discovered in the domain of the imagination the origin of temporal presentations.

(VPZ, p. 375)

According to Husserl a twofold error forms the basis of Brentano’s doctrine. First, our
consciousness of the past is not in its original constitution any kind of reproductive or
pictorial consciousness. To be aware that the friend with whom I was speaking two hours
before is still at home in the room where we spoke does not essentially consist in my
picturing to myself first the past occasion and then comparing this picture with one of the
probable present situation of her sitting at a desk reading. This would also be true for any
consciousness of future events: to apprehend the sheets of paper as something which will
allow me to write a certain number of letters in the future in no way requires that I form
mental representations of future acts of writing, addressing envelopes, etc. Rather,
experience involves at the most basic level a stretching of the present moment into the
past and the future. Accordingly, time-consciousness is not accurately accounted for as a continuum of present moments or ‘now-points’ but rather constitutes from the first a synthetic unity in the form of a temporal field or horizon. In this connection Husserl notes a profound analogy between the field of vision and that of time:

The originary temporal field is clearly limited, just as with perception [...] [This field] transposes itself (verschiebt sich), so to speak, over the perceptual and newly remembered movement and its objective time, in a manner that is similar to the way in which the visual field transposes itself over objective space.

(op. cit., p. 391)

If the core of internal time-consciousness is constituted as a basic horizon of temporal or temporalized experience that has no intrinsic connection to representative acts, then this core of lived time must be grasped as originally presentative, that is, as intuitive in character. Accordingly, for Husserl we do not ‘see’ merely what is present at this or that moment but also what was present before and what is to come. Of course, such comprehensive ‘sight’ exhibits in each of its modes peculiar limitations. Only if the concept of perception is limited to the immediate presence of consciousness is an analysis of temporal consciousness called upon to explain how this immediate present is extended in two directions. But that would require at once an explication of the union of what are, according to Husserl, mutually exclusive acts of consciousness, namely direct perception and reproductive imagination. Husserl avoids this potential problem through his broadening the notion of perception to include any mental act ‘which places something itself in front of our eyes as the act which originary constitutes the object’ (op. cit., p. 400). By postulating an originary givenness of things not only in the present but also in the immediate past and future Husserl arrives at a concept that renders the phenomenon of time at once unitary and non-punctual. The fundamental stretching of temporal consciousness into the past and future he terms retention and protention respectively.

The original synthetic unity of time-consciousness provides at once the grounds for the possibility of any act of reproduction (Vergegenwärtigung). According to Husserl such reproductive acts constitute a ‘corresponding image (Gegenbild) of temporally constitutive intentionality’ (op. cit., p. 410). Whereas at the most basic level the constitution of time-consciousness involves what Husserl will later call ‘passive synthesis’ of sensible impressions, reproductive time-consciousness is a function of freedom and spontaneous activity. As Husserl notes:

The originary appearance and running off of the various modes of process (Ablaufsmodi) in their appearance is something fixed, something of which we are conscious by ‘affection’ which we can inspect… As against this, representation (Vergegenwärtigung) is something free, it is a free traversing.

(op. cit., p. 406)

The ‘originarity’ of time-consciousness has two significant manifestations: first, in the case of the primacy of what Husserl terms the ‘originary impression’ (Urimpression) or
foundational now-point with respect to retention and protention; second, the priority of productive and intuitive consciousness (the threefold synthesis of originary impression, retention and protention) over all forms of reproduction, in particular imaginative reproduction. However, could it not be said that, in his very carrying out of the phenomenological investigation of time-consciousness Husserl has recourse to the imagination in order to make possible reflection upon temporally constitutive acts? Does not the imagination possess crucial significance for the Husserlian analysis of time thanks to its unique role in phenomenological method?

Following his critique of Brentano, Husserl remains preoccupied with cutting any essential ties the imagination might be thought to have with originary time-consciousness. As a consequence, not only does Husserl place the imagination at one remove from all originarity through his characterization of it as representative, he also appears to deny it any role in the achievement of phenomenological reflection. Accordingly, time would be neither constituted nor made phenomenologically accessible by imaginative presentations. Instead Husserl identifies remembrance (Wiedererinnerung) as a type of representative consciousness at once quite distinct from imagination and making possible reflection upon the stream of conscious life. What separates remembrance from imagination for Husserl is the character of positionality: to remember is to assert or posit the real having-been of something. Imagination, on the contrary, entails no such positing of the real existence of its object in any temporal mode. As shown, Husserl holds that acts of perception and acts of imagination of one and the same content cannot obtain simultaneously: these acts constitute quite distinct attitudes or relations of intentionality. By positing the reality of their content in the mode of having-been, acts of remembrance provide a definite anchor, so to speak, to bind time-consciousness to the fixed points of primary perception. As Husserl states:

In mere imagination (Phantasie) there is no position (Setzung) of the reproduced now and no coinciding (Deckung) given of this now with one that is past. Remembrance, on the contrary, posits what is reproduced and grants it in this position a standing (Stellung) to the present now and to the sphere of the originary field of time to which the remembrance itself belongs.

(op. cit., p. 409)

Not only does Husserl thus ascribe to remembrance a definite relation to the basic level of temporal consciousness, he also speaks of its ability to open up a progressively richer temporal horizon in a movement directed towards the future (cf. op. cit., p. 411). The notion of the horizon plays a pivotal role in Husserl’s phenomenological descriptions and goes hand in hand with his extension of intuition beyond immediate punctual presence. Whereas the structures of retention and protention constitute the temporal stretch of consciousness at its most fundamental level of sense-impressions, the horizon opened up in memory is, so to speak, a horizon with a horizon. It is nothing other than what might be called the space of phenomenological intuition, that is, the area for reflective observation. In a word, Husserl identifies remembrance as the condition of the possibility for phenomenological description. Accordingly, if the time lectures are concerned with ‘the immediate intuition of temporal objects’ (op. cit., p. 417), then it must at once be
recognized that ‘there exists at all times the possibility of remembrance with respect to
earlier perception of a process (equally, the possibility of a reflection in remembrance
which brings the earlier perception to givenness)’ (op. cit., p. 415). Clearly, Husserl is
speaking here of two distinct acts: one that represents what he calls a consciousness of
some object in the mode of having-been, and another which is directed at the act of
perceptual givenness in the same mode. Thus, if reflection is made possible by such acts
of remembrance then the non-positional character of imaginative presentations would
appear to explicitly preclude their playing any essential role in phenomenological
analysis.

Basic to Husserl’s sense of phenomenology is the notion that the adoption of the
phenomenological attitude requires a radical reversal in the movement of conscious life.3
The ‘average’ mode of intentional consciousness is one whereby it is more or less totally
absorbed by the field of inten-tional objects. The phenomenological ‘conversion’
redirects the ‘rays’ of mental life towards the acts of consciousness itself and away from
the objects that appear in and through these acts. In analogy with Kant’s insistence that ‘it
must be possible for the “I think” to accompany all my representations’ (KRV, B131),
Husserl asserts the universal possibility of reflection upon acts of consciousness. And yet,
having claimed that it is reproduction that renders time-consciousness intuitively evident
and having restricted such acts of intuition to positional reproduction in the mode of
remembrance, Husserl appears to remove the basis of this restriction as his analysis of
time unfolds. As claimed above, the ‘basic experience’ that at once motivates and
informs Husserl’s phenomenology involves a recognition of the possibility that all
empirical existence might be in some sense ‘cancelled out’. His observations on the
consciousness of time make evident this sense of the radical contingency of the
empirical:

Position (Setzung) normally covers objects (das Gegenständliche) of
external appearance, but this position can be cancelled or contradicted and
then there always remains remembrance or expectation. Thus, we shall
continue to call these remembrance and expectation even if we refer to
past or future perception as merely ‘intended’.

(op. cit., p. 416)

As an addendum to the lectures makes clear, Husserl takes the distinction of the
positional and non-positional to cover all modes of mental act (cf. op. cit., p. 453). Yet,
admitting the possibility of a mode of remembrance that cancels out any grounding in
empirical reality appears to be in direct conflict with Husserl’s simultaneous insistence
that remembrance is distinguished from imagination by virtue of the positionality of the
former. One might attempt to uphold the distinction by saying that it is possible to
remember something which in fact never obtained while the experiential character of
remembrance remains intact, i.e. assert a psychological phenomenon of counter-factual
memory. As opposed to such acts, one could continue, an imagining never involves
consciousness of something that really exists or existed. Yet this attempt to uphold a
strict opposition between remembrance and imagination is unconvincing. Consider a
situation where I return to my table in the library and find that my books have been
moved around. Here I would naturally suppose that someone had moved them and that
therefore an event had occurred. On Husserl’s analysis I would have to say that such a supposition would assume the existence of the past event even though I had never witnessed it. On the other hand my only intuitive apprehension of the supposed act would be necessarily imaginative, that is, an imaginative act bound by obvious limits of probability. Thus, the possibility of positional imagination would have to be admitted. But if positionality and non-positionality were meant to be the distinctive marks of remembrance and imagination respectively, then Husserl has certainly failed to provide adequate grounds for such a putative opposition.

The breakdown of Husserl’s attempted opposition of remembrance and imagination means that a space is left open for a phenomenological elucidation of time-consciousness by means of imaginative presentations. But what of our consciousness of time at the pre-reflexive, immediately intuitive level? Certainly, the signal achievement of Husserl’s lectures is to offer a systematic account of time-consciousness as an original synthetic unity rather than a mere manifold of punctual presence. As shown, originary time-consciousness is characterized by Husserl not as a chain of ‘now-points’ but rather as a synthetic unity of primal impressions, retentions and protentions. Retentions are no mere after-images or fading impressions of a once lively present and protentions are not to be thought of as some kind of ill-defined presentiment of what is to come. Instead, the closely-knit fabric of conscious life requires recognition of an extended act of originary intuition, so that one may speak equally of ‘seeing’ the present, past and future. Husserl’s insistence upon the synthetic unity of immanent temporality is principally motivated—in common with Kant’s critical analysis of time—by his concern to offer a plausible phenomenological account of the order and continuity of the world as given to immediate perceptual consciousness. However, such concern for synthetic unity in no way rules out the postulation of hierarchical relations within the basic structures of inner time-consciousness. On this point Husserl recognizes ‘the a priori necessity of retention being preceded by a corresponding perception or originary impression’ (op. cit., p. 393). Husserl quite unequivocally affirms this primacy of the core of presence within time-consciousness:

The originary impression is what is absolutely unmodified, the originary source (Urquelle) for all further consciousness and being. As its content it has that which is denoted by the word ‘now’, as long as it is taken in the strictest sense. Every new now is the content of a new originary impression.

(op. cit., p. 423)

Insofar as the originary or primal impression stands for the absolute origin of time-consciousness it is taken to be ‘the constant rising up (Hervorquellen) of a now, of the creative point in time, the source point, of any position in time whatever’ (op. cit., p. 427). Yet the creativity of this ‘vital source-point of being’ (p. 424) is seemingly contradicted in Husserl’s later claim that the primal impression is, in common with ‘primal remembrance’, ‘no product of spontaneity, but rather in a certain way something receptive’ (op. cit., p. 441).

This apparent antinomy of the active and spontaneous as against the passive and receptive nature of the Urimpression lies at the heart of Husserl’s thought on lived time
precisely because he views time, in common with Kant, as the fundamental structure of intentional consciousness. In LU, as shown, Husserl arrives at a basic characterization of conscious life in terms of objectivation, that is, as an act that at once animates and makes manifest underlying intentional ‘material’. As originary objectivation ‘intuition’ in Husserl stands for a genuine immediate seeing of things and not a falsifying manipulation of them. In his time lectures Husserl arrives at the insight that all objectivation is at once a function of temporalizing consciousness. Accordingly, inner time in the sense of the radical temporalization of mental life is at once pre-objective:

[The time constituting stream of consciousness] is absolute subjectivity and has the absolute properties of something to be referred to figuratively (im Bilde) as a ‘stream’, as something that originates in a point of presence (Aktualitätspunkt), a source-point or ‘now’. In the lived experience of the present we have a source-point and a continuity of reverberating constituent parts. For all that we lack names.

(op. cit., p. 429)

It is remarkable that Husserl, for all his efforts to resist the Augustinian tendency to reduce other temporal modes to that of presence, so forcefully insists on the absolute primacy of impressional presence. This is particularly striking in light of the fact that the basic problem which gave rise to the project of phenomenological philosophy first worked out in LU concerned precisely how something can possess meaning for us in its intuitive absence. The intention/fulfilment dynamic characterizing intentional consciousness implies that nothing can be given to consciousness in immediate givenness that is not configured beforehand in its absence. In this sense, nothing can confront us in experience as utterly meaningless, for any object of possible experience must in a sense (i.e. ‘intentionally’) be given in advance of its actual appearance. Accordingly, absolute intuitive novelty would appear to be excluded in principle by Husserl’s account of conscious life. Yet this is precisely the key feature ascribed to the primal impression: ‘Above all the now-component (Jetztmoment) is characterized by the new’ (op. cit., p. 419).

The internal contradictions and inconsistencies of Husserl’s phenomenological account of consciousness are amassing: the breakdown of the imagination/remembrance distinction; the tension between the notions of distention beyond the now and contraction back into punctual presence; the simultaneous activity and passivity of absolute subjectivity. In turning now to Husserl’s posthumously published writings on the imagination composed in the same period as the time lectures, an attempt will be made to negotiate these aporia which threaten to be the undoing of the inaugural sense of phenomenology.

The origin and its shadow

In his first published work, Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, Jacques Derrida claims that Husserl did not subject the imagination to sufficiently close scrutiny within his extensive phenomenological studies. Since the time of Derrida’s
analysis (1962) the appearance of Husserl’s unpublished writings on the theme of the imagination within the Husserliana necessitates a rejection of the Derridean claim. This in no way entails, however, that Derrida’s substantive criticism of Husserl in terms of a radical ambiguity within the latter’s thinking on the imagination is thereby neutralized. Indeed, the present investigation expressly sets out to show how this ambiguity is a key symptom of unresolved fundamental tensions in Husserl’s idea or sense of phenomenology.

The writings on the imagination collected in Volume 23 of the Husserliana cover a period from 1904 to 1924, with occasional interpolations of earlier work. Given that two-thirds of the volume is made up of texts dating from 1904 to 1912 it is clear that this period spanning the time from the publication of the Logical Investigations to that of Ideas I (1913) saw Husserl’s greatest efforts to develop a coherent phenomenological analysis of imagination. As the title of the volume chosen by the editor—Phantasie, Bildbewußtsein, Erinnerung—indicates, arriving at conceptual clarity on the imagination necessarily involves identifying grounds for a clear distinction of the imagination proper (Phantasie) from those other modes of intentional consciousness which are most clearly related to it, namely memory (Erinnerung) and pictorial consciousness (Bildbewußtsein). In the previous section I argued that Husserl’s efforts to separate imagination and memory in the 1905 time lectures fail. On the other hand, holding to the assertion of the intuitive nature of imaginative presentations put forward in LU furnishes a basis for effectively rejecting any understanding of the imagination as an apprehensive of an object by means of pictorial resemblance. However, Husserl’s positioning of imaginative presentations sometimes on the side of intuition, at other times within the domain of significations and their intrinsic referentiality, makes evident a basic instability in his idea of the imagination within the period in question.

The first text from the collection on imagination stems from the third part of a lecture series held in the 1904/5 winter semester at Göttingen, entitled Principal Components of Phenomenology and Epistemology. This manuscript accordingly covers lectures delivered immediately prior to the time lectures just considered. This treatment of imagination immediately before that of time is itself an important indication of the close connections these two phenomena exhibit for Husserl. The imagination lectures begin with the reaffirmation of the ideal possibility of one-to-one correspondence between acts of perception and imagination. Husserl goes on to note that despite this ideal correspondence the descriptive essence of the two acts differs: in the case of imaginative presentations (Phantasievorstellungen) we find a ‘mediation of presentation’ (Mittelbarkeit des Vorstellens) (Hua 23, p. 24) that is lacking in the case of perception. Such mediation signifies a divide between presentation and appearance not evident in perceptual acts: ‘In imaginative presentation an object also appears, but what appears in the primary and proper sense is not what is presented’ (ibid.). In accord with earlier analyses, this division of appearance and presentation is said to characterize imaginative presentations as lacking the ‘selfhood’ (Selbstheit) of the intended object. Such absence of the thing itself in an imagining constitutes the essential representative nature of imaginative acts.

Thus far we are on familiar ground. When however Husserl goes on to differentiate imaginative presentations not only from perception but also from pictorial representations, a new essential feature of imagination is postulated. Whereas what is
delivered to consciousness in perception exhibits a fixed synthetic unity and ordering, according to the 1904/5 lectures imaginative presentations and even memories are characterized by a ‘senseless confusion’ (sinnloses Durcheinander) (op. cit., p. 33). Given their common representational essence, one might suspect that the disorder ascribed to imaginative presentations would be an essential feature shared by the acts of pictorial representation. In describing the latter Husserl characterizes such disorder as in fact a lack of continuity with the perceptual field of experience. This suggests that what is really at stake here is the recognition of two incommensurable orders of conscious life, the presentative and representative. According to Husserl, although a painting is present as an object to be apprehended in the normal way within the perceptual field, taken as a pictorial representation it constitutes an opening or a kind of ‘window in pictorial space, into pictorial reality (Bildwirklichkeit)’ (op. cit., p. 46). Such a reality is, however, properly speaking an unreality that shows itself to be such precisely through its relation of ‘contradiction to actual presence’ (Widerstreit mit der aktuellen Gegenwart) (op. cit., p. 47). The negativity ascribed by Husserl to the object as given in pictorial consciousness marks it as a givenness of something non-present. But such a revelation of the non-present is something pictorial consciousness has in common with imaginative presentations that, in contradistinction to perceptions, apprehend the object ‘as nothingness (als ein Nichtiges)’ (op. cit., p. 48). As Husserl remarks:

> There belongs to the essence of imagination a consciousness of non-presentationality (Nichtgegenwärtigkeitsbewusstsein). We live in the present, we have a visual field (Blickfeld) of perception; but besides it we have appearances that present something non-present (ein Nichtgegenwärtiges vorstellen) entirely outside of this visual field.

(op. cit., pp. 58–9)

Thus far the imagination has been united with pictorial consciousness in ‘having’ its object in the non-immediate fashion of something empirically non-present. The non-presence of which Husserl speaks does not of course signify something previously present within the perceptual field or even something which might come to appear in that field at some point in the future. Rather, it is a matter of radically different modes of apprehension that constitute distinct, indeed mutually exclusive modes of mental life. Within the category of representational consciousness itself, however, Husserl insists upon a no less essential differentiation between imaginative and pictorial consciousness. Accordingly, the latter requires a physical analogue that grounds the recognition of resemblance between the ‘image’ and what it represents. The more common word for imagination in German, Einbildung, suggests in a manner analogous to the term Erinnerung (memory) some manner of ‘internal’ representation. It is this very independence from ‘external’, empirical reality that motivates Husserl’s efforts to find a key role for ‘fantasy’ (Phantasie) in phenomenological analysis. In the present context, however, he underscores the instability and lawlessness of imaginative presentations over and against the fixity of the physical analogue in the case of pictorial consciousness:

A gradual change of correspondence comes to light with respect to imaginative presentation that is absent in relation to physical pictoriality.
(physische Bildlichkeit). And at the same time we notice that in the latter the respective picture tends to be stable and therefore possesses a level of correspondence once and for all. In the former, however, the image (Bild) is something that oscillates, wavers and alters, now increasing in fullness and power, now decreasing. In this way it is thereby subject to constant immanent change in its level of completeness (Vollkommenheit).

(op. cit., p. 60)

This passage indicates something of central significance in Husserl’s understanding of the imagination. Though there can be no doubt that he ascribes to the imagination a key role in arriving at direct intuition of the general structures of consciousness, the inherent dangers involved in enlisting such a volatile ally for the achievement of ‘phenomenological intuition’ are at once readily recognized. And yet is this wariness with respect to the epistemic function of the imagination properly phenomenological, that is, grounded in direct experience? Is it not rather the case that Husserl is repeating a gesture made by Kant in his critical philosophy, indeed in western philosophy as a whole since Plato? In Kant we find recognition of the necessary role of the imagination in bringing about the unifying synthesis of impressions in experience and in realizing the transition from the empirical to the super-sensible ideas that underpin ethical thought. Yet Kant’s initially positive evaluation of the power of imagination (cf. KRV, A100–102) stands in a difficult relation to his insistence in the Critique of Judgement that reason alone provides the measure of all conscious life (cf. A68/B69; 5:241) and, even more problematically, to the accentuation of pathological imbalance in Kant’s final account of the imagination offered in his later lectures on anthropology (cf. § 25, A67/B68 ff.). If for Husserl the very sense of conscious experience is to stand in relation to one and the same world, then this unitary sense exhibited by the field of experience cannot in his view legitimately be ascribed to the ‘productive’ power of consciousness. Consequently, just as his contemporary Freud attempted to describe the metamorphic and plastic power of the human imagination in dream-life, Husserl signalizes what might be called the basic ‘allotropic’ and dynamic characteristics of fantasy:

Opposed to [physical picture-presentation] (physische Bildvorstellung) stands the protean nature of fantasy-appearance (Phantasieerscheinung). This entails that the unity of the representative image (repräsentatives Bild) is not preserved in the unity of the imaginative presentation (Phantasievorstellung). The object appearing as image does not remain unaltered in the unity of the image-presentation (bildliche Vorstellung)…but rather changes constantly. Thereby the richness and poverty of representative moments also changes.

(op. cit., p. 61)

This passage is all the more significant in dating from 1898, when Husserl was working out the pioneering phenomenological analyses of LU. The immediate meaning of the passage is evident, namely, that any continuous act of imaginative consciousness in no way entails a continuity of representational content. As a consequence of this lack of constant ‘objective relation’ in the case of acts of imaginative consciousness, for Husserl
the manifest order of conscious experience cannot in any sense be traced back to the imagination. Instead, all imaginative presentations must be recognized as pointing back to more originary acts of constitution, acts in which the unified structure of the world as experienced—that is, the form of phenomenal being—is directly delivered over to consciousness. For what could be more evident than the fact that change must be change of something underlying that remains unaltered or that a plurality of shifting appearances points back to a unitary, stable reality? As the following remark from the time lectures show, Husserl’s epistemological subordination of the imagination is grounded in an Aristotelianism more deeprooted than one might at first suspect: ‘In any case, consciousness of otherness, of difference, presupposes a unity. In change there must be present something lasting... Naturally, that points back to essential forms of consciousness of something individual’ (VPZ, p. 440). This point is then underscored: Thus it is in all cases wherever one speaks of alteration and change: an underlying consciousness of unity must exist’ (op. cit., p. 441). In the light of Husserl’s explicit alignment with the traditional metaphysical prioritizing of static unity over fluid plurality, the present task becomes a matter of drawing out the significance of his analysis of imagination as the pre-eminent polymorphous power of mind for the development of his sense of phenomenology.

In the unfolding of the 1905 lectures on imagination the distinction between fantasy and pictorial consciousness comes to be seen as a differentiation within a broadly conceived phenomenological field of imaginative presentation (Einbildung). Accordingly, Husserl refers to pictorial consciousness as ‘imagination in the proper sense’ (Imagination im eigentlichen Sinne) and to fantasy (Phantasie) as imagination in an improper or inauthentic sense (op. cit., pp. 82–3). These determinations need to be understood in their phenomenological context. Precisely because fantasy is not imaginative in the sense of representing objects by means of physical analogues, it is an authentic, that is, directly intuitive mode of consciousness. This merely follows the extension of the sense of intuition put forward in LU. As Husserl notes: The fantasy-appearance, in its simplicity without the burden of any superimposed pictorality, relates to the object just as simply (einfältig) as perception’ (op. cit., p. 85). In perception and fantasy the fulfillment of a simple intention comes in the form of sensory impressions and ‘phantasms’ (Phantasmen) respectively. This parallelism accordingly makes of fantasy-representation ‘an ultimate mode of intuitive presentation (intuitive Vorstellung)’ (op. cit., p. 86). Thus we find the same division of acts as postulated in LU: perception and fantasy on the side of intuition or authentic presentation, picture-consciousness and symbolic presentations on the side of ‘empty’ or inauthentic presentation. On the other hand, Husserl considers the opposition of perception and fantasy to constitute a basic difference within the field of intuitive consciousness. Indeed this opposition is so fundamental that ultimately his descriptions of this difference tend towards tautology:

The impression resists, so to speak, the demand that it be taken for a mere image. It is itself the mark of reality against which all reality is measured; it is primarily actual presence (aktuelle Gegenwart) […] The phantasm, the sensible content of fantasy, on the contrary, is given as non-present (nichtgegenwärtig). It resists the demand that it be taken for something present and bears from the outset the character of irreality (Irrealität).
Having seemingly granted equal rights to perception and fantasy as basic modes of operation for intuitive consciousness in his lectures on imagination (rejecting thereby Brentano’s endorsement of the Humean notion of the imagination or ‘idea’ as a faded impression), Husserl nevertheless goes on in the time lectures that follow to determine Phantasie as a kind of representative consciousness that thus refers back to a grounding in direct perception. Once again his words carry an unambiguous force:

The impression (in its narrower sense, in opposition to representation) is to be grasped as primary consciousness that has no further consciousness beyond it in which it would be made conscious. Representation (Vergegenwärtigung) on the contrary, even the most primitive immanent representation, is as such secondary consciousness. It presupposes primary consciousness in which it is made impressionally conscious.

(VPZ, p. 442)

The 1904/5 lectures accordingly repeat the pattern of vacillation in Husserl’s treatment of imagination identified above in relation to the earlier writings, particularly in LU. But is this movement of thought really an index for some basic confusion on Husserl’s part? Could it not be argued that, whereas the mutual independence of imagination and perception relates to these ‘mental powers’ in terms of acts of consciousness, the dependence of the imagination on perception relates rather to the objects of intentional consciousness? For what does Husserl mean by saying that acts of imagination relate intuitively to what is non-present or to the ‘irreal’? Certainly, the ‘nothingness’ of imagination’s intentional object cannot be absolute, but rather must be recognized as a mode of intentional being. The key question thus becomes: What is the positive ontological status of the object as imagined and what is its significance for Husserl’s sense of phenomenology?
4
The genesis of experience and phenomenological method

Imagination in phenomenological method

As Husserl develops his understanding of imagination in the years leading up to the publication of Ideas I in 1913, the pivotal role of imaginative presentations in making possible phenomenological analysis emerges more clearly. Already in 1905 he is drawing attention to the possibility of imaginative reflection and drawing parallels with the method of phenomenological reduction: ‘Just as I can “reflect in imagination (Phantasie)”, so too can I phenomenologically reduce in imagination’ (Hua 23, p. 187). This possibility of imaginative reduction is itself derived for Husserl from the universal potential of consciousness to convert a positional act of perception (i.e. consciousness absorbed, so to speak, in the sensuous presence and reality of the object) into a non-positional act of imagination that ‘suspects’ the reality of the intuited thing. A remark, again from the 1904/5 period, makes clear that this conversion into modified non-positional consciousness in no way compromises the givenness of the object’s phenomenal being: ‘To fantasize means to let this object hover before one’s eyes (vorschweben lassen), that is, to let it appear presently as itself (ihn als selbst daseienden erscheinen lassen) (to let something appear, hover before one’s eyes and appear presently as itself, is the same thing)’ (op. cit., pp. 174–5).1 But if Husserl constantly returns to his postulation that ‘in accord with ideal possibility every concrete lived experience can also undergo a modification’ (op. cit., p. 103), what does this claim indicate with respect to his basic concept of experience?

In 1907 Husserl delivered a series of lectures entitled Thing and Space whose task is characterized as preparatory studies for a future phenomenology of experience (cf. Hua 16, p. 3). Concerned with a rigorous phenomenological description of experience from the most basic acts of perceptual consciousness to the constitution of the visual field and kinaesthetic phenomena, Husserl returns at various points in the course of his lectures to a consideration of the fundamental differences between perception and imagination. But it is not until he arrives at a ‘concluding observation’ that Husserl’s concept of experience is allowed to come most strikingly to the fore. While insisting on the possible non-existence of everything perceived as real, Husserl nevertheless claims that all perceptual postulations of reality are rationally grounded: ‘Experience is the power that guarantees the existence of the world (die Kraft, welche die Existenz der Welt verbürgt), and
experience is the power that constantly draws new power from itself and continuously integrates itself (Hua 16, p. 290). Yet, because the existence of the world is granted rationally only as phenomenon, the contingency of its reality is by no means cancelled out in experience. According to Husserl there is no inconsistency or absurdity entailed in the possibility that the order and regularity of the world might be converted into the irregularity of a ‘beautiful memory or fantasy’ (op. cit., p. 289). This realization prompts him to make a telling remark: ‘All in all, the world is with respect to its existence and its mode of being an irrational fact and its facticity lies in the stability of the motivational relations (Motivationszusammenhänge)’ (op. cit., pp. 289–90). If, however, perception stands for the primary intentional relation to contingent being, phenomenology must stand or fall with the possibility of a relation to non-contingent being, that is, to rational structures embedded in the irrational datum of the world as immediately experienced. Thus for phenomenology as the ‘science’ of such structures in general there must be some manner of passage from concrete sense perception to the ‘intuition of essences’ or ‘ideation’. In light of this need for a ‘mediating’ mode of consciousness to ground the very possibility of phenomenological analysis, in the period immediately leading up to the publication of Ideas I in 1913 the imagination is finally granted a proper place within the economy of Husserl’s thought.

A sustained analysis from 1912 offers crucial indications in relation to the transformation of Husserl’s idea of imagination in the period immediately preceding the appearance of Ideas I. Here Husserl begins by tersely stating the central idea of his thinking in this area:

My doctrine turns on the following: that every type of cogitationes falls under the division of actuality and inactuality; that in every type actuality signifies position taking (Stellungnahme) (real position taking) and that there is in every case a refraining from positing, excluding (Ausschalten) it, in short, the modification of inactuality.

(Hua 23, pp. 362–3)

Husserl goes on to equate what he calls here actuality (Aktualität) or position taking (Stellungnahme) as such with ‘impressional intuition’ (impressives Anschauen). The opposed notion of inactuality is in turn equated with imagination in the form of ‘pure fantasy’:

Inactuality consists in the analogue of pure fantasy (im Analogon der puren Phantasie) and constitutes a concept of imagination (Einbildung), insofar as precisely pure imagination (blosse Einbildung) expresses the cessation of actuality (Unterbinden der Aktualität). Thus all aesthetic pictorial consciousness (pictorial object-consciousness) belongs here, provided pure pictorial observation is realized.

(op. cit., pp. 363–4)

Here Husserl appears to be operating with an extended notion of ‘pure fantasy’, one that encompasses rather than stands opposed to pictorial consciousness. What is also new is the explicit reference to aesthetic consciousness. In the analysis in question Husserl
rejects Kant’s determination of the aesthetic attitude in the third *Critique* in terms of an ‘insensitiveness in relation to being and non-being (Unempfindlichkeit gegen Sein und Nichtsein)’ (op. cit., p. 390). In opposition to such putative indifference, Husserl holds that aesthetic consciousness is indeed ‘interested’ in the being and non-being of its objects, though indeed ‘in the relevant “manner of appearance”’ (*Erscheinungsweise*) (op. cit., p. 391). For Husserl as for Kant, however, aesthetic appearance is not given in any mode of positional consciousness, that is, it does not relate to objects in terms of empirical or factual existence. But for Husserl this exclusion of positionality in the aesthetic attitude can only signify a relation to objects in terms of non-empirical or ideal existence. Accordingly, he goes on to affirm an affinity between the aesthetic and theoretical attitudes: ‘Related to aesthetic pleasure is theoretical interest. Pleasure in knowledge, for instance mathematical knowledge: for the sake of the beauty of mathematical relations, proofs, theories’ (op. cit., p. 392).

The implications of this affinity between the aesthetic and the theoretical for Husserl’s idea of imagination are striking and fundamental. Above all, the sense of phenomenology itself as a theory of appearance is at stake. As Husserl remarks of the aesthetic attitude: ‘[it] does not go in and through the appearance, but rather it relates to [the appearance] and the object only “for the sake of the appearance”’ (ibid.). Neither in theory nor in art, according to Husserl, is it essentially a matter of a ‘reproductive reality-consciousness’ (*reproduktives Wirklichkeitsbewußtsein*). Although in both cases there can be no question of simple experience in the manner of sense perception, the aesthetic and theoretical attitudes are not related in virtue of being species of ‘inactual’ or non-positional consciousness. For, as noted, the aesthetic attitude is not characterized for Husserl by indifference to the being or non-being of the object in appearance. Similarly, in the case of theory there is manifestly an active concern to ‘do justice’ to the phenomena. The principal conclusion of the analysis under consideration reaffirms the universal applicability of ‘pure fantasy’ and at once identifies it as the common element uniting aesthetic and theoretical modes of consciousness:

I come to the result that pure fantasy (*blosse Phantasie*) is an ultimate and quite originary modification. Thus according to ideal possibility there obtains in relation to every experiential act such a modification […] Each such [act] has its ideal counterpart in a fantasy-experience (*Phantasie-Erfahren*), more precisely, in an experiential fantasy (*erfahrende Phantasie*), a memory (*Erinnerung*) in the broadest sense and with various possible modes. Only, every experiential fantasy has its counterpart in non-experiential [fantasy]. In the case of perceptions I see no possibility to convert experience into non-experience.

(op. cit., p. 396)

What is indicated here must be underscored. Husserl appears to be saying that every aspect of conscious life that affirms empirical existence (every ‘positional act’) permits ideally a conversion into an ‘as-if existing’ mode of imaginative consciousness. More particularly, he suggests two stages involved in this potential universal conversion of sense-experience: first the transformation from actual to quasi-experience and second a transition from quasi-experience to pure imaginative possibility. It would seem to follow
from this that the imagination in the form of pure fantasy constitutes the source of what Husserl refers to as a universal potential within conscious life to convert positional acts of consciousness into nonpositional acts by means of an ‘inactuality modification’ (Modifikation der Inaktualität) (cf. op. cit., p. 363). In a word, Husserl’s concept of experience postulates the ideal possibility of a transition from empirical consciousness to pure imaginative analogue of universal scope. Such a postulate in no way entails the supposition that what is given in immediate perception must in some manner present itself as a mere simulacrum, that is, as a merely specious original ultimately indistinguishable from its ‘reproduction’, ‘image’ or copy. To the contrary, Husserl immediately follows his comments cited above with an insistence on immediate experience (schlichtes Erfahren) as ‘something peculiar, ultimate, simple’ (op. cit., p. 396).

The positive result of the 1912 investigation is Husserl’s realization that there can be no way to reach the theoretical (or aesthetic) attitude through immediate experience itself or through immediate givenness of any kind. Husserl inaugurates phenomenology in recognition of the fact that science and theory generally require some means beyond sense perception to articulate the structures of experience. His initial way of accounting for theoretical consciousness in LU was to posit the existence of super-sensible or categorial intuition. In the present context it is the imagination in the form of pure fantasy that is called upon to effect the move from the simple apprehension of objects to the basic structures of experience. The exposition of categorial intuition in LU addresses the basic problem of how consciousness effects the transition from the concrete givenness of sense perception to revelation of the ideal structures of experience upon which the validity of all theory rests. Categories are not taken there to be mere inductive generalities or rational postulates that explain how the world can appear to us in the way it does. Instead Husserl grasps the categorial in terms of conscious acts of immediate though non-concrete ‘perception’ that reveal structures immanent in the world as experienced. Despite his widening of the concept of intuition in this way, Husserl evidently realized in the years that followed the breakthrough to phenomenology that the Kantian problem of how to bridge the gap between immediate sense experience and conceptual thought had by no means been dispelled. Indeed the nearness to Kant and his basic problems, to which Husserl frequently alludes, leads the founder of phenomenology to precisely the same source that his predecessor had identified as the ‘common root’ of understanding and sense perception, namely to the imagination. In an analogous manner to the question raised in LU as to how consciousness can move from the perception of a sheet of white paper to an apprehension of the being-white of the paper, in the present analysis Husserl approaches the question of the very meaning of being in phenomenological analysis: What does it mean: I look now at the ‘object’ and now at what is (das Seiend)? What kind of ‘looking at’ is that? It is indeed one kind of consciousness that simply perceives and grasps the existent (seienden) object as such, and another kind that attends to the ‘object’ in a manner that differentiates (auf den Gegenstand unterscheidend <zu> achten) and grasps in it the character of ‘existent’ (,seiend”).

(op. cit., p. 399)
True to his earlier accounts, Husserl is at pains in the 1912 analysis to insist on the necessity of grounding all categorial or ‘higher-level’ acts in a foundational consciousness of simple perception. Similarly, there can be no question of an autonomously produced ‘world’ of imaginative quasiexperience. Instead, Husserl insists on a one-directional universal convertibility: all perceptions may be converted into ‘mere speculation’ (*Sich-denken*) (cf. op. cit., p. 404), but simply adding a character of belief to pure fantasy can in no way generate actual experience (cf. op. cit., p. 396). As indicated, the basic question underlying both LU and the analysis in question concerns the grounds of valid theory. In the course of the decade following publication of LU Husserl’s understanding of categorial intuition has become notably more complex. More specifically, the question concerning the ‘genesis’ of theory has now become: *How can something like categorial intuition be at all possible?* Whereas LU tended to emphasize what was common to perception and ideation as forms of intuition, in the time leading up to his *Ideas* Husserl appears preoccupied with the specific difference between concrete and general intuition. By implication the meta-theoretical possibility of phenomenology is equally at stake. As Husserl makes clear in 1912, only an account of consciousness that clarifies its essential freedom from objective, positional modes of apprehension can hope to clarify adequately and positively theoretical models of experience. What his observations continually approach but stop short of announcing explicitly until the publication of *Ideas I* a year later, is that such basic freedom from the empirical takes the form of a fundamental power of imagination.

As shown, the 1912 text proposes a concept of imagination that extends to all species of intentional act. Such a concept allows for the possibility that ‘thought executed in a fully intuitive manner’ might be achieved on a purely imaginative basis (cf. op. cit., p. 375). On the supposition of this possibility Husserl contends that acts of expression, explication, conception and predication—in other words, all basic acts of conceptual thought—can be carried out in imagination (cf. op. cit., p. 374). Such a contention necessarily entails *absolving theory from any essential tie to empirical reality in its perceptual givenness*. In additional material appended to the 1912 text Husserl explicitly links this absolution of theory from the empirically real to the intuition of categorical structure first articulated in LU. In such cases of ‘higher level’ acts of intuition the intentional object is no longer really existent but rather a ‘non-existent (nicht-seiendes) but apparent thing’ (op. cit., p. 418). The ‘super-sensible’ intuition of general structures and features of experience is thus a direct apprehension of the ‘non-existent’. But the negativity of this ‘non’ signifies for Husserl in a positive sense ‘irreal’ or ideal being. What other name could be given to this intuition of the empirically non-existent than imagination?

It is not until Husserl’s reflections on phenomenological method in *Ideas I*, however, that this turn to the imagination that had been indicated already in his papers on epistemology from the 1890s is finally explicitly acknowledged. The basic insight into phenomenological method arrived at by Husserl over the course of two decades of sustained enquiry into the origins of knowledge might be formulated thus: *The way to theory for conscious life both in general and in the particular case of phenomenology is principally by way of imagination.* In Husserl’s own words: ‘There are reasons for the sake of which in phenomenology, as in all eidetic sciences, representations and, more precisely, *free fantasy achieves a position of primacy over perception*’ (*Ideas I*, pp. 130–
1). What these reasons are has already been clarified to some extent with reference to the
texts on imagination from 1904 to 1912. But in resolving to make public his mature
account of phenomenology in 1913 Husserl at once becomes much more forthright in his
affirmation of the fundamental significance of the imagination for phenomenological
method. Here for the first time Husserl unequivocally recognizes imagination as the very
ground of possibility of phenomenology itself. But as a descriptive science of
transcendental consciousness, so I wish to argue, phenomenology is merely an operation
of making explicit the pre-phenomenological dynamic of consciousness itself. This sense
of phenomenology as pointing back to a ‘pre-sense’ in the form of a basic imaginative
dynamic of consciousness will not gain adequate articulation until the treatment of
Heidegger in the second part of the present study. Nevertheless, the interpretation offered
here aims to show the extent to which Husserl’s thinking approaches ever closer to this
presense of phenomenology.

In the opening sections of Ideas I Husserl gives an account of ideation or the intuition
of essences that will be repeated without substantial change over the following two
decades. The general epistemological framework retained by Husserl from the time of
LU centres on a distinction of ‘truths of fact’ and ‘truths of essence’, a differentiation
inherited in the first instance from Leibniz. As a direct consequence of this distinction,
Husserl holds that acts of ideation need have no recourse to empirical data and so may
‘just as well proceed from non-experiential, non-reality-grasping (nichtdaseinerfassenden) but rather “merely imagined” intuitions’ (op. cit., p. 12). Insofar
as ideation furnishes the basis for ‘truths of essence’, the validity of such truths may
obtain without recourse to even ‘the slightest postulation of some individual existence’
(op. cit., p. 13). However, while insisting on the absolute distinction of sense perception
and intuition of essences Husserl is also at pains to deny that the latter may be viewed as
itself nothing more than a kind of imaginative apprehension. In a word, ‘free fantasy’
may be essential in the transition from concrete perception to ideation but erases itself, so
to speak, with the actual achievement of essential intuition. Again, Husserl’s anxiety to
retain the genuinely intuitive character of ideation leads him to reject any essential
affinity between it and imagination: ‘Apprehension and intuition of essence is a
multiform (vielgestaltig) act; in particular, the intuition of essence is an originary act of
givenness and as such the analogue of sense perception and not of imagination’ (op. cit.,
p. 43).

Given this guarded attitude what is it that makes Husserl affirm the importance of
imagination for phenomenological method? In a word, it is the freedom of imagining in
the sense of a freedom from the empirical or real that prompts Husserl to have recourse
to it in his account of ideation. As we shall see, as he refines his idea of phenomenology
Husserl places ever greater emphasis on the actualization of free possibilities within
phenomenological reflection. In Ideas I Husserl makes the by now familiar comparison
with the geometrician, who in producing countless new formations exhibits ‘a freedom
that affords him for the first time entrance to the expanse of essential possibilities with
their infinite horizons of essential knowledge’ (op. cit., p. 131). Analogously, the freedom
of essential research in phenomenology requires necessarily ‘operating in fantasy’ (ibid.).
Following his affirmation of an affinity between the aesthetic and the theoretical in the
1912 analysis of the imagination, Husserl draws attention in Ideas I to the pre-eminent
significance of the domain of aesthetic fantasy for phenomenological research:
An extraordinary amount of use is to be drawn from the presentations of history, to a greater extent from those of art and in particular poetry. [These latter] are indeed imaginings (Einbildungen), but with respect to the originality of new formations, the richness of individual characterizations and the completeness of motivation [they] tower above the achievements of our own fantasy. In addition, they may be converted with particular ease into completely clear imaginings (Phantasien) by virtue of the suggestive power of artistic means of presentation.

(op. cit., p. 132)

Yet this explicit affirmation of the key role of imagination in phenomenological method at once binds phenomenology to a quasi-aesthetic attitude of reflection that appears to exclude the historical or temporal in any sense. In his 1905 time lectures Husserl had maintained: ‘It is clear that the oft mentioned evidence, the inner truth and evidence of the cogitatio, would lose all meaning and sense if the temporal extension were to be excluded from the sphere of evidence and real givenness’ (VPZ, p. 438). In absolbing the intuition of essences from any necessary derivation from sense perception, however, Husserl hopes at once to remove phenomenological, ‘eidetic’ insights from the temporal horizon as from all forms of perspectival givenness. Accordingly, as already noted, the grounding of phenomenological method in imagination stems from recognition that ‘fiction’ constitutes the vital element of phenomenology, as of all eidetic sciences; that fiction is the source from which knowledge of “eternal truths” draws its sustenance’ (op. cit., p. 132).

The thoroughgoing equivocation with respect to the fundamental status of time for conscious life is a crucial index of the principal unresolved dualism at the heart of Husserl’s sense of phenomenology. According to the general line of argument put forward in the present investigation, this equivocation is intimately related to Husserl’s inability to arrive at a coherent notion of the imagination in the first phase of his development of phenomenology following the publication of LU. Accordingly, Husserl oscillates between two irreconcilable senses of the phenomenon: first as the place of appearance for what is recurrently given as super- or extra-temporal, that is, as the revealed a priori structures of mathematics, logic and experience itself in phenomenological analysis. According to a second basic sense of the phenomenon Husserl grasps it as the event whereby something is originally given or ‘donated’. The former basic sense grasps the phenomenon as the ideality and timelessness of immanently given essences; the latter, in contradistinction, as the real (reell)7 advent or ‘arrival’ of the intentional object in pre-objective or objectifying, constituting consciousness. However, as Husserl’s analysis of conscious life is in all respects directed in advance by an idea of synthetic unity, he cannot rest content with this polarization of two basic senses of the phenomenon but is driven to seek means for effecting an essential union of the ideal and the real, the super-temporal and temporaling consciousness as such. As we shall see, the shift in the post-war period to what Husserl called ‘genetic’ phenomenology constitutes a belated and ultimately unsuccessful effort to reconcile the two senses of the phenomenon identified.

We have seen in what way Husserl explicitly acknowledges the primacy of imagination with respect to eidetic method in Ideas I. His analysis of time eight years
earlier, however, had identified the punctual primal impression as the ultimate ground of being for consciousness. The question thus arises: Does reflection upon mental life reveal such a thing as an instantaneous uprising of novel content at each moment of the ‘flow’ of lived experience? Certainly, one would have to insist that with respect to the contents of mental acts the categories of recognition must be at work in advance. Thus, to take Husserl’s favoured example of a melody, the quality of the notes, the timbre, the cadence etc., are given only against a background of pre-given qualitative criteria. But what of the sounding of this note now, at this very instant—is there not here the event of absolute novelty to which Husserl’s concept of the originary impression refers? Without doubt novelty of a kind, but by no means absolute newness, that is to say, not an event essentially unconnected to foregoing acts of ‘empty intending’. For is this not precisely the key insight articulated in LU in relation to conscious life? Namely, that nothing can appear or be present to consciousness that is not grasped in some way in advance of its ‘bodily givenness’? All sensuous givenness would accordingly presuppose an a priori pre-figuration or projection. Further, such pre-figuration would lend to any concrete perception the quality of quasi-remembrance, as though any actual and immediate presence were given in advance in the form of implicit foreshadowings.8

Accordingly, Husserl’s own descriptions of the basic dynamic of consciousness in the form of the intention/fulfilment structure first set out in the early 1890s are clearly at odds with his repeated insistence upon the irreducibility of the fundamental originary impression. For such an impression is understood as a source point for all consciousness without necessary synthetic connection to other moments in the flow of consciousness. Grasping the impression as the essential origin of consciousness at once returns us to an atomised, punctual model of lived time and renders all forms of imagination mere empty mirrorings of an absolute sensuous original. The fact that Husserl nevertheless postulates a model of extended temporal synthesis and at once insists on the necessary role of non-impressional moments (retention and protention) in the constitution of time-consciousness shows that the very concept of impression is principally opposed to his actual phenomenological insights. Thus, everything indicates that this concept of the absolute primal impression is a historical prejudice. In fact, this idea of the primal impression and its accompanying concern that denying the necessity of a sensible source-point would render the flow of consciousness a mere empty reverberation containing no trace of sensuous ‘material, mark the persistent shibboleth of Husserl’s empiricist inheritance. Accordingly, the question for which the postulation of the primal impression is meant to be the solution relates precisely to what Kant called the receptivity of the human mind. In other words, it relates to the question of an original conscious act of material donation. In the context of Husserl’s phenomenology the response to this question must take the form of a rigorous description of the essential structures of ‘sensibility’ or of possible experience at its most basic level. In following the key developments in Husserl’s genealogy of experience after the publication of Ideas I in the next section, the possibility of locating a form of imaginative synthesis at the heart of primitive sensible givenness will be explored. The realization of this possibility would identify the imagination as the ultimate origin of conscious life itself.
Imagination and sensibility

From 1918 onwards Husserl dedicated much of his efforts to a phenomenological explication of sensibility under the title ‘analyses of passive synthesis’. In speaking of sensibility in terms of passivity Husserl follows Kant’s division of lower-order, non-cognitive mental acts as passive and higher-order acts of judgement and understanding as active or spontaneous in nature. But whereas for Kant the basic ‘threefold synthesis’ (KRV, A97) that makes knowledge possible is thoroughly active in character, Husserl speaks in the case of sensibility of a passive synthesis. Kant himself does refer to a ‘synopsis’ (ibid.) in the sense of a composite visualization at the level of receptivity, indicating that some process of unification already takes place before synthesis according to the categories, that is, prior to cognitive synthesis in its proper Kantian sense. Though not elaborated upon in the first addition of the first Critique and indeed no longer even mentioned in the B-Edition, the notion of synopsis can be shown to indicate unresolved tensions within Kant’s concept of the imagination. Such ambiguities are nowhere more apparent than in the B-Edition Transcendental Deduction:

Now, as all our intuition is sensible, so the imagination belongs…to sensibility. Insofar, however, as its synthesis is an exercise of spontaneity…so is the imagination a capacity (Vermögen) thus to determine sensibility a priori…a working of understanding upon sensibility and the initial application of understanding (at once the foundation of all others) to objects of our possible intuition.

(KRV, B151–2)

As the conduit of understanding and sensibility, what Kant calls the productive or transcendental imagination belongs equally to both basic ‘faculties’ of knowledge, forging the bridge between intuition and concept and so crossing the fundamental divide in Kant’s critical philosophy. While praising Kant for his ‘almost overwhelming genius’ in setting out ‘a first system of transcendental syntheses’ (Hua 11, pp. 125–6), Husserl makes clear that for him the Kantian exposition limits itself to ‘the problem of the constitution of the spatially mundane (raumweltlich)’ (op. cit., p. 126). The principal concern for any phenomenology of sensibility thus remains to be addressed:

Yet, the problem of the inner, purely immanent objectivity of the constitution, so to speak, of the inner world (Innenwelt), lies deeper and is essentially prior: precisely the problem of the constitution of the stream of lived experience of the subject as being for itself, as the field of all being properly and authentically belonging to it (des Subjekts als für es selbst seidend, als Feld alles ihm selbsteigen zugehörigen Seins).

(ibid.)

Thus, whereas Kant’s concept of synthesis and hence his idea of imagination were restricted to the explication of the world of ‘outer’ perception and experience—to what
Husserl calls transcendent or contingent beings the phenomenological concept of synthesis relates to that achievement of consciousness whereby something is given within the pure ‘inwardness’ of mental life. As Husserl remarks:

> It is here in immanence that the principally most general syntheses are to be sought. In particular, the syntheses of content that extend over and above the transcendental syntheses of time, insofar as they are, in accordance with their general character (Artung), intuitable (einhbar) as transcendentally necessary. (ibid.)

Such talk of the fundamental syntheses of immanence beyond those of temporality must be understood properly in the context of Husserl’s exposition. For such syntheses are in fact temporal in the strictest sense, that is, they constitute the most general forms of pre-predicative objectivation within transcendental subjectivity itself. So understood passive synthesis is nothing other than the most basic achievement of what Husserl calls in the 1905 time lectures ‘phenomenological time’ (cf. VPZ, p. 444). Just as this time of the ‘inner world’ was thought of there as a process of synthetic unification at the level of basic impressions, so in his lectures on passive synthesis some fifteen years later Husserl identifies phenomenological time as the ultimate source of unity in conscious life: This is the most general and primal synthesis that necessarily connects all particular objects that originally become something existent in passivity, whatever their content and whatever the means may be whereby they are constituted as unitary in content’ (Hua 11, p. 127).

As the ‘primal site’ (Urstätte) for the constitution of basic unity, time-consciousness is nothing other than ‘consciousness productive of a general form’ (op. cit., p. 128). But in what sense does immanent time produce the general unifying form of conscious life?

As productive, originary time-consciousness is not to be grasped phenomenologically as a kind of static template somehow superimposed upon the raw data of the senses. Instead, time is formal in the sense of a process of formation, in German Bildung. As a ‘production’ at the most basic level of conscious life, time is precisely the underlying ‘achievement of hyletic passivity’ (op. cit., p. 162) in the manner of a unifying connection within sensibility itself. Such productive activity within sensible passivity bears more than a passing resemblance to Kant’s notion of a ‘figurative synthesis’ performed by the productive imagination (cf. KRV, B151). As Husserl himself notes: This extensional formation (Formung) according to temporal form and local form (Zeitgestalt und Lokalgestalt) can be nothing other than that which Kant had in mind under the title figurative synthesis’ (op. cit., p. 164). Just as Kant had described synthesis in general as ‘the mere working of the imagination’ (cf. KRV, A77/B103) and the figurative synthesis in particular as ‘a hidden art in the depths of the human soul’ (op. cit., A141/B180–1), Husserl claims that with the disclosure of passive synthesis phenomenology is furnished with the means to solve ‘all the riddles of the “unconscious” (des Unbewuβt) and the various processes of “becoming conscious” (des Bewuβtwerdens)” (Hua 11, p. 165). The enigma of the unconscious centres for Husserl on the tension between opposed characterizations of consciousness at the most basic level as at once passively affective and spontaneously active. Husserl attempts to resolve this tension by grasping passive synthesis as constituted affectivity:
The achievement (Leistung) of passivity and at the lowest level the achievement of hyletic passivity therein is what constantly produces for the ego a field of pre-given (vorgegeben) and, by extension, possibly given objectivities [...] For the ego (Ich) what is constituted in relation to consciousness is only there insofar as it affects [consciousness]. Anything constituted is pre-given insofar as it exercises an affective stimulation (affektiver Reiz); it is given, insofar as the ego has responded to the stimulation with attention, grasped it in turning towards it. These are basic forms of objectivation (Vergegenständlichung).

(op. cit., p. 162)

At least formally this account of passive synthesis offered by Husserl runs parallel to the description given by Kant at the beginning of the first Critique of the fundamental role of sensible intuition within the economy of knowledge (cf. KRV, A19/B33). Furthermore, what is at stake here for both thinkers is an account of how space and especially time come to inform experience at the most basic level. As noted, Husserl claims that Kant’s notion of synthesis is ultimately limited to an attempt to account for the spatial field. As is well known, Kant saw his historical task as one of developing philosophical theory in such a way that it was able to account for the signal achievements of mathematical physics in the seventeenth and eighteen centuries. To this extent one could assume that he would invest far more energy in working out a cogent theory of space rather than time. It is all the more striking, therefore, that it is generally time that preoccupies Kant in his Critique of Pure Reason and that the reason given for this is the universal application of the temporal forms to both outer and inner sense (op. cit., A138/B177). As mentioned repeatedly, it is in the exposition of what Kant calls the ‘schematism’ of the pure concepts of understanding in the first Critique that the true significance of the temporal dimension for his genesis of knowledge becomes most apparent. As this will be discussed in detail in the second part dealing with Heidegger, at present a few broad indications must suffice.

The schematism, Kant tells us, concerns ‘the sensible condition under which pure concepts of reason can solely be used’ (op. cit., A136/B175). As concepts and intuitions are heterogeneous forms of representation there must be, Kant argues, some mental operation that makes possible the subsumption of the latter under the former. This mechanism will accordingly provide the condition of possibility for the application of the pure concepts of understanding or categories to what is empirically given. In other words, the schematism grounds any possible validity in the application of concepts and, by extension, the truth of any judgement whatever. Now the problem for Kant is that he requires a shared element to be present within empirical appearances and categories in order for the schematism to constitute an original unity of the two. This common element he identifies to be nothing other than time: grasped on the one hand as a partial content of empirical presentations and on the other as a general form of experience (cf. op. cit., A138–9/B177–8). More specifically, Kant posits a one-to-one correspondence of categories to what he calls ‘schemata’. As a ‘transcendental determination of time’ the schema is at once a ‘transcendental product of the imagination’ (transzendentales Produkt der Einbildungskraft) (op. cit., A142/B181).
This ‘production’ of time, however, turns out to be the actual *generation of time itself*. For just as Kant had spoken in the A-Edition Transcendental Deduction of an ‘apprehension of intuition’ that realizes the temporal form of sensibility through a double action of ‘traversing (Durchlaufen) the manifold and then composing (Zusammennehmen) it’ (op. cit., A99), he characterizes the first schema of quantity as a ‘production’ (Erzeugung) of ‘time itself in the apprehension of intuition’ (Apprehension der Anschauung) (op. cit., A142–3/B182). In the context of the schematism section this can only mean that intelligibility of any kind—of the empirical world but equally of the human mind itself taken as essentially non-empirical—is grounded in a basic operation of the imagination. To return to the original question concerning the epistemological status of time, with his doctrine of the schematism Kant is also explicitly identifying the transcendental constitution of the *temporal rather than spatial field* as basic to human understanding. Furthermore, in characterizing the schematism as a transcendental operation that actually produces time itself as the basic, universal form of experience Kant is in agreement rather than at odds with Husserl’s postulation of a passive synthesis—operating for both before the temporal determination of empirical individuals—at the level of material sensibility that makes possible all phenomenal givenness. Thus the affinity between Kant’s idea of the basic synthesis of transcendental imagination and Husserl’s notion of passive synthesis goes beyond any mere formal resemblance. In order to develop this point further, however, the structural significance of the idea of passive synthesis for Husserl’s genetic model of phenomenology needs to be more fully drawn out.

The task of phenomenologically elucidating the workings of passive synthesis—in Kantian terms the operations of figurative or transcendental imagination—Husserl entitles ‘radical theory’ (radikale Theorie) (cf. Hua 11, p. 165). The achievements of sensibility at the most elementary level of conscious life are correspondingly thematized within a field of study called ‘transcendental logic’. This constitutes a principal component of phenomenological research and is characterized by Husserl as the ‘ultimate clarifying science of theoretical operations (Leisten) and of all operations in accordance with ideas of reason’ (op. cit., p. 256). However, although Husserl thus characterizes the guiding ideas for the transcendental temporal constitution of objectivity in inner consciousness as rational, he ascribes the ‘action’ of objectivation itself, as we have seen, to a passive synthesis carried out by something closely resembling the Kantian productive imagination. Consequently, the source-point for the fundamental act of sense-donation (Sinngebung)—an act identical with the sense-animation (Sinnbelebung) or basic objectivation of LU—may be assimilated to the Kantian synthesis of the transcendental imagination. The primary origin of sense that forms the object of transcendental or pure logic is accordingly for Husserl identical with ‘the intentional achievements carried out in passivity, which are presupposed as the constant foundation of all ego-activity’ (beständiger Untergrund aller Ichaktivität) (ibid.). As Husserl explicitly states in a first version of the passive synthesis lectures dating from 1920/1, phenomenologically speaking Kant’s synthesis of the imagination is intentional constitution in the form of the essential passive productivity of consciousness. In Husserl’s words, phenomenological method discloses ‘the working together (Zusammenspiel) of the intentions of passive consciousness that constantly become more highly developed and in which a thoroughly
multiform \((\text{vielgestaltig})\), immanent and transcendent sense-donation passively operates’ (op. cit., p. 276).

How has the transcendental or productive imagination come to assume such central and thoroughly fundamental significance in Husserl’s phenomenology? The answer is that a certain reversal has occurred within his conception of the phenomenological outlook itself. The formal indication for this reversal is a shift from ‘static’ to ‘genetic’ phenomenology.\(^{12}\) In truth, elements of both kinds of phenomenology are present in Husserl’s writings from the beginning. This is demonstrated nowhere more clearly than in the early account of objectivation in LU. How, then, does the explicitly genetic perspective alter the character of Husserl’s sense of phenomenology? In a word, it reverses the previously held priority of intuition over intention, of ‘bodily’ presence over absence. Considered genetically, absence in the form of ‘empty intending’ \((\text{Leermeinen})\) is always prior in conscious life. In a paper from around 1920\(^{13}\) Husserl states:

Genetically, empty forms \((\text{Leergestalten})\) precede every kind of intuition [and so] every perception constitutive of objectivities \((\text{Gegenständlichkeiten})\) in all modes of appearance \((\text{Erscheinungsmodi})\). Nothing can be intuited \((\text{zur Anschauung kommen})\) which was not previously presented in an empty manner \((\text{leer vorstellig})\) and which finds fulfilment in intuition.

\[(\text{op. cit., p. 326})\]

Returning to the language of his early essays, Husserl also speaks in the first version of the passive synthesis lectures from the same period of ‘inauthentic’ presentations or ‘empty intentions’ as ‘fundamentally essential \((\text{grundwesentlich})\) for making possible all explicit and concrete consciousness’ (op. cit., p. 242). Together with this reversal of priority that places intention before intuition goes the transformation of the previously asserted absolute primacy of originary intuition. No longer absolved from its immediate horizon of non-presence, the constitution of the primal impression is finally recognized as requiring an essential contextuality: The constitutive achievement \((\text{constitutive Leistung})\) of the primal impression and of the retentions and protentions that constantly modify the impression is a single indissoluble achievement’ (op. cit., p. 325). As the original version of the passive synthesis lectures puts it, the primal impression represents an ‘elementary \text{but not self-standing} component’ of originary consciousness (op. cit., p. 234).

The consequences of Husserl’s adoption of the genetic stance are clear as is its motivation. If at the level of the most originary givenness of conscious life a passive synthesis is in operation, then some manner of immanent combination must be recognized and phenomenologically articulated. In order to count as a genuine operation any combination must involve a plurality of elements and thus some manner of heterogeneity. Given Husserl’s insistence upon the radical novelty of each primal impression one must suppose that the heterogeneity with respect to any plurality of such impressions is qualitative as well as quantitative. If the synthesis of passivity, sensibility or sense-donation is identical with originary time-consciousness then what is signified by these equivalent terms can only be the primal impression \text{within its co-original context of retentional and protentional horizons}. The original weaving together of the impression and impressional horizons thus constitutes at once the passive synthesis of sensibility that
Husserl equates with the Kantian transcendental imagination. As Husserl grasps originary time-consciousness as the fundamental synthetic structure of conscious life, it follows from the grounding of the temporal synthesis in passive or imaginative synthesis that the original sense of intentional consciousness in Husserl is imaginative. In other words, if originary time-consciousness constitutes the essence of subjectivity then the ‘life’ of such consciousness is at once a ‘having in absence’ of that to which consciousness relates. Thus, according to Husserl’s idea of intentional consciousness, the original source of sense in human experience is the obscure working of imaginative synthesis. Consequently it might be said that it is within the darkness of imaginative metamorphosis that both human experience itself and any possible theoretical elucidation of such experience originates.

Eidetic variation and imaginative possibility

The interpretation of Husserl set out above began by drawing attention to a basic vacillation with respect to the intuitive or non-intuitive nature of the imagination. Though a broad notion of intuition is put forward in LU Husserl is at pains there to distinguish absolutely the imagination from both sense perception and categorial intuition. In the early lectures on time Husserl is equally wary of any attempt to assimilate the originary temporal horizon constituted by retentions and protentions to any manner of imaginative presentation. However, fundamental tensions remained in Husserl’s phenomenological elucidation of experience both with regard to the account of the intention/fulfilment dynamic and the analysis of inner time-consciousness. With the turn to genetic phenomenology all the key Husserlian terms remain intact but a different perspective is brought to bear on conscious life. The reversal of the earlier prioritizing of intuitive fulfilment over empty intention according to which intention as the act of ‘having in absence’ is now grasped as preceding all intuition offers, as we have seen, perhaps the most basic consequence of this shift in perspective. This reversal is at once accompanied by the accentuation of passive synthesis as fundamental to all forms of conscious life. Drawing on Husserl’s references to Kant the notion of passive synthesis emerged as equivalent to the Kantian figurative synthesis of the transcendental imagination. According to Kant, in its most basic operation such synthesis actually produces time itself as a universal form of lived experience. However, as intimated, Husserl at once repeats the Kantian gesture of acknowledging the importance of the imagination for his analysis of consciousness only to subsequently fail in the task of adequately drawing out the consequences of such an insight. In order to underscore the principal points of the interpretation put forward, Husserl’s articulation of the phenomenological method of eidetic variation given in the mid-1920s will now be considered in the broader context of developments in his thought at that time.

In the course of a lecture series on ‘Phenomenological Psychology’ from the summer semester of 1925 Husserl offers a detailed account of the phenomenological method of ideation or the intuition of essences whereby the a priori is grasped (Hua 9, p. 72). As shown, the notion of direct intuition of ideal structures of experience constitutes from the time of the breakthrough to phenomenology in LU onwards a basic postulate in Husserl’s thought. At the time of LU Husserl explicitly ruled out the possibility that such super-
sensible perception might refer back to some mode of imaginative presentation. However, following the announcement in *Ideas I* that fantasy represents the key to all eidetic sciences, Husserl’s characterization of eidetic variation over a decade later shows that the acknowledgement of the central role of the imagination in phenomenological method has become an established position in his later thought. From the outset of his 1925 lectures Husserl underscores the basic point that in order to grasp essential structures empirical reality must in some way be held at arm’s reach or ‘neutralized’. As ever in his accounts of phenomenological method, Husserl is at pains in the analysis of eidetic variation under consideration to make clear that neutralization signifies a change in the how rather than the what of experience. Accordingly, the empirical world remains as it is, but it is ‘seen’ from another perspective. In order to explicate this shift of perspective Husserl has recourse to imagination in the form of ‘fantasy’: ‘A pure eidos treats the factual reality (*faktische Wirklichkeit*) of the individual cases aimed at in variation as completely irrelevant. A reality is treated as one possibility among others, indeed as an arbitrary fantasy-possibility’ (op. cit., p. 74). This arbitrariness of the imaginative presentation, however, in no way excludes necessity: Those things that within themselves admit of variation in the arbitrariness of fantasy bear within them a necessary structure, an eidos, and thereby a law of necessity’ (op. cit., p. 75).

Within the 1925 account four distinct phases or aspects of the method of ideation may be discerned. As a first stage Husserl speaks of selecting some factual existent to guide the variation. This operates as an exemplar or paradigm (*Vorbild*) ‘for the systematic formation (*Gestaltung*) of pure fantasy’ (op. cit., p. 72). It is at once made clear however that such recourse to empirical data is not necessary: ‘As point of departure an experience was thereby considered. Manifestly, even a mere fantasy or what intuitively and objectively appears therein might equally have served’ (op. cit., p. 73). Following the selection of an exemplary content a process of mental variation constitutes the second phase of ideation. Once again Husserl underscores both the necessary initial shift in attitude as well as the strange conjunction of freedom and necessity at play in this imaginative operation:

The type (*Gattung*) as pure eidos, however, can only be intuited (*zur Erschauung kommen*) if we do not seek the real and realities but rather raise (*hinaufheben*) all reality to pure possibility, to the realm of free will (*freies Belieben*). Then it becomes apparent however that free will also has its peculiar bounds (*eigenartige Gebundenheit*), insofar as every variation bears its eidos within it as a law of necessity.

(op. cit., pp. 75–6)

The process of variation produces in its traversal of data what Husserl calls the ‘variational manifold’ (*Variationsmannigfaltigkeit*). The prior selection of an exemplary datum ensures that this manifold at the very moment of its inception exhibits some basic level of order. To clarify this point Husserl remarks that in variation it is not a matter of random connections or associations of ‘passive fantasy’ but rather of the ‘pure, autonomous activity of imaginative transformation’ (*pure eigene Aktivität phantasiefähigten Umfingierens*) (op. cit., p. 77). In light of what has been said about the idea of passive synthesis it is clear that in the case of ideation a higher-level ‘repetition’
of imaginative activity is in question. As opposed to what might be called the ‘dative imagination’ of passive synthesis at work in the initial constitution or giving of the temporal field of experience, ideation points back to a higher-order constructive or ‘genitive imagination’ that consciously realizes the ideal structures immanent within but inexplicit at the level of primal sense-donation. It is through this latter imaginative repetition that for Husserl the temporal horizon is somehow elided as ‘the eidos, the Platonic idea, the essentially general (das Wesensallgemeine) comes into view’ (op. cit., p. 76).

The third and fourth phases of ideation take the form respectively of what Husserl calls ‘unifying connection in continuous coincidence’ (einheitliche Verknüpfung in fortlaufender Deckung) and ‘the selective identification of what is congruous as opposed to the differences’ (die herausschauende Identifizierung des Kongruierenden gegenüber den Differenzen) (op. cit., p. 78). What is most evident in this account of eidetic method is the fine balance Husserl is attempting to maintain between the heterogeneity of elements involved in variation and the unity and simplicity of the ideal structure and its apprehension. Once again Husserl evinces a fundamental concern to show that in every case of ideation unity and sameness must precede and so ground multiplicity and difference. Appealing directly to the Platonic motif of the ‘one over many’ (πολλῶν), necessity of all discourse and theory, Husserl insists that the result of eidetic variation is essentially distinct from any mere aggregation of empirical data yielding an empirical generalization insofar as in the former case all difference is subordinated to ideal unity:

Thus every difference in the transposition (Überschiebung) with other differences opposed to it refers to a new commonality (Allgemeines) to be selectively apprehended (herauszuschauen), here [referring] to a form as to a commonality of the differences that overlay one another and come respectively to be unified in opposition.

(op. cit., pp. 80–1)

The particular significance of this subordination of difference to identity is that it is through a putative operation of the imagination that such unification is to be achieved. Bearing in mind Husserl’s contemporaneous identification of the temporal synthesis with the Kantian transcendental imagination (passive in nature for Husserl, active for Kant), if the Husserlian notion of imagination as Phantasie is to maintain even basic consistency then the temporal synthesis must itself be a preeminent instance of unification. In the posthumously published work Experience and Judgement that is composed largely of material from the early 1920s we find just such a claim: ‘Unity of temporal intuition is the condition of the possibility of the unity of intuition of any connected plurality of objects that are temporal objects. Every other connection of such objects presupposes therefore temporal unity’ (EU, p. 214). In both its basic, passive form as also its conscious and active operation fantasy is thus for Husserl an act of unification in intuition.

Theoretical accounts of the imagination tend to ascribe to it either a fundamental power to unify disparate elements and so constitute a continuum of some kind or else to view it in terms of operations of disruption and discontinuity. In the case of Husserl and ultimately, as we shall see, Heidegger, the former idea is predominant. Imagination as
disruption is perhaps best articulated when it is grasped not within an epistemological or ontological framework but rather within a ‘libidinal economy’. The twentieth century theories of imagination influenced by Freud such as that put forward by Breton in his surrealist writings represent the other face of the imagination. This raises the broader question of the relationship between imagination and art, something that has received only marginal attention with the present analysis of Husserl, but will emerge as central when considering the significance of imagination for Heidegger’s sense of phenomenology. For now however it is a matter of underscoring the fact that Husserl’s positive appreciation of imagination rests entirely on a model of it as unifying and integrative and that this model indicates a certain basic decision with respect to what the imagination is. Certainly, this decision on Husserl’s part is far from necessary and serves to indicate the limits of his sense of phenomenology in light of its alignment with a fundamental prejudice at work in western thought from Plato onwards. This prejudice might be formulated in the following way: As a mental power the imagination is incapable of any autonomous attainment of truth or knowledge; it is necessary and indeed almost irrepressible within any overall mental economy but it must at all costs be subordinated to truly rational powers of mind. The history of western thought has consistently borne out this prejudice from the warnings of Plato against the deceptions of perspective in mimetic art to those of Kant against the dangers of fanaticism due to an over-active imagination. As Nietzsche showed in The Birth of Tragedy this fear of excess within western thought is grounded in the peculiar social history of ancient Greece and its xenophobic demonization of the eastern cult of Dionysus. Though the imagination has from time to time reasserted its rights (in the modern period most notably in Romanticism from Herder to Nietzsche himself), in general a doctrine of sobriety on guard against imaginative intoxication has been consistently preached and enforced. To enter into detailed discussion of theories of imagination in the tradition of western thought would obviously transgress the limits of the present investigation. Further comparison of Husserl with Kant must suffice, therefore, to indicate the historical predetermination of the Husserlian account of imaginative synthesis.

The four phases of ideation have emerged as exemplification, variation, unification and identification. Initially it was made clear that both the selection of exemplary data and the process of variation itself might be achieved without recourse to empirical actuality. Thus the first two stages of eidetic method may be adequately (or as Ideas I suggests, even preferably) carried out in imaginative ‘free fantasy’. However, Husserl is at once at pains to insist on the immanent lawfulness of the operations of free fantasy, in order to leave no room for doubt that here ‘free’ denotes only free from empirical or sensible determination. In view of the two remaining stages of unification and identification the question thus becomes whether the imagination is understood to operate both lawfully and autonomously in the first two phases. In a text from 1918 Husserl remarks that free fantasy lacks ‘the determination of predelineation’ (die Bestimmtheit der Vorzeichnung) (Hua 23, p. 523). By the early 1920s, however, he contends that fantasy in the form of the ‘as if’ modification of actual experience ‘has its own constitutive reason’ (constitutive Vernunft) (op. cit., p. 559). In Husserlian terms, this ascription of rationality to free fantasy means precisely that purely imaginative synthesis is ‘motivated’ in the sense of being predetermined or ‘predelineated’. By its very nature free fantasy cannot admit of empirical predetermination, for in that case it would be a
question of an empirical and not a ‘transcendental’ power of imagination in the Kantian but equally Husserlian sense. However, rather than an empirical event, the method of ideation denotes a certain ‘purely spiritual activity’ (*rein geistiges Tun*) (Hua 9, p. 87). Accordingly, the predetermination of free fantasy can only take the form of rational ‘motivation’ and the role of imagination in eidetic method becomes entirely subject to the jurisdiction of reason.

Once again it appears as though Husserl is making moves analogous to those made by Kant in his account of epistemic role of the transcendental imagination. As already noted, in the ‘Transcendental Deduction’ of the first *Critique* Kant distinguishes the purely intellectual synthesis of the pure concepts or categories of the understanding from what he calls the figurative synthesis of the transcendental imagination (cf. KRV, B151 ff.). As all intellectual activity refers for Kant to preceding sensible form and content, figurative synthesis as the mental activity that realizes sensible form is said to precede and so furnish the basis for all intellectual synthesis. But rather than acknowledge the transcendental imagination as an autonomous mental power Kant insists on viewing it as a ‘first application’ (op. cit., B152) of the understanding to sensible data. As the schematism chapter makes clear, the synthetic activity of the transcendental imagination relates not to concrete empirical individuals but rather to general forms of experience. Accordingly Kant remarks: The schema is in itself in every case only a product of the imagination. But the synthesis of the imagination does not aim at any individual intuition, but rather solely at the unity in the determination of sensibility’ (op. cit., A140/B179). As a non-sensible form of synthesis the activity of the transcendental imagination is, as the Transcendental Deduction makes clear, subordinate to what Kant identifies as the highest principle of all intuition with respect to the understanding, formulated as follows: ‘that every manifold of intuition stands under the conditions of the originary synthetic unity of apperception’ (op. cit., B136). ‘Apperception’ here stands for self-consciousness, so that this pre-eminent vestige of Cartesian thought in Kant’s critical thinking is precisely the point at which the Kantian and Husserlian conceptions of imagination coincide.

More detailed consideration of Kant’s account of the various schemata confirms its apparent affinity with Husserl’s description of eidetic method. Following his table of categories with its four basic divisions, Kant gives the following determinations: the schema of quantity is temporal sequence (*Zeitreihe*), as product time *itself* (*Zeiterzeugung*); the schema of quality is temporal content (*Zeitinhalt*), as product time *fulfilment* (*Zeiterfüllung*); the schema of relation is temporal order (*Zeitordnung*), as product duration (*Zeitdauer*); finally, the schema of modality is temporal totality (*Zeitbegriff*), as product belonging to time as a whole (*Zeitall*) (cf. op. cit., A144–146/B183–186). If these four schemata are compared to Husserl’s four stages of ideation remarkable correspondences emerge. Just as Kant’s first schema corresponds to number (*numerus*) as the *a priori* mental production of the temporal field, Husserl’s first stage of exemplification represents the mere givenness of something (before determination). It is also striking that such bare sensible givenness relates in Husserl not to sense perception and its attendant attitude of positing empirical reality but rather to data of pure fantasy (an indication of Husserl’s more radical idealism). To Kant’s temporal content or sensation (*sensatio*) there corresponds Husserl’s phase of variation whereby the manifold is produced; rather than merely something, there is at this stage a definite (though not yet consciously determined) something. Duration or continuity (*constans*) as a Kantian
schema relates to Husserl’s phase of unification, whereby the manifold is ordered and granted definite dimensions and internal consistency. This would be the work of understanding in Kant’s terms, but a rational achievement for Husserl who uses the term ‘reason’ indifferently to refer to what Kant distinguished as understanding (Verstand) and reason (Vernunft). Finally, the determination of something as enduring for a particular stretch of time in view of the whole of time or eternity (aeternitas) in Kant has its equivalent in Husserl’s last stage of eidetic identification. To truly identify an eidos it must be grasped in relation to other superordinate ideas; to take Husserl’s own example, the eidos red is subordinated to the eidos colour (cf. Hua 9, p. 85). This final phase represents for Husserl as for Kant a closest possible approximation to the ideal of pure thought or ‘purely mental activity’, an ideal that entails a curious elision of time; for Kant rational thought beyond temporal specificity is without objective validity, but for Husserl such thought is at its end-point a form of direct intuition that founds all knowledge of the objective world. Accordingly, for Kant transcendental imagination is an index of the necessary limits of pure reason in relation to empirical reality, whereas for Husserl the same power indicates the autonomy of reason with respect to the empirical and the power of the human mind to convert all actual data into pure possibilities.

Immediately following his account of eidetic method Husserl determines the ultimate purpose of his description as an effort to arrive at ‘a radical conceptual division of the world into essential world-regions (Weltgebiete)’ (op. cit., p. 87). What goes by the name of ‘psychology’ in the lectures thus refers to phenomenology in terms of a rigorous analysis of how things make their appearance in and through mental acts. The initial move towards such an analysis takes the form of revealing the world of experience in such a way ‘that we bring possible experience (Erfahrung) into play’ (op. cit., p. 88). Broadening our comprehension from actual to possible experience offers, according to Husserl, the possibility of grasping the world as a whole and so discerning its ‘necessary structural forms’ (notwendige Strukturformen) (op. cit., p. 89), ‘the essential structure of the world of experience’ (Wesensstruktur der Erfahrungswelt) (op. cit., p. 90). As all empirical data allow a conversion into experience ‘as if, the eidetic method has a potentially universal application (op. cit., p. 92). It is clear, however, that Husserl is by no means postulating any number of possible worlds parallel to the manifest actual world. Rather it is a matter of revealing universal structures immanent but inexplicit within the world as immediately experienced. Once again, Husserl explicitly recognizes a close relationship to Kant: ‘Certainly an essential affinity (Wesensverwandtschaft) of the problem of the evident structure of the world of possible experience with the problems of the transcendental aesthetic and analytic, indeed even the dialectic of Kant cannot fail to be recognized’ (op. cit., pp. 94–5). As shown, however, Husserl’s idea of the universal potentiality to convert all actual empirical data into merely possible data appears to have a more radically ‘idealist’ significance than Kant’s notion of possible experience.

The method of eidetic variation makes use of fantasy in order to produce an open-ended manifold within which the pre-selected exemplary datum may be ‘purified’ in the movement towards eidetic form. Thus, through Einbildung (imagination) the Vorbild (exemplar) is subject to an Umbildung (reconstruction). How is the individual datum converted or metamorphosed into ideal structure? Is what Husserl calls free fantasy anything more than the name for a mysterious alchemical transformation—a strange catalyst for an even stranger product, namely eidetic intuition? Though a certain opacity
is undoubtedly present within Husserl’s account of ideation, an important clue for rendering it reasonably clear can be gleaned from his idea of possible experience. This notion features centrally in his later writings on imagination between 1921 and 1924 and so may be safely assumed to be in play in the 1925 lectures. In the text from 1918 already cited Husserl makes the following comment: ‘From the present (aktuell) ego there issues forth…a realm of present real and possible experience (aktuelle Wirkliche und Mögliche Erfahrung) and this possibility does not signify fantasy-possibility, but rather [possibility] that is within certain bounds predelineated along with real experience,…motivated by it’ (Hua 23, p. 522). An analysis from 1922/3, by contrast, insists that the notions possible experience and fantasy-experience are equivalent. Thus we find in the opening paragraphs of this later study a statement that stands in stark opposition to the 1918 position: ‘Experience “in” fantasy is itself possible experience’ (op. cit., p. 548). As noted, possible experience refers in Husserl no more than in Kant to some independently existing possible world(s). Instead, possible experience relates only to structures of the unitary and unique immediate world of experience. Although their ultimate reference is the same Husserl posits a principal distinction between possibilities that relate to individual empirical objects or states of affairs and what he calls ‘pure possibilities’ which have no such relation: ‘A pure possibility would be such that in it no individual reality is co-posited as a reality. It is thus an objectivity (Gegenständlichkeit) that is constituted exclusively by fantasizing quasi-experience’ (ibid.). In what sense does the purely imaginative object lack individuality? Husserl’s answer is that such objects lack definite time determination. Thus, whereas what is perceived contains within itself ‘also individual temporal determination’, the object of quasi-experience does indeed have a temporal horizon but this horizon ‘is undetermined and to be filled out arbitrarily by fantasy’ (op. cit., p. 551).

In Experience and Judgement the same question of the relation between fantasy and time is taken up and the same position taken. Accordingly Husserl remarks:

What is absent in mere fiction (bloße Fiktion) is that which distinguishes really existent (wirklich existierende) objects: absolute tempo-ral position, ‘real’ time, as absolute, genuine uniqueness (absolute, ernstliche Einmaligkeit) of the individual content given in temporal form (Zeitgestalt). More precisely: time is indeed presented (vorgestellt), even intuitively presented, but it is time without real and proper situatedness of position (eigentliche Örtlichkeit der Lage)—precisely a quasi-time.

(EU, p. 197)

More specifically, the aspect of time lacking in the case of imaginative objects is temporal order (Zeitordnung). This order is understood by Husserl to be rigidly fixed. Indeed this stability of temporal order underpins for him our very sense of the empirical world. Such a world is what it is and nothing more, whereas a certain ‘always more’ still to be directly apprehended characterizes the objects of the imagination: ‘In the real world nothing remains open—it is as it is. The world of fantasy “is” and is in this or that way insofar as it has been fantasized by virtue of fantasy. No fantasy is at an end such that it would not admit of a free unfolding (freie Ausgestaltung) in the sense of a new determination’ (op. cit., p. 202). Thus, if the temporal space of the empirical individual is
characterized by fixed order, the possibilities of imagination are by contrast ‘fluid’ *(fleißend)* (cf. Hua 23, p. 553).

One of the principal points of agreement between Husserl and Kant on time—an agreement which at once motivates a shared scepticism with respect to the epistemic function of the imagination—relates to the function of time in providing a unitary basis for experience as a whole. Just as the schematism in Kant is ultimately viewed as a transcendental temporal determination of the sensible manifold *by the understanding*, in *Experience and Judgement* Husserl views temporal form as the foundation for the cohesion of the real world as opposed to any ‘quasi-world’ of fantasy:

> The unity of time plays here its particular role as condition of the possibility of a unity of the world, of the correlate of the unity of ‘one’ experience and so to speak of the ground upon which all inconsistencies operate in the form of ‘opposition’ (*Widerstreit*).

*(EU, p. 202)*

In the same place Husserl also indicates why for him it is ultimately only sensible intuition that can furnish direct apprehension of empirical individuals. This is so in light of the fact that ‘*individuation* and identity of the individual, just as the identification based upon it, is *only possible within the world of actual experience on the basis of absolute temporal position*’ (op. cit., p. 203). In the 1922/3 analysis of imagination this same point is expressed from a different perspective: ‘An individual indeed cannot be fictively presented in its entirety’ (*Ein Indivuduum läßt sich eigentlich nicht voll und ganz fingieren*) (Hua 23, p. 552).

In the account of eidetic method given at the beginning of this section it was noted how Husserl characterizes the initial stage of phenomenological method as a conversion of actual empirical data into merely possible imaginative data. Accordingly, eidetic science and phenomenology pre-eminently operate at the outset in an attitude of indifference towards the immediate givens of sense perception. If the objects of such perception are necessarily temporally determined, the fundamental temporal form of experience, by contrast, cannot itself be grasped by sensible intuition. In order to grasp time in the sense of the basic ‘form’ of actual experience recourse to ‘possible experience’ is required and such recourse is achieved, as we have seen, by pure fantasy. Accordingly, the methodological use of the imagination in phenomenological reflection does not for Husserl relate to individual temporal objects or even to such objects in their totality but rather to time itself as a basic structure of all possible experience: “Unity in fantasy” is manifestly nothing other than the *unity of a possible experience or the neutrality-modification of a experiential unity*. That however provides precisely the ground for the *essence*—unity of experience’ (EU, p. 200). If the imagination is essentially precluded from grasping the concrete individual as such, then this aversion to the empirical is precisely what attracts Husserl to this mental power. The methodological function of imagination in eidetic intuition thus bears out the initial determination of Husserl’s sense of phenomenology offered at the beginning of the present enquiry, namely, the *meaningfulness to consciousness of the intentional object in its intuitive absence*. Earlier attention was drawn to the fact that with the shift to genetic phenomenology Husserl finally makes this sense of phenomenology explicit in his later
account of phenomenological method. In reconstructing the development of Husserl’s thought above the key index of resistance against openly acknowledging the pivotal role of imagination was identified as the priority of the primal impression in the 1905 analysis of time. If there is a genuine shift in Husserl’s idea of phenomenology in the early 1920s then one could expect to find a revision of the time analysis. What evidence is there for such a revision?

If the imagination in the form of free fantasy constitutes a temporal horizon lacking absolute position for any of its objects, does it not follow that the mind is able to apprehend a temporal field without privileged moments of absolute orientation? If such is the case then the original analysis of time-consciousness offered by Husserl according to three basic temporal forms including the privileged source-point of the primal impression must be rejected. In the 1922/3 text on imagination Husserl senses this and remarks:

Does [the temporal indeterminacy of fantasies] not have significance for the originary constitution of time-consciousness? Can one still say that the primal impression as such founds (stiftet) the individual point of time? Does it not do this in combination, by virtue of the fulfilment of protention? That leads to difficulties. The primal impression in all events founds in an original way; it is the origin of individuality (Urquelle der Individualität) and is itself individual in a primordial way (urindividuell). Yet it is what is it—something dependent (Unselbständiges) in the flow and only conceivable in its place. How is it then with respect to fantasy as representation (of a presence) (Vergegenwärtigung (einer Gegenwart))? It grants a possible but not actual presence and thereby no individual presence. But that is really rather strange.

(Hua 23, p. 552).

The strangeness that Husserl feels here is, according to the interpretation offered, due to his resisting the thought that sense perception itself as a conscious engagement with the empirical world might have the fundamental character of repetition or representation. Such a characteristic should not be confused with any form of pictorial reproduction analogous to the way Plato conceives of the world of the senses as somehow copied from non-sensible originals. By placing the notion of passive synthesis at the centre of his phenomenological explication of experience, Husserl at once renders untenable his earlier determination of the primal impression as the source point of all consciousness and being. For if such synthesis constitutes a unity of experience ‘in the “subconscious”’ (im ‘Unterbewusstsein’) (EU, p. 210) in advance of all actual perception, then all conscious acts of perception are necessarily passively prefigured.

In the previous chapter it was noted how Husserl assimilated passive synthesis to Kant’s figurative synthesis. In this concluding section it has been shown how Husserl’s later account of eidetic method also rests on imaginative operations, in this case consciously directed acts of imaginative transformation and variation. If the interpretation proposed is tenable then the phenomenological elucidation of experience is possible only because experience itself is from the base up imaginatively constituted. In the interpretation offered Husserl has been presented as standing in the shadow of the Kantian legacy and thus as essentially involved in a philosophical project to overcome
the sensation/conception dichotomy that began with early German Idealism. Although Husserl’s actual analyses often succeed in such an overcoming his self-interpretation fails to resist the attraction of a rigid division between real and ideal. Accordingly his idea of phenomenology remains fatally compromised by rationalist bias.

The interpretation carried out does not aim at refutation or defence but rather a productive transformation of Husserlian phenomenology. In bringing to light some aspects of what was determined at the outset as the ‘sense’ of phenomenology in Husserl the sole purpose has been to construct a position that is at once quite distinct from Husserl’s self-interpretation and yet consistent with Husserl’s actual analyses. Throughout this construction material has been selected to further the interpretative stance adopted. Yet, to underscore the point, the whole interpretation has been carried out in full awareness of its distance from what are readily recognizable as Husserl’s intellectual predispositions. Again, the goal was to make these predispositions apparent in a productive manner through the focus on Husserl’s analyses of the imagination. In grasping rational activity as unification of an intuitive manifold and granting a genuine epistemic function to the imagination only insofar as its operations are rationally motivated, Husserl offers an unremittingly one-sided idea of imagination. For all Husserl’s genial insights, ultimately the imagination is ascribed no autonomous constructive power within either pre-theoretical or theoretical forms of conscious life. In this respect the sole achievement of Husserl’s later thought is a limited rehabilitation of imaginative presentations within eidetic method. But even here variation is understood as motivated in advance by a drive towards rational unification. As a result the positive potential of imaginative apprehension to grasp plurality and difference without subordination to conceptual unity is never acknowledged by Husserl. In turning now to Heidegger an opportunity is given to examine the possibilities of phenomenology in a thinker free of Husserl’s rationalist prejudices. It is in Heidegger’s phenomenological analyses of the imagination that a radical understanding of the possible imaginative production of time as the basic horizon of human understanding comes into view. It is also in the context of Heidegger’s hermeneutical transformation of the phenomenological project that the imaginative apprehension both of difference and of radical singularity takes centre stage.
Part II
The pre-sense of phenomenology (Martin Heidegger, 1920–36)
Historicity and the hermeneutic conversion of phenomenology

Introduction

Whereas Husserl’s intellectual origins lie in the domain of mathematics, Heidegger took up his philosophical enquiries after a prolonged engagement with theology. This theological background is evident in Heidegger’s early Freiburg lectures, given as a Privatdozent from 1919 to 1923. Although Heidegger had gained an intimate familiarity with Husserl’s published work some years before, the latter’s move to Freiburg in 1916 naturally precipitated an intensified engagement with Husserl’s phenomenological enquiries. Heidegger’s lectures from the early Freiburg period attempt, thematically speaking, to integrate a basic concept of the historical into the phenomenological framework. However, it is clear that from the outset such integration is for Heidegger not simply a matter of filling a gap in Husserl’s account of experience. Rather, it involves a conversion from the base up of the Husserlian idea of phenomenology. Identifying some of the key features of this conversion forms a necessary preparation to following Heidegger’s thought through to his decisive encounter with Kant and the Kantian understanding of the imagination. An essential aspect of Heidegger’s hermeneutic transformation of phenomenological research is an insistence on the explicit engagement with the philosophical tradition. The hermeneutical sense of phenomenology necessitates abandoning the idea of presuppositionless enquiry in favour of an effort to determine the suitability or otherwise of concepts taken over from philosophical history. As Heidegger puts it in 1920, it is a matter of recognizing ‘that it is naivety to believe one might today or some day begin over again in philosophy and be so radical that one dispenses with all so-called tradition’ (GA 59, 1920, p. 29).

According to Heidegger it is precisely such naivety that vitiates Husserl’s phenomenological analyses. More precisely, Husserl’s assertion of transcendental consciousness as the proper domain of phenomenological research from the time of his Ideas I (1913) onwards betrays the influence of a historical prejudice that finds its consummate modern expression in the Cartesian subject. This prejudice holds that the fundamental grounding of all knowledge claims is provided by an inalienable intimacy of the mind with itself as an agent of thought or cogito. This epistemological principle at once conceals an ontological foundation, namely, the idea that I am essentially a thing that thinks or res cogitans. As Heidegger is wont to remind us, this idea finds its initial expression already in Plato who identifies thought as a ‘silent dialogue of the soul with itself (cf. Sophist, 263e) and even more tellingly in Aristotle’s determination of the highest state of mind as noēsis noēsiōs (thought of thought) (cf. Metaphysics, 1074b33...
ff.). However, Heidegger does not hold that Husserl merely reinscribes this intellectualist prejudice without significant modifications. Particularly in the *Logical Investigations* which constitute the breakthrough to phenomenology, Husserl’s basic task is to lay bare the *pre-objective* acts which make possible all objective or explicitly thematic consciousness. As shown, these acts are identified there as in each case a direct engagement not with ‘ideas’ or ‘representations’ of the mind but rather with extra-mental things themselves either in the mode of mere intention or direct intuition. From this determination of the basic act of mind as direct relatedness to the nonmental it follows that all reflective acts must be considered derivative rather that originary in mental life. In this way Husserl overturns the primacy granted to mental self-relation by Descartes and maintained, albeit in an attenuated form, by Kant.

Nevertheless the basic rationalist bias of Husserlian phenomenology becomes increasingly evident from the publication of *Ideas I* onwards. In the present enquiry this bias was indicated by consideration of Husserl’s sustained subordination of the apprehension of multiplicity through acts of the imagination to the grasping of unity and identity by rationally motivated acts. In this way Husserl basically reasserts the mental economy explicated in Kant’s critical philosophy. As will emerge, it is in an effort to overturn the hegemonic intellectualist reading of Kant by the Marburg neo-Kantians that Heidegger enters into a protracted engagement with Kantian thought in the mid-1920s. At the same time, Heidegger is intent on purging Husserlian phenomenology of the same intellectualist prejudice. Adequate understanding of this dispute over the significance of Kant’s thought, however, calls for a foregoing clarification of the *positive* tasks of Heidegger’s idea of a hermeneutic phenomenology.

**Destruction and historicity**

In his lectures from summer semester 1920, whose title—‘Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression’—already indicates the decisive meeting point of Husserlian phenomenology and Kantian thought, Heidegger gives for the first time a detailed account of his idea of ‘phenomenological destruction’. This idea of destruction is clearly meant to substitute for Husserl’s notion of phenomenological method as ‘reduction’. Whereas for Husserl the phenomenological reduction brings about the shift from the ‘natural attitude’ to a phenomenological or reflective comportment, Heidegger’s destruction makes accessible what he calls the ‘hermeneutical situation’. The term ‘reduction’ signifies literally a ‘leading back to…’ and suggests a movement towards a first principle that would furnish something akin to a basic axiom for a deductive process. Heidegger’s German equivalent for the term ‘destruction’ (*Destruktion*) is *Abbau*, literally a dismantling or ‘de-building’. The destruction reverses what Heidegger in this period calls the building up or blockage (*Verbauen*) of human existence. Destruction is accordingly a razing which provides an open space for existence to view itself, that is, a *Lichting* not primarily in the sense of an illumination but rather as a lifting up or removal of what prevents light entering in the first place.

Heidegger constantly underscores the point that the purely negative resonances of the term ‘destruction’ should not cover over its essentially positive meaning. Destruction is necessary according to Heidegger because human existence finds itself in each case
within a historical context. As *phenomenological* method destruction is not concerned with history as a concatenation of objectively verifiable occurrences, but rather with ‘hermeneutical’ history, that is, with the way human existence has understood itself and textually recorded that understanding.² Just as Husserl grasps phenomenology not as a specific area of enquiry but rather as a clarification of the basic concepts of any rigorously scientific research, Heidegger’s way or method of phenomenology does not essentially relate to specific philosophical problems, but rather to philosophy’s self-understanding as at once an understanding of human existence. Thus, the destruction is carried out in order to make evident the basic preconceptions that historically dominate philosophical understanding. Once such preconceptions have been identified it is then a question of deciding as to the legitimacy or ‘originarity’ of these concepts with respect to contemporary human existence. Heidegger’s idea of a hermeneutical phenomenology, as he often insists in the early 1920s, thus characterizes phenomenology as at best meta-philosophical in nature. As he says in the 1920 lecture course: ‘[The phenomenological destruction] leads to the situation of following the predelineations (Vorzeichnungen), of the actualization of the preconception (Vorgriff) and thereby of the basic experience [of philosophizing]’ (GA 59, p. 35).

The criterion employed by Heidegger for the assessment of the historically dominant preconceptions of human existence in philosophy is identified as ‘originarity’ (*Ursprünglichkeit*). Undoubtedly something of Husserl’s basic distinction between intuitive and non-intuitive mental acts as authentic or inauthentic (*eigentlich/uneigentlich*) is at play here. However, the relationship is one of mere structural analogy rather than genuine affinity of meaning. Heidegger’s early lecture courses amply demonstrate that his appropriation of phenomenology is from the first committed to overturning what he takes to be a fundamental theoretical prejudice at work in Husserl’s thought in favour of an idea of phenomenology in terms of a possible, radically authentic self-understanding of concrete existence. Thus, with respect to its guiding insights it would be fair to say that Heidegger’s original notion of destruction has more in common with Kierkegaard’s movement from the aesthetic to the truly ethical³ than with Husserl’s transition from a natural attitude to a reflective attitude in relation to the structures of transcendental consciousness. That this is so is indicated by Heidegger’s rejection of eidetic generality in favour of concrete singularity as the ‘proper object’ to be revealed by means of the destruction. As he puts it in 1920, the radicalism of phenomenology consists in ‘realizing one’s own factical situation in an ever more originary way and in this realization preparing for genuineness (*Genuität*)’ (op. cit., p. 30). Again, destruction is concerned with the question of the ‘originarity of the relation of existence (*Existenzbezug*)…and the correct pursuit of the distinguishable predelineations (*abhebbare Vorzeichnungen*)’ (op. cit., p. 38).

In the lecture course cited thus far Heidegger employs a threefold conceptual distinction that is maintained, though with significant modifications, through to the publication of *Being and Time* in 1926/7.⁴ Accordingly Heidegger distinguishes what he terms ‘surrounding world’, ‘with-world’ and ‘self-world’ (*Umwelt, Mitwelt, Selbstwelt*). If originarity is the criterion at work in the phenomenological destruction, originarity in turn relates to the ‘self-world’. The operation of destruction is thus ‘originary’ if it promotes ‘present renewal in a self-worldly existence’ (*aktuelle Erneuerung in einem selbstweltlichen Dasein*) (op. cit., p. 75). The threefold distinction does not offer concepts
for distinguishing types of things, but rather indicates three fundamentally different
directions of concrete existence. Strictly speaking Heidegger reserves the term
‘existence’ for human life insofar as it is directed in a pointed manner towards the ‘self-
world’. That is, existence is only truly existence when human life is primarily concerned
with itself. Such self-concern is not however, as Heidegger will come to say, what
characterizes human life ‘from the first and for the most part’ (zunächst und zumeist).
Instead such life largely takes the form of the ‘falling off (Abfall) of a significance
(Bedeutsamkeit) that is directed purely towards the self-world into a significance of the
surrounding world and this as a neutralized layer (verblaβte Schicht) of what mostly
accompanies in a secondary and subsidiary manner’ (op. cit., p. 84). Here we find an
early form of what Heidegger will later call ‘fallenness’ (Verfallen) as a basic structure or
tendency of human life to lose itself in its concern for the things that surround it. In the
specific context of the comment cited, Heidegger is concerned with the derivative nature
of the theoretical attitude. The question that animates his discussion is: how is historicity
as a basic character of human life to be grasped? For Heidegger it is the method of
phenomenological destruction that can provide access to such historicity. What precisely
is meant here by history and historicity?

In the 1920 lectures Heidegger sets himself the task of making evident the derivative
nature of the theoretical attitude. As he is at once involved in a positive appropriation
of phenomenology, he must show that the basic intention of phenomenology is a disclosure
of the originary, pre-theoretical structures of human life. Taking his cue from the idea
common to Kant and Husserl that temporality is basic to consciousness, Heidegger is
intent on showing how the subterranean theoretical prejudice of Husserl’s thought works
against an articulation of human life as essentially structured by time. As Heidegger will
undergo in the more exhaustive critiques of Husserlian phenomenology that follow in
his Marburg lectures from 1923 onwards, for him Husserl’s thought is fatally
compromised by an inadequately explicated ontological opposition of the real and ideal.
This opposition allies Husserl with the underlying prejudices of philosophy since Plato
and effectively neutralizes the genuine insights into the nature of ‘lived time’ gained
within Husserlian phenomenology. The 1920 lectures attempt to lay bare the questionable
nature of the real/ideal opposition by resolving it into an opposition of the irrational
Erlebnis (lived experience) and rational Begriff (concept), which in turn is resolved into a
temporal/super-temporal dichotomy. In the context of Husserlian phenomenology and its
preoccupation with problems of objective knowledge the opposition is formulated by
Heidegger in the following manner: ‘The super-temporality (Überzeitlichkeit) of the ideal
[i.e. of the true proposition] is thus opposed to the “temporality” of the objective
occurrence [i.e. of the judgement], into which the historical is also inserted’ (op. cit., p.
72). Though he will later explicitly indict Husserl’s thought with this interpretation of the
historical, for now Heidegger impugns other leading figures of German contemporary
thought (in particular Rickert, Windelband, Simmel and Scheler) and its pervasive
intellectualist reading of Kant. If temporality and historicity are grasped as basic
determinations of the empirical/objective then what are for Heidegger the decisive
Kantian insights into the fundamental role of time for the human mind are covered over
and a more radical sense of the transcendental or a priori is lost.

In the face of a dominant philosophical interpretation of the historical as the empirical
and irrational, Heidegger’s idea of a hermeneutical phenomenology rests on the claim
that a conceptual explication of human life as essentially historical is possible. Phenomenology so conceived enters into explicit opposition to contemporary neo-Kantianism and its privilege of the intellectual over the sensible sources of human knowledge. The ramifications of this opposition will be explored later. For now it is a question of characterizing Heidegger’s idea of the historical and the implications of this idea for his transformation of phenomenology. The key problem of phenomenology as Heidegger sees it in 1920 is that consciousness presents itself concretely as an immediate irrational datum (cf. op. cit., p. 26). As a flow of sensible data consciousness is a seemingly random succession of Erlebnisse. Immediate consciousness is thus in itself an essentially irrational or senseless empirical occurrence. With recourse to Dilthey’s ‘psychological’ enquiries Heidegger attempts to dismiss this understanding of mental life as a concatenation of Erlebnisse without order by insisting on the immanent holistic sense of immediate experience. At the very least this involves rejecting the atomistic model of sensible givenness proposed by intellectualist Kantianism. More radically, however, Heidegger follows Dilthey in asserting what may be called an inherent ‘logic’ or structural sense of mental life in its radically singular or sensible manifestation. This ‘logic’ is identified with the historical context in which each concrete life is caught up: The context of experience (Erlebniszusammenhang) is a historical context. [The context] is situated in a development, it bears within itself an articulation and rationality. Life can be interpreted from out of itself (op. cit., p. 166).

The sense of the historical employed by Heidegger is thus that of the ordered context of concrete experience. The point of opposition to neo-Kantianism is thus clearly marked out: structure is not imposed on the sensible manifold by some agency radically different in kind to ‘sensibility’ itself. In Kantian terms, Heidegger is asserting precisely what Husserl understands by ‘passive synthesis’, namely, an order of conscious life inherent in its most basic, sensible manifestation. However, the decisive affinity with Kierkegaard’s idea of existence means that ultimately ‘history’ does not signify for Heidegger a basic structure of the immediate data of consciousness but rather the possibility of each individual to grasp their own ‘authentic’ being as a basic task. Here the authentic/inauthentic distinction employed by Husserl as a fundamental differentiation of modes of presentation resurfaces as a basic division of modes of singular human life:

The human can be there (da sein), have being (Dasein), without existing. Insofar as [the human] exists all life-significance (Lebensbedeutsamkeit)...is concentrated on a dominant mode of significance with an orientation towards the self-world. This mode of significance is that of the sustained propulsion (Anstoß) towards self-world orientated destruction.

(op. cit., p. 82)

Whereas the theoretical attitude asserts a sense of the real as that which is immediately given for conceptual formation or rationalization (for ‘constitution’ in the approach of Natorp that Heidegger explicitly critiques; cf. op. cit., pp. 109 ff.), Heidegger’s hermeneutical idea of the historical grasps it as a concern for the inherent meaning of one’s own life. As a matter of concern, historical life remains in constant danger of becoming literally ‘disowned’ and merely factual:
All reality receives its original sense from the worry (Bekümmerung) of the self […] The worry of the self is constant concern (Sorge) about departing from the origin. Where worry is lived and realized in the manner of a substitution through tasks, the present being of the self-world (das aktuelle selbstweltliche Dasein) is degraded.

(op. cit., p. 173)

The broader horizon of Heidegger’s idea of the historical at this period is indicated by a number of cursory and seemingly marginal remarks made in the course of the 1920 lectures. No doubt immersed in preparation for his analyses of the Pauline letters and Augustine’s Confessions that formed the basis of his lectures on the Phenomenology of Religion in the following two semesters, Heidegger makes the following comment: There exists the necessity of a principle confrontation with Greek philosophy and its deformation of Christian existence’ (op. cit, p. 91). Heidegger then indicates a fundamental continuity between Greek philosophy and the rationalist tradition in modern thought in the following comment:

There resides in that which one infelicitously calls Christian philosophy, patristic and scholasticism of the medieval period—Luther included—a spiritual world from which modern philosophy from Descartes blocked itself off more and more. This process reached its climax, precisely because they spoke so much about Christianity, in Fichte and Hegel.

(op. cit., pp. 94–5)

Heidegger’s religion lectures from 1920/1 identify through an interpretation of St.Paul’s letters a concrete historical instance of ‘authentic temporality’. This indicates that Christianity—in opposition to theoretical thought—offers a paradigm case of genuinely ‘historical’ human existence. The indictment of the theoretical attitude does not for all that amount to a rejection of philosophy in favour of religious life. Rather, the decision for philosophy against religion is basic to Heidegger’s thought in this period. As Heidegger puts it relatively early on in the 1920 lectures, what is at stake for him is the attempt ‘to lead philosophy out of its alienation (Entäußerung) and back to itself (op. cit., p. 28). This remark underscores the fact that the idea of the historical propounded by Heidegger has more in common with the Christian notion of Heilsgeschichte (salvation history) than with history understood as a concatenation of empirical, objectively verifiable events. But for the same reason Heidegger’s notion of history has no fundamental affinity with Husserl’s concept of internal time-consciousness. For in Husserl time is grasped not in terms of a horizon of meaning for individual human life, but rather as a set of universal structures (primal impression, retention, protention) that obtain regardless of the concrete ‘content’ of consciousness. Thus, within the sense of historicity to be grasped through the clearing away of historical prejudices there ultimately resides for Heidegger the possibility of individual self-realization. Does this process of ‘self-recollection’ have any essential affinity with the idea of imagination as articulated in the interpretation of Husserl set out above? Can Heidegger’s idea of phenomenological destruction offer initial clues for understanding the relationship between his transformed sense of phenomenology and the imagination?
The theoretical bias of Husserl’s phenomenology

With his promotion from Privatdozent to professor and move from Freiburg to the then centre of contemporary neo-Kantianism at Marburg, Heidegger no doubt felt the time had come for him to offer an explicit critique of Husserl’s idea of phenomenology. As shown above, already by 1920 Heidegger’s attack on the theoretical bias of certain strands of contemporary German thought made apparent his departure from Husserlian orthodoxy. In his first Marburg lecture series delivered in the winter semester of 1923/4 Heidegger at once overtly aligns Husserl with what he takes to be the dominant Cartesianism of modern thought and offers a detailed diagnosis of the intellectualist symptoms of Husserlian phenomenology. As indicated, in his 1920 lecture course Heidegger characterizes the theoretical attitude as indifference to concrete individual existence or what he calls the ‘self-world’ (cf. op. cit., p. 142). It was also made clear that Descartes is identified by Heidegger as the historical turning point in philosophy towards the domination of the theoretical standpoint. In his first Marburg lectures Heidegger speaks in a similar manner of the predominance in modern philosophy of an ‘empty and thereby fantastical idea of certainty and evidence’. He continues:

This predominance of a particular idea of evidence is predominance before any actual revelation of the potential for the genuine matter of philosophy to be encountered (vor jeder eigentlichen Freigabe des Begegnenönnens der eigentlichen Sache der Philosophie). The concern for particular absolute knowledge, grasped purely as an idea, gains dominance before any question concerning matters that are decisive, that is, the whole development of philosophy is reversed (kehrt sich um). (GA 17, p. 43)

According to Heidegger the dominant idea of modern philosophy has absolutely evident knowledge as its basic matter of concern. Such knowledge is to provide an unshakeable foundation (the fundamentum inconcussum of Descartes’ Meditations) not only for scientific research but also for human life in general. This idea is labelled ‘fantastical’ by Heidegger precisely because it seeks to establish itself not through genuine enquiry into the nature of things but rather as an imposition upon the phenomena. So construed, such an idea clearly violates the phenomenological ‘prin-ciple of all principles’ as formulated in Husserl’s Ideas I. This principle states that only intuitive givenness of things can be taken as a legitimate source of knowledge claims. This is the very meaning of ‘evidence’ in Husserlian phenomenology, that is, that only the intuitive ‘confirmation’ of intentions makes of them genuine instances of truth. Accordingly, if Heidegger implicates Husserl in the Cartesian legacy then this amounts to saying that Husserl’s idea of phenomenology is at odds with itself. With Husserl’s 1911 essay ‘Philosophy as a Rigorous Science’ in mind, Heidegger identifies within Husserlian phenomenology an alignment with the theoretical attitude for the sake of providing a secure foundation of humanist culture in scientific knowledge:

Concern (Sorge) relates to recognized knowledge (erkannte Erkenntnis) because knowledge should see to the security (Sicherung) of existence.
(Dasein) and culture. This concern for recognized knowledge within phenomenological research is intent on arriving at a material foundation (sachlicher Boden) on the basis of which all knowledge (Wissen) and cultural life may become something genuinely amenable to proof (begründbar).

(op. cit., p. 60)

Thus, Heidegger grasps the theoretical attitude as a basic demand that all claims to truth be objective and demonstrable. This demand to universalize the idea of truth as demonstration naturally raises the question as to the status of descriptions concerning the Erlebnisse or ‘lived experience’. In the context of his early orientation towards the thought of Dilthey, Heidegger allies himself with that movement in German thought in the second half of the nineteenth century which argued for a mode of scientific inquiry into the subjective distinct from that of the natural sciences.10 However, if Heidegger adopts the basic principle of Dilthey’s hermeneutics that ‘life can be interpreted from out of itself’, his own ‘science of the subject’ calls for a more radical break with the epistemological paradigm of the natural sciences:

Dilthey is not clear in himself about the novelty that he pursues. He does not see that only a radicalism that puts all concepts in question can lead to advances. The entire conceptual material must be grasped in a more originary way and determined anew. That is the peculiar tendency of phenomenology.

(GA 59, p. 168)

Rather than the apparent rejection of the model of knowledge in the natural sciences indicated by Husserl’s polemic against naturalizing tendencies within epistemology, the Husserlian idea of phenomenology represents according to Heidegger nothing other than a radicalization of that very model (cf. GA 17, p. 72). For Heidegger the principal consequence of this ‘decision’ in favour of the epistemological paradigm of natural science is that phenomenological description becomes orientated exclusively toward phenomena insofar as they allow for universally valid description. As already indicated, it is principally in the form of an opposition between concrete singularity and ideal universality as the ‘proper object’ of enquiry that the rival versions of phenomenology propounded by Heidegger and Husserl respectively confront one another. In the previous section it was claimed that whereas Husserl’s method of reduction involves a bracketing out of concrete singularity in order to make universal, ideal structures of experience explicitly graspable, Heidegger’s idea of destruction aims at the removal of general prejudices in thought in order to reveal concrete individual existence. It was also indicated that Husserl’s identification in the period following the publication of LU of transcendental consciousness as the ‘object’ of phenomenological research marked for Heidegger a particularly telling symptom of Husserl’s alignment with Cartesian thought. As Heidegger will go on to say in his 1925 lectures:

This idea—consciousness should be the region of an absolute science is not simply invented, rather it is the idea that has preoccupied modern
philosophy since Descartes. The explication (Herausarbeitung) of pure consciousness as the thematic field of phenomenology is not attained phenomenologically with recourse to the things themselves, but rather with recourse to a traditional idea of philosophy.

(GA 20, p. 147)

If theory is a relation to things whereby the radical concern for one’s own being is lost from view, theoretical comportment itself is grounded according to Heidegger in the constitutional structure of human existence that he calls first ‘ruination’ (Ruinanz) (cf. GA 61, p. 131) and from 1922 ‘falleness’ (Verfallen). Fallenness denotes the basic tendency of human life to understand itself not through itself but rather with recourse to the things that surround and concern the individual. This structure is in part manifested in a basic way in which human life grasps itself, that is, as a type of seeing or intuition—what Heidegger calls initially ‘relucence’ (Reluzenz) (cf. GA 61, p. 119) and later ‘reflection’ (Rückschein or Rück-strahlung) (cf. SZ, pp. 15–16). Again with conspicuous resonances of both Augustine and Kierkegaard, Heidegger holds to the basic idea that what is initially and for the most part furthest from direct sight is concrete human life itself. In the first Marburg lectures Heidegger implicitly has recourse to his analysis of Augustine’s account of human existence from three years earlier when he identifies curiosity as the basic determination of how human life grasps itself in fallenness: ‘The concern for recognized knowledge can be characterized according to three possibilities: 1. the concern of curiosity; 2. the concern of security; 3. the concern of being bound by (Verbindlichkeit)’ (GA 17, p. 126). Curiosity as the desire to see for the sake of seeing—what Augustine calls ‘lust of the eyes’—constitutes fallenness at the most basic level of human life, that is, at the level of the engagement with things through the senses. If scientific culture is rooted in curiosity, then the disinterest of theoretical research cannot signify an absence of will or desire but rather a disinclination to attend to one’s own individual life. In a word, theory is motivated self-forgetfulness.

If the proper matter of concern according to Heidegger’s idea of phenomenology is concrete individual human life, then the difficulty of intuitively grasping ‘factual life’ is grounded in the basic tendency of such life to direct attention away from itself. That is to say, phenomenological research is engaged in a constant struggle against the self-alienation (Selbstentfremdung) of human life. As we have seen, this struggle is carried out by means of the destruction, a procedure employed to expose the traditional sedimentations of self-understanding and make accessible the sense of individual life within its historical context. In his 1923/4 lecture course Heidegger again highlights how Husserl’s insights into temporality as basic to the constitution of consciousness indicate the irreducible singularity of that which phenomenology attempts to explicate:

The field of consciousness is according to its being nothing factual (keine Tatsächlichkeit). Nevertheless, the individual, singular (einmalig) nature of this being is not bracketed out. The being of consciousness is with all transcendental bracketing of nature an individual singularity of the stream of lived experience.

(op. cit., pp. 79–80)
However, although Heidegger concedes that Husserl’s discovery of intentionality ‘provides explicitly for the first time in the history of philosophy the path (Weg) for radical ontological research’ (op. cit., p. 260), in the final analysis the Husserlian sense of phenomenology merely makes all the more urgent the need for a more fundamental overthrow of the theoretical hegemony within philosophy:

Insofar as for us today the exceptional situation obtains that, due to the dominance of the concern for scientific culture, all domains of life and worlds of being (Seinswelten) are theoretized in a peculiar way, there arises the basic task of going back behind this theoretization in order to attain anew the potential basic position from out of life (Dasein) itself.

(op. cit., p. 269)

By aligning phenomenology with the theoretical attitude Husserl has in Heidegger’s view fatally compromised the radical potential of phenomenological research. Ultimately, this is of interest in the present context only insofar as the senses of phenomenology advanced by Husserl and Heidegger stand opposed in terms of different modes of intuition. As proposed above, Heidegger’s confrontation with Husserl is undertaken in order to defend the position that the notion of the a priori has genuine applicability to human life in its concrete singularity. For Husserl it is only as a region ‘purified’ of its empirical singularity that human life in the form of a ‘reduced’ transcendental consciousness can be subject to a priori determinations. As shown, the ‘sense’ of experience is for Husserl ultimately founded on the rational motivation of acts of consciousness. This identification of rationality as an ultimate matter of concern leads Heidegger to determine the fundamental intention of Husserlian phenomenology as ‘laying the foundation for an absolute, self-standing (auf sich selbst gestellte) rational science, with the absolute legitimation of reason to set out rules for a completely free development of humanity’ (op. cit., p. 266). The principal question thrown up by Heidegger’s rejection of rationality as the legitimating basis of phenomenological research is: what other source of phenomenological truth does he identify in reason’s stead? How can phenomenology grasped as the clarification of concrete singular existence avoid the thoroughgoing relativism that Husserl struggled against from the time of his early refutation of psychologism in LU onwards?

**Hermeneutical recollection and imaginative mediation**

In his 1920 lecture course Heidegger states that the procedure of phenomenological destruction leads into the situation of ‘phenomenological judgement’ (phänomenologische Diüidication): This judgement is the decision about the genealogical position that pertains to the meaning-complex from the perspective of originarity’ (Diese Diüidication ist die Entscheidung über die genealogische Stelle, die dem Sinnzusammenhang vom Ursprung her gesehen zukommt) (GA 59, p. 74). In the notes appended to the text of the lectures Heidegger concedes that the criterion employed in the phenomenological ‘decision’ of originarity is essentially relative, not absolute in nature. Accordingly, phenomenological research is for Heidegger ‘to strive for the origin
[not] as idea, but rather as what is concrete and singular. Relativism [is] unavoidable’ (op. cit., p. 190). If phenomenological investigation relates to human life in its concrete singularity then its mode of ‘seeing’ must be equally relative to existence in its individual ‘factual’ reality. As we have seen, however, the ‘relativism’ of Heideggerian phenomenology does not mean that its insights are utterly arbitrary in nature. For ‘concrete individuality’ does not signify for Heidegger some atomized isolation of monadic consciousness. Instead human life evinces a structure that is shared insofar as it is from the first caught up in a historical context. As Heidegger puts it in the first Marburg lecture series:

Every ontological investigation of existence (Dasein) is as such destructive; it stands in an inner relation with that which one calls historical consciousness […] Any historical orientation must not be looked upon as a matter of chance (Zufälligkeit), but rather as a particular task that is predelineated by existence itself.

(GA 17, pp. 113–14)

This passage clearly indicates that it would be wrong to ascribe to Heidegger’s idea of phenomenology some espousal of irrationalism. The confrontation between this idea and the Husserlian interpretation of phenomenology is not over whether human life has an inherent sense, but rather over the source of meaningfulness. Formally, the two are even in agreement as to the source of meaning: time. Thus, the opposition in the end comes down to radically different interpretations of the originary phenomenon of time: primal impression in Husserl and, as will be shown in more detail below, the projective appropriation of one’s own singular existence in its finitude in Heidegger.

Phenomenology as hermeneutical is a concern for the historicity of concrete existence. Concrete existential historicity is by no means amenable to ‘immediate intuition’ but must instead be sought indirectly via phenomenological destruction. As an equivalent for the idea of reduction in Husserl, the destruction retains a basic affinity with the notion of a ‘leading back to…’. In the 1923/4 lectures Heidegger accordingly speaks of destruction in terms of a recollection (Rückerinnerung): ‘A recollection is not simply a retelling (Nacherzählen), but rather a process of becoming clearer to oneself through a traversing of the way thus far’ (op. cit., p. 109). The insights or ‘intuitions’ of phenomenology are thus attained by means of an act of historical remembrance. Given the non-factual status of the historical understood as the very being of the ‘subject’ by Heidegger, memory cannot here be an operation of objectively confirming that this or that state of affairs obtained or that a particular event actually happened. Instead, Heidegger’s comments clearly indicate that destruction as recollection can only signify a process of individual existence becoming mindful of itself, of existence ‘awakening’ from the stupor induced through the prolonged preoccupation with everyday concerns. If for Heidegger existential time is neither empirical nor ideal in nature, then the mode of ‘intuition’ at work in hermeneutical phenomenology can be neither sense perception nor ‘ideation’. From the account offered thus far all that is clear about hermeneutical intuition is the following: (1) it relates to history in the sense of a shared context of meaning for singular existence (historicity); (2) it is non-immediate insofar as it is achieved only through a counter-movement to the immediate self-concealment of concrete existence (destruction); (3) it
reveals nothing that factually pertains to concrete existence but instead offers a clarified sense of self in terms of what existence *may be or become* (existentiality as possibility).

Heidegger’s critique of the Husserlian interpretation of phenomenology is at once an instance of destruction that attempts to unearth the theoretical prejudice at work in Husserl’s thought. The historical locus identified for this prejudice is, as we have seen, Descartes. Descartes’ thought is shown by Heidegger to be articulated according to conceptual schemes inherited from scholastic thought, in particular the conceptual pairing of freewill and grace. On this point Heidegger remarks: ‘That which is theologically designated as the effect of the grace of God is transferred by Descartes to the relation of the effect of the intellect on the will. *The role of grace is assumed by the clara et distincta perceptio*’ (op. cit., pp. 156–7). What is epistemologically at stake here is not only the relationship between understanding and will but also the relationship between immediate intuition and understanding. Both relationships have in turn a common basis, namely, the question of truth. The question put most simply is: if the mind receives certain ‘ideas’ how is it to decide as to their correspondence to reality? In accord with the ideal of indubitable certainty Descartes seeks to guarantee human access to absolute truth through recourse to the notion of innate ideas. Such ideas fully satisfy Descartes’ criterion of truth in terms of ‘clear and distinct perception’ precisely because here there is no relation of the mental to the sensible givenness of the ‘external’ world. In this connection Heidegger indicates that Descartes has failed to confront exactly what is most in need of clarification, namely, the ‘region between’ (Zwischengebiet) the sensible and the intelligible (cf. op. cit., p. 223).

According to Heidegger, Descartes’ overlooking of what is decisive takes the form of the transgression of an ‘originary region’ (Übersteigerung des Ursprungsgebiet) and constitutes thereby a failure of concern to grasp its ‘most proper possibilities’ (Vergreifen der Sorge bezüglich ihrer eigenen Möglichkeiten) (op. cit., p. 224). The originary region in question is the mathematical. The mode of cognition proper to mathematics is taken up in Descartes, so Heidegger argues, as paradigmatic for his idea of truth, so that the timelessness of mathematical propositions becomes a basic determination of truth. But this absolutizing of the mathematical is only achieved at the price of the complete exclusion of sensible givenness as constitutive of truth, a rationalist position characterized by Heidegger as ‘an extreme Pelagianism of theoretical knowledge’ (op. cit., p. 228). Here Descartes’ inability to appreciate any positive significance of perception for his idea of truth applies equally to the imagination: ‘[Perception and imagination] belong to a region of being (Seinsbereich), that comes into question for Descartes from the first as obscurum, [that is,] to a region between (Zwischengebiet) the res extensae and the res cogitans’ (op. cit., p. 237). Here we find for the first time positive indications that the imagination may provide a decisive ground upon which Heidegger’s confrontation with what he takes to be the historically inherited theoretical prejudice of Husserlian phenomenology may take place. Before this possibility can be pursued through detailed consideration of the confrontation with Kant, however, Heidegger’s understanding of temporality as it develops in the period leading up to the time of this confrontation must be clarified.

Heidegger’s lectures from the summer semester of 1925 proceed according to a pattern evident in all the early lecture series: destructive interpretation of certain figures and aspects of traditional thought followed by a radicalizing ‘repetition’ of the
historically identified ideas and motifs. In this case the destructive material is once again Husserlian phenomenology and the historical roots of its theoretical prejudice. In the 1925 lecture series Heidegger puts particular emphasis on Husserl’s articulation of the phenomenological concept of truth according to the notion of intuitive, ‘bodily’ (leibhaft) givenness of something. As set out above, the distinctive innovation in Husserl’s account of truth was to extend the concept of intuition to include ‘categorial’ acts of givenness while recognizing that such acts are in each case founded on the immediate, sensible givenness of things. Along with this crucial reinterpretation of the notion of intuition Heidegger credits Husserl with having dispelled the idea that the sense of the a priori is necessarily grounded in subjectivity. According to Heidegger, in opposition to both Descartes and Kant, Husserl clears the way for a genuine ‘material a priori’: ‘As opposed to [them], phenomenology has shown that the a priori is not restricted to subjectivity, indeed that it has primarily nothing at all to do with subjectivity’ (GA 20, p. 101). In the context of Heidegger’s idea of phenomenology as ontology this means for him that ‘a priori in phenomenological understanding is not a title of comportment (Verhalten), but rather a title of being’ (ibid.).

Phenomenology grasped as ontology has for Heidegger the basic task of clarifying the being of the intentional. This involves a twofold question: first, how is the manner of the intentional relation to things to be fundamentally determined? Second, how are things in the first instance given to that which relates to them intentionally? An adequate answer to both questions would indicate the general sense of intentional being. Heidegger answers the first question by determining the basic character of the intentional relation as care or concern (Sorge/Besorgen). The 1925 time lectures give for the first time an elaboration of Heidegger’s answer to the second question concerning the basic mode of givenness of things within the intentional relation. In a section entitled ‘Positive clarification of the basic structure of the worldliness of the world’ (op. cit., pp. 251 ff.) Heidegger offers an account of the ‘work-world’ that will later initiate the concrete analysis of human existence in Being and Time (cf. SZ, § 15, pp. 66 ff.). In the 1925 version Heidegger speaks of how the surrounding world (Umwelt) may become explicitly present when some anticipated object or object-quality is missing from an environment. Of particular interest in this description is Heidegger’s claim that it is a partial absence that makes the presence of the whole environment potentially explicit:15

Because the specific presence of the surrounding world lies precisely in the familiar referential whole (Verweisungszahnheit), the lack—and lack means always absence of what belongs within the closed referential whole—can precisely allow what is inconspicuously present (das unauffällig Vorhandene) to be encountered. The absence of something within the world of concern (Besorgungswelt)—absence as interruption of reference, as disturbance of familiarity—has thus a privileged function in the encounter of the surrounding world.

(op. cit., p. 256)

In this phenomenological description of givenness within the intentional relation Heidegger is operating with two conceptual pairings: whole/part and absence/presence. Despite its extension, Heidegger holds that the notion of intuition in Husserl remains in
essence restricted to the givenness of things. Manifestly taking his cue from Husserl’s notion of the horizon of perceptual experience, Heidegger is attempting to account for the elusive presence of this horizon. However, it is important to recognize here that Heidegger does not understand himself to be offering an analysis of perception, but rather explicating how we encounter things in our everyday attitude of practical engagement. Thus it is not primarily a matter of seeing things but rather of doing things. According to Heidegger the context of action is at any point somehow ‘present’, though certainly not present in the sense of being an explicit matter of attention. Indeed, the peculiarity of the surrounding world is that of necessity it cannot appear as an item of explicit attention but is rather what makes the presence of particular items possible.16

Having recourse to a term used by Husserl to describe the givenness of the other’s ego in intersubjectivity,17 Heidegger speaks of the ‘appresentation’ (Appräsentation) of the environment or ‘world’ in the encounter with the environmental thing (cf. op. cit., p. 258). Insisting on the derivative nature of Husserl’s concept of intuition as ‘bodily’ givenness (leibhaftige Gegebenheit), Heidegger contends that the true ground of intuitive givenness is what he calls ‘the presence of concern’ (Besorgtheitspräsenz) (cf. op. cit., p. 268). At this point Heidegger makes a remarkable identification. Concern, he says, has ‘the mode of being of letting-something-become-present (Gegenwärtigen-ber-lassen), a peculiar (merkwürdig) mode of being that one only understands when one sees that this presentation and appresentation (Gegenwärtigen und Appräsentieren) is nothing other than time itself (op. cit., p. 292). However, as is characteristic for Heidegger, this putative identification of presentation and time in fact signifies the grounding of the former in the latter. As he goes on to state more explicitly in BT, presentation has the basic sense of a ‘bringing-nearer’ (Näherbringen) of the surrounding world. This bringing-nearer is grounded in retention (Behalten) of the instrumental context in the light of an anticipated possibility (einer Möglichkeit gewärtig) (cf. SZ, p. 359). Heidegger is here clearly transforming the Husserlian analysis of time according to the tripartite structure of originary impression, retention and protention. For Heidegger it is a matter of overturning the primacy of impressional presence in favour of the fundamental orientation of concrete existence towards the future in terms of ‘projection’ (Entwurf). The future is arguably the least present and so least ‘real’ dimension of time. In what sense then can it constitute the ultimate foundation of the sense of concrete existence?

According to Heidegger, the mode of givenness in the intentional relation is that of the non-explicit presence of a whole context of meaningfulness. This presence may be made explicit through partial absence.18 In the final section of the 1925 lectures Heidegger introduces the key element in his account of time that had first been emphasized in his lecture from the previous year, The Concept of Time’.19 If the theoretical attitude is bound to an idea of truth as indifferent to the determinations of place and time (‘universal validity’), then what could Heidegger’s opposed understanding of time as the history of concrete individual existence mean other than time grasped as radical finitude? Accordingly death or mortality is the decisive determination for Heidegger’s concept of time. Certainly, by death Heidegger does not understand a particular moment in one’s life considered from an impersonal perspective. Instead, death here signifies mortality as the very basic condition of individual existence, that is, as that aspect of human life that gives it its very sense as human life. As Heidegger puts it in his 1924 lecture:
The end of my existence (Dasein), my death, is not some point at which a related sequence [of events] (Ablaufzusammenhang) suddenly breaks off, but rather a possibility about which existence knows in this or that way: its own most extreme possibility, which it can seize, and appropriate as awaiting (bevorstehend) it.\textsuperscript{20}

Death is grasped here certainly not as any actual ‘event’ in life but rather as the permanent ‘limit-experience’ that conditions all such events. In terms of the whole/part analysis of concrete existence set out above, what Heidegger understands by death is precisely that which holds open the horizon of action as a whole. It does this through its character as the ‘most extreme possibility’ of individual existence, though again this possibility is for the most part never made explicit. Indeed, in line with Heidegger’s notion of the tendency of human life towards self-concealment, death as a basic feature of such life only very rarely becomes explicitly present as such.

The structural analogy between the givenness of the world as matter of concern and the disclosure of one’s own death in terms of the non-explicit presence of the whole is of course far from accidental. World and death are, in Heidegger’s sense, ‘identical’; that is, world is grounded in death insofar as the latter is understood as the way concrete existence relates to its own being. According to Heidegger existence as radically temporal has the basic characteristic of incompleteness, such that the very sense of concrete life is the constant lacking of something yet to come. Concretely, this basic sense of ‘yet to come’ is mostly grasped in terms of specific things or situations that one desires or wishes to be realized. Heidegger contends, however, that what makes possible my integrated sense of self as a whole is the mostly implicit understanding of my own permanent possibility of death. As he puts it in 1925:

\begin{quote}
Death is not the part lacking for a whole as compositum, but rather [death] constitutes the wholeness of Dasein in advance, so that first from out of this wholeness [Dasein] has the being of the respective parts, i.e. the possible ways to be.
\end{quote}

(GA 20, p. 432)

If phenomenology in its hermeneutical transformation is a radicalized concern for concrete existence, then its basic task must be one of explicitly grasping death not as a structure of consciousness to be eidetically ‘fixed’, but rather as a possibility to be pursued. According to Heidegger’s understanding death cannot be intuited or ‘bodily’ given in Husserl’s sense (i.e. presented in the sense of either Gegenwärtigung or Vergegenwärtigung) precisely because mortality signifies the dynamic of life towards a future that is of necessity never present. Heidegger’s idea of phenomenology thus pursues death as the essentially non-intuitable absence that, ‘at first and for the most part’, implicitly grants sense to individual existence. Insofar as hermeneutical phenomenology offers an explication of existence in terms of historicity its basic ‘act’ is nevertheless broadly speaking a ‘presentation of something in its absence’. In what sense is phenomenology so conceived at once an exploration of that ‘region between’ the sensible and intelligible, that is, an investigation at once of and by the imagination?
6

Heidegger’s appropriation of Kant

Time and the cogito

The development of Heidegger’s thought in the 1920s is decisively shaped by confrontations with two seminal thinkers in the tradition of western philosophy. Following the conviction expressed in the course of his lectures on religion from 1920/1 to critically confront ancient Greek thought, Heidegger attempts a ‘genealogy’ of the theoretical paradigm through an intensive engagement with Aristotle from 1921 to 1924/5. As the so-called ‘Natorp Report’ from autumn 1922 clearly shows, Heidegger’s emphasis was from the first placed on a radicalizing appropriation of the Aristotelian notion of phronēsis or practical reason. This appropriation had manifest significance for Heidegger’s analysis of the structures of worldly existence in terms of ‘meaningfulness’ (Bedeutsamkeit), ‘relevance’ (Bewandtnis) and ‘for-the-sake-of’ (Worumwillen). The second crucial encounter followed on directly from the appropriation of Aristotle and involved an extensive phenomenological transformation of the thought of Kant from 1925 to 1929. What unites these confrontations is Heidegger’s underlying effort to radically recast Husserl’s idea of phenomenology in such a way that its supposed theoretical prejudice is put out of action and the way cleared for a truly radical phenomenological interpretation of concrete human existence.

What distinguishes the Kant appropriation from the preceding engagement with Aristotle is the centrality of the concept of time within Kantian thought. Furthermore, as argued in Part I, Husserl’s thought is itself directly worked out within the Kantian framework in terms of a negotiation of its basic dualism of intuition and concept. Husserl’s response was essentially an attempt to mediate the sensible vs. intelligible divide by positing the necessity of a non-sensuous form of intuition. However, given the dominant intellectualism of Husserl’s thought, such intuition is grasped as general and non-temporal in nature. The young Hegel in his attempt to bridge the intuition/concept divide in Kant had already identified a more radical possibility of mediation in the Kantian notion of the transcendental imagination. We have seen how Husserl’s own basic conceptual opposition of presentation vs. representation makes any adequate articulation of non-reproductive imagination extremely difficult. When this is combined with Husserl’s insistence on the primal impression as an absolute moment of presence acting as the source-point of all time-consciousness, the possibility of clarifying the radically temporal character of conscious life with recourse to imagination necessarily remains concealed. From the Heideggerian perspective, for all the genial insights evident within Husserl’s phenomenological analyses, its stated task of elucidating the pre-theoretical sources of scientific knowledge remains in thrall to a theoretical bias that limits enquiry to the realm of ‘objectifying’ consciousness. Accordingly, Heidegger
wishes to radicalize phenomenology in a quite literal way, that is, by digging deeper to lay bare the truly foundational levels of what he calls in the early 1920s ‘factual life’.

Heidegger offers his first extensive analysis of Kant in a lecture course from 1925/6 entitled somewhat elusively Logic: The Question concerning Truth (GA 21). In this lecture series are to be found already the basic features of Heidegger’s Kant interpretation that will be elaborated over the following four years. Accordingly, the exegesis concentrates on early sections of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, in particular the transcendental aesthetic, transcendental deduction, schematism and analogies of experience. Heidegger places such emphasis as he believes that here the central problem of Kant’s critical philosophy is dealt with, namely, the problem of the ‘objective relation’ of pure concepts of understanding or ‘categories’. Given this emphasis some light is at once shed on Heidegger’s choice of title. For the question of the ‘objective relation’ of pure concepts relates to the source of truth for non-sensible or (for Kant at least) purely intellectual presentations. It is thus the question whether there can be non-trivial or non-tautological a priori truths, that is, whether anything can be known about experience through non-empirical sources. As will be shown, the novelty of Heidegger’s interpretation rests on his insistence that Kant’s insight into the role of time as a non-empirical source of a priori knowledge constitutes his basic contribution. The orthodox reading by contrast emphasizes the role of the ‘I think’ or what Kant calls ‘transcendental apperception’ as the ultimate source of all a priori knowledge. From Heidegger’s perspective, however, the role of the cogito within Kant’s theory of knowledge in terms of its providing the ‘transcendental unity of apperception’ is merely testament to the abiding influence of Descartes’ epistemology and what is for Heidegger, as shown, an utterly ‘fantastical’ notion of subjective self-certainty.

By focusing from the outset on the relationship between sensibility and understanding, Heidegger approaches Kant in an effort to break down this most basic of Kantian oppositions. This effort cannot take the form of refusing any validity or fecundity to this dualism in the historical context of Kant’s thought. It is rather a question of ‘destroying’ this conceptual opposition in order to uncover something more fundamental, more ‘originary’ to concrete existence. As for this something, Heidegger’s hermeneutical ‘preconception’ is set from the beginning as temporality. Thus his first move when interpreting the transcendental aesthetic of the first Critique is to assimilate the Kantian notion of time as the a priori ‘form of intuition’ (cf. KRV, A31/B47 ff.) to what he had identified in his lecture course from the previous semester as the unthematically pre-given horizon wherein all encounters with concrete objects may occur:

What does it mean when Kant says: time is the form of intuition? Nothing other than: time is that with respect to which, in an unthematically prior, i.e. purely presented manner, intuition (Hinblick) allows the manifold of the senses to be encountered (Zeit ist das unthematisch vorgängig, d.h. rein vorgestellte Worauf des Hinblicks im Begegnenlassen des Mannigfaltigen der Sinne).

(GA 21, pp. 275–6)

Thus, rather than take ‘form’ to mean subjective formation, Heidegger interprets it to mean horizon of givenness in the sense of a space open in advance to admit empirical
‘data’. If time as the form of intuition is thus prior openness with respect to an encounter with concrete objects, then Kant’s further determination of time as ‘pure intuition’ (cf. KRV, A124) must be shown to confirm this understanding. Intuition signifies in every instance for Kant the immediate givenness of concrete singularities. But if time is grasped as a universal structure of sensible intuition it cannot itself be a proper determination of some particular set of empirical ‘contents’. Rather it determines in advance the ‘field’ wherein empirical objects of whatever kind may be in each case encountered. The crucial point for Heidegger is that time thus understood signifies the horizon of immediate givenness prior to all intellectual activity or ‘construction’ of experience. As he puts it:

On the basis of pure intuition—that is what is essential and again what Kant saw—the pure manifold as such is given immediately and there is no need for a synthesis of the understanding. In light of this phenomenal state of affairs (phänomenaler Tatbestand) the interpretation of the Critique of Pure Reason in the manner the Marburg School sought to carry it out fails utterly. (GA 21, p. 276)

In view of the brief exposition of the Heideggerian idea of phenomenology offered in the previous chapter, it is evident that the notion of time as pure intuition or form of intuition in the context of Kant’s transcendental aesthetic is here being assimilated to Heidegger’s conception of historicity as the context of sense out of which concrete existence is to be interpreted. It was noted in the previous chapter how the ‘universality’ of historicity for Heidegger in no way signifies the universal validity of a ‘proof of existence in the way the cogito in Descartes is meant to function as an unshakeable foundation for individual consciousness. According to Heidegger’s view, individual human existence is neither in need of nor amenable to proof. Instead hermeneutical phenomenology—following Kiekegaard’s concern for the how rather than the what of existence⁴—sets itself the task of clarifying possible modes of human life. Accordingly, human life understood in terms of concrete possibilities must first be provided with a space of orientation (Spielraum) cleared of ossified inherited conceptions that work to narrow down the scope of historical existence. As shown, this horizon of human self-understanding is for the most part implicit, remaining unthematized in the context of the particular concerns of human life. Analogously, Heidegger grasps sensibility and its pure temporal form as signifying the space that obtains prior to all intellectual, conceptual or ‘objectifying’ operations, that is, as that which accounts for the fact that we are able to ‘orientate ourselves in thinking’.

In the context of his exposition of the transcendental aesthetic Heidegger refers to Kant’s attempt to introduce the notion of the transcendental imagination in order to provide common ground for sensibility and understanding as the two recognized basic roots of human knowledge. Here Heidegger leaves no room for doubt that for him Kant’s own conception of the imagination radically fails to throw light on the fundamental dynamic of human understanding:

Kant sees himself forced in the end to resolve in a certain manner one root into the other, or at least to found one in the other, sensibility in understanding, and further to introduce the phenomenon of the
imagination as mediation. Kant not only leaves the imagination phenomenologically unexplained, but above all he leaves the relations of the imagination both to sensibility and to understanding obscure.

(op. cit., p. 283)

Having raised the question of the mediation of sensibility and understanding as the two basic sources of knowledge in Kant, Heidegger focuses the basic thrust of his interpretation through the following reformulation of his own guiding question: ‘What is the condition of the possibility of a relation (Zusammen) of time itself and the I think itself?’ (op. cit., p. 309). Heidegger has already emphasized that for him Kant remains basically in the shadow of the Cartesian legacy (cf. op. cit., p. 292), so that the task at hand must be one of using Kant’s explication of time to show its more fundamental status in relation to the cogito. Taking his cue from Kant’s notion of time as the form of ‘inner sense’ in the manner of pure ‘auto-affection’ (Selbstauffektion) (cf. op. cit., p. 339), Heidegger draws the following remarkable conclusion:

Intuition as pure intuition (time) is indeed not intuitus originarius in the sense of the intellectus originarius, for the subject does not firstly create time. But it is nevertheless an intuitus derivativus, namely an intuitus originarius of a created being. The existing subject has here the possibility to affect itself by itself and indeed in a completely originary way. Thus I say: time is according to Kant the originary and universal pure auto-affection.

(ibid.)

As ‘the most originary and universal form of the possibility of giving (Gebraerkeit)’ (ibid.), the Kantian concept of time is here understood as signifying something Zidentical’ with intuition not in the sense of an individual act of specific apprehension but rather as what gives—always in advance of any objectifying activity—the space for the possible appearance of objects. Time so conceived is not identical with human understanding but rather constitutes the ‘horizon’ within which any such understanding can exist. In its role as horizon of possible givenness, time is at once that which in principle remains at first and for the most part thematically non-given, concealed. As such time is that which is simultaneously fundamental for and hidden from explicit human cognition. Heidegger calls it the ‘abyss’ (Abgrund) of human existence in the sense of an unfathomable ground of being. Certainly time in this sense does not admit of demonstration or proof. Nor can it furnish a first principle or axiom for any proof of human existence in the manner of Descartes’ cogito. Instead, as Heidegger conceives of it, time is simply the way the human being relates to and goes about things, in an immediate, non-reflexive manner that allows for a subsequent reflective modification as in the case of the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

Time as the pre-givenness of the horizon of all possible data is intuitive in the sense of being what Heidegger goes on to call in his 1927/8 lectures on Kant ‘syndosis’: the ‘mental act’ or synthesis of primal sense-giving (Sinngebung) (cf. GA 25, p. 135). In light of this interpretation, how does Heidegger respond to his own basic question of the relationship between time and the cogito? Here attention is focused on Kant’s brief
description of what he calls the ‘schematism of the pure concepts of reason’. According to Heidegger: This chapter on the schematism is the genuine centre of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. With the doctrine of the schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding and its tenability the whole edifice absolutely stands or falls’ (GA 21, pp. 357–8). In the context of Kant’s account of the *a priori* sources of knowledge the schematism is posited as the mental operation that ‘applies’ the categories or pure concepts of understanding to the manifold of sensible data. Here Heidegger’s interpretation must struggle against two tendencies of Kant’s general understanding. First, against the tendency to grasp genuine cognitive operations as acts of intellectually ‘(in)forming’ intrinsically unintelligible sensible ‘material’ (matter/form opposition); second, against an understanding of cognition according to the logical operation of subsuming particulars under concepts as ‘general presentations’ (intuition/concept opposition). The former historical prejudice of thought militates against acknowledging the possibility that immediate sense perception might have its own intelligible structures (the possibility affirmed by Husserl with his notion of ‘passive synthesis’). The latter idea assumes that all concepts operate extensively by offering the mind a general mark which allows for identification of a group of actual or potential individuals and is of a radically different nature to those individuals it signifies.

As shown, the general movement of Heidegger’s ‘destructive’ interpretations involves the dissolution of such inherited conceptual oppositions on the way towards identifying a more fundamental common ground. In the present case Heidegger takes up Kant’s explicit articulation of what he calls the transcendental or productive imagination as that mental power which mediates between the radically disparate faculties of sensibility and understanding. With reference to Kant’s determination of the schematism as an operation whereby the pure concepts of understanding are granted objective relation through ‘sensible restriction’ (*sinnliche Bedingung*) (cf. KRV, A136/B175)—what Heidegger calls ‘sensibilization’ (*Versinnlichung*)—Heidegger attempts to counteract the Kantian tendency to view the imagination as an effect of understanding on sensibility by grasping the mediation as a prior action of sensibility on the understanding. Such a reversal in mental economy indicates an idea of the imagination as the pre-cognitive basis of all possible cognition, so allowing Heidegger to affirm time (as the basic form of intuition) as foundational for all intellectual or conceptual operations. Accordingly, in the crucial passage of his interpretation of the schematism as ‘figurative synthesis’ Heidegger remarks:

That in which the pure concepts of the understanding can and must be solely exhibited (*dargestellt*); that in which and as which they can be seen, is a uniquely possible intuition (*Anblick*), is that with respect to which the *a priori* apprehension (*apriorische Hinblicknahme*) [occurs]—time.

(GA 21, p.377)

With this interpretation the epistemological primacy of the *cogito* or reflexive consciousness in the shape of what Kant calls the ‘transcendental unity of apperception’ is undermined in favour of a pre-conceptual immediate ‘givenness’ of the space of possible appearance of any intelligible object whatever. In this way Heidegger invokes
Kant’s doctrine of the schematism of the transcendental imagination in order to liquidate the dominant Cartesian notion of the cogito within Kantian thought. It is this notion of imagination as the temporalizing ‘realization’ (cf. KRV, A146/B185–6) of conceptual activity that constitutes the central thread of Heidegger’s Kant interpretation up to the 1929 publication of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

**From eternity to finitude**

Towards the end of his 1925/6 lecture series Heidegger returns to the idea of the ‘identity’ of time and presentation (Gegenwärtigen) underscored in his lectures from the previous semester. Here he takes the meaning of the present for concrete existence to be fundamental for its very sense of being as an engagement with things in the world. As clarified above, the sense of the present as presentation is grasped by Heidegger as a basic act of bringing things encountered in the world closer. This act of bringing closer is further understood as the characteristic comportment of Dasein’s immediate relation to things that provides the foundation for a possible theoretical or cognitive ‘modification’. In the context of Kant’s critical thought, the postulation of the universality of time as a source of knowledge/cognition (Erkenntnis) in the form of ‘pure intuition’ is grasped by Heidegger as at once an indication of the non-originary status of the theoretical attitude:

What is genuine and progressive in the Kantian interpretation of time resides in the fact that it not only ascribes time to the subject as a manner of intuiting, but beyond this makes this phenomenon—which is nothing other than presentation (das Gegenwärtigen)—the basis for the interpretation of knowledge.

(GA 21, p. 404)

As shown, Heidegger also identifies time with the Kantian notion of auto-affection. Presentation and auto-affection are in turn equated insofar as the former is grasped as that action whereby Dasein ‘lets what it encounters approach it’ (das Begegnende auf es zukommen lassen) (op. cit., p. 405). Such ‘action’ is by no means an operation of subjective consciousness when consciousness is grasped in the Cartesian manner as a ‘thinking thing’ that relates in the first instance to its own thoughts and so only in a derivative manner to other conscious beings and non-conscious material things. If it is to be called an action at all then it can only be in a sense analogous to Husserl’s notion of ‘passive synthesis’, that is, as an opening of the field of experience prior to all constitution of particular objectivities and to the constitution of the transcendental ego itself.

It is this curious active passivity of existential temporality in its role as what first provides an open space for the encounter with things that Heidegger pursues in his 1927/8 lectures, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* (GA 25). Here, in the wake of the publication of his magnum opus, Heidegger highlights the radical passivity of human existence with respect to the temporal field:
The human is as such by no means the free creator of space and time, but rather the human intuits as a finite being in the sense of ‘intuitus derivativus’—allowing the encounter of what is already pre-given. Pure intuition is indeed not sensible, but nevertheless—if space and time are ‘presented as given infinite magnitudes’—a manner of giving.

(GA 25, p. 126)

In this later lecture series Heidegger’s basic preoccupation with identifying a unitary a priori source of knowledge in Kant is retained. Accordingly he highlights relatively early on how the apparent duality of mental faculties in terms of sensibility and understanding is complicated through the introduction of the imagination as a third, mediating ‘power’ (cf. op. cit., p. 92). Heidegger immediately adds that this third faculty is not merely placed side by side with the other two, but is instead grasped by Kant as mediator in the sense of providing the unitary root of sensibility and understanding. Furthermore, he adds, it will become apparent ‘that this root is nothing other than time grasped radically in its essence’ (op. cit., p. 93).

As noted, the universality of time is not an independent postulation on Heidegger’s part but rather already found in Kant’s critical thought. In Kant’s own terms time is a form of both inner and outer sense. This means that all determinate presentations, whether of external objects or of myself as subject, must be temporal in the sense of given in time. The rejection of the pretensions of what Kant calls ‘rational psychology’ to gain knowledge of the thinking subject outside all time is a central task of the first Critique carried out in detail in the ‘Transcendental Dialectic’ (cf. KRV, A338/B396 ff.). This rejection involves two basic steps: first, viewing intuition as the sole ultimate source of legitimation for knowledge claims; and second, limiting intuition to sensible intuition and so rejecting in principle the possibility of non-sensible or intellectual intuition. Kant’s underlying concern is to offer an epistemological clarification and justification of the knowledge claims of contemporary mathematical physics. Such a clarification involves at once explicating the bounds of legitimate claims to knowledge. These bounds are basically determined by Kant to be those principles or propositions that have in some manner ‘objective relation’, that is, propositions which refer to things in appearance. This restriction of valid knowledge to the ‘objective’ raises the question of what can be known about the ‘subject’. Here Kant is obliged to recognize that the subject too may only be known ‘in appearance’ and this basically means that the subjective can be positively grasped only insofar as it affects the material world (cf. KRV, A348/B376 ff.). If, as Heidegger holds, Kant retains Descartes’ concept of the subject as res cogitans, then positive claims as to the nature of this ‘thinking thing’ must be limited to the action of thought on the empirical realm. Again, such action is taken by Kant as the very definition of ‘objective validity’ for a concept (cf. KRV, B 142). The problem for Kant, however, now takes the form of a basic question: How can thought as something radically non-empirical in nature come to manifest itself within the empirical domain? In this way some plausibility is granted to Heidegger’s claim that Kant’s account of the ‘sensibilization’ of the pure concepts of human understanding in the form of a ‘schematism’ carried out by the transcendental imagination is decisive for the Kantian critical project as a whole.

Kant tackles the question of the relative primacy accorded to the cogito and to time by means of an identification of the ultimate a priori source of unity in the field of
experience. In Chapter 5 it was shown how Heidegger’s appropriation of Husserlian phenomenology centred on a radicalization of Husserl’s concept of horizon as the ‘appresented’ or co-given sphere of appearance for encountered objects. According to the phenomenological understanding, the horizon stands for the necessary givenness of the field of appearance in advance of the appearance of any particular object. Not being itself an objective presence, the horizon cannot be present thanks to any kind of objective presentation whether it be originary, ‘bodily’ givenness (Gegenwärtigung) or its representative modification (Vergegenwärtigung). Coming before even concrete sensible intuition of concrete objects, horizonal presence must denote a ‘field of presence’ (Präsenzfeld) somehow given in advance of all concrete intuition and even the ‘categorical intuition’ grounded in it. As we have seen, it is this problematic and ‘pre-conscious’ presence of the field of possible experience that Heidegger equates with time. In view of its status as at once pre-objective and pre-subjective (pre-cognitive with respect to the knowing subject), time here denotes for Heidegger the origin of concrete existence in the form of its basic limiting condition. Time as the necessary horizon of human understanding thus essentially determines Dasein as finite:

Dasein as finite is referred to a subsistent being it encounters (begegnetes Vorhandenes). This ontic [i.e. empirical] intuition is only possible on the basis of pure intuition. Space and time as the pure forms of intuition are conditions of the finitude of intuition and thereby the most acute indices of the finitude of Dasein, precisely insofar as they must be realized in advance (vorgängig vollzogen).

(GA 25, p. 155)

As cited above, Heidegger in his earlier interpretation of Kant refers to time as the ‘intuitus originarius [originary intuition] of a finite being’ (GA 21, p. 339). In so doing he is at once alluding to Kant’s insistence on the restriction of all immediate givenness of things in human representation to sensible intuition and attempting to overturn that restriction by interpreting the pure intuition of time as a form of radically non-sensible givenness. When Heidegger speaks of time as an index of finitude he is endorsing Kant’s notion that nothing can be known by purely conceptual or intellectual means. But this anti-rationalist aspect of Kantian thought is compromised for two principal reasons: first, through the rehabilitation of the Cartesian cogito though in the diminished form of a ‘logical subject’ as opposed to a ‘transcendental subject’ (cf. KRV, A350 ff.). Second, and more radically, Kant’s anti-rationalism becomes questionable due to the fact that if all knowledge has, as he holds, its ultimate source in sensible intuition alone, then the very project of Kant’s critical philosophy itself would seem to be without possible epistemic basis. For, when Kant speaks about space and time as purely subjective forms of concrete perception to what sources of knowledge does he have recourse for such a determination of possible experience?

Heidegger’s response to this question, as noted, is to posit a pre-cognitive givenness of or acquaintance with time as the field of possible experience. Such acquaintance relates to something at least formally akin to Kant’s ‘pure intuition’ insofar as for Heidegger also time is ‘nothing objective’ (cf. KRV, A32/B49 ff.). Rather, time conditions the very ‘being of the subject’: for Kant in the sense of an a priori structure of sensibility, for
Heidegger as that with respect to which the relation of concrete human existence to the things of its world is at all possible. But everything turns here on the distinct ways in which time is understood as the mark of human finitude. For Kant it is a determination of human understanding insofar as it is limited to what is given as or relates to empirical objects (including myself as such an object). For Heidegger, by contrast, time is understood as the *donation* of human life as a field of existential possibilities. This donation *has sense* only insofar as the field (history) is appropriated in light of concrete possibilities of individual existence. Accordingly, time as a basic ‘existential’ is a givenness (passivity) granted sense through individual ‘constitution’ (activity). It is this strange union of activity and passivity that leads Heidegger to identify Kant’s idea of the transcendental imagination with his own notion of time in its ‘mode of operation’ (*Vollzugsmodus*).

Within the context of Kant’s thought finitude specifically determines the nature of human understanding. Insofar as Kant admits only sensible intuition as a direct givenness of things ‘outside’ the subject and sensibility stands for the power of the human mind to *receive* data from the outside, all human thought and so intellectual activity is founded on pure sensible receptivity. This primal receptivity of cognition is grasped by Heidegger in the form of the necessary diversion (*Unweg*) of human thought via the data of sensible intuition:

> Thought is thus according to its essence *diversionary* (umwegig); it traverses determinate presentation, it is a *traversal* (durchlaufend)—*discursive* (diskursiv). In this diversionary and discursive character of thought, i.e. in the fact that judgement as a function of understanding is a *presentation* (*Vorstellung*) of a presentation, a mediate presentation, *the finitude* of thinking shows itself (bekundet sich).

*(GA 25, p. 172)*

In the 1929 publication *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (KPM)⁷—substantially based on the analysis from 1927/8—Heidegger has recourse to the same characterization of discursive thought that he had earlier applied to time as a basic determinant of intuition: This diversionary character (discursivity) of the understanding is the most acute index of its finitude’ (KPM, p. 30). This analogous use of the term ‘finitude’ with reference on the one hand to the temporal determination of intuition and on the other to the intuitive restriction of thought again indicates the ultimate matter of concern within Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant, namely, temporality understood as the basic horizon of understanding for concrete human existence. Time grasped as finitude thus constitutes Heidegger’s hermeneutical ‘preconception’ (*Vorgriff*) as this has been clarified in the form of the essential mortality of human life. With this basic sense of time as mortality guiding his destructive reading of Kant, the senses of finitude ascribed to sensibility and the understanding respectively must be lead back to a more originary unitary sense found within concrete existence itself. This unitary sense of existential finitude Heidegger identifies with Kant’s underdeveloped notion of the transcendental imagination.
Imaginative schematism and temporal ecstasis

Guided by the hermeneutical principle of attempting to understand Kant’s thought better than he understood it himself (cf. GA 25, p. 3), Heidegger determines the central task of his 1927/8 lectures as the effort ‘to make evident (vor Augen legen) the time-related synthesis of the transcendental imagination in its basic structure, that is, as the foundation of what makes possible (Ermöglichung) any a priori relation to objects whatever’ (op. cit., p. 338). If the a priori basically applies to sources of knowledge in Kant, for Heidegger it is to be grasped as a determination of the being of concrete existence in its essential relatedness. In other words, Heidegger is seeking a sense of the a priori that will facilitate his radicalized interpretation of intentionality as the basic determination of the ‘subjective’ relation to objects. It is of great significance in this context that Heidegger explicitly connects the temporal sense of this relatedness with Kant’s basic concept of sensibility. For by doing so he signalizes what is for him of fundamental value in Kant’s critical philosophy, namely, a characterization of human understanding as fundamentally receptive rather than purely autonomously active. Such activity has tended to be grasped as the preeminent determination of human life within the history of western thought, a determination made explicit for the first time by Aristotle with his determination of ‘contemplation’ (theoria) as the highest possible activity of human life in virtue of its being the most ‘autarchic’ or self-sufficient.8 At odds with this intellectualist prejudice, Heidegger’s phenomenological outlook stands equally opposed to all forms of positivistic empiricism. As a consequence, emphasizing Kant’s notion of the transcendental imagination offers a way of avoiding both intellectualist and sensualist paradigms.

In the 1927/8 lectures Heidegger’s interpretation of the relationship between transcendental imagination and time centres on what Kant calls in the A-Edition of the first Critique the ‘threefold synthesis that is necessarily present in all cognition: namely, the apprehension of presentations (Vorstellungen) as modifications of the mind in intuition, the reproduction of [these presentations] in imagination and their recognition in concepts’ (KRV, A97). As indicated, Heidegger takes his own understanding of ‘lived time’ to be something essentially alien to the horizon of Kant’s thought. Accordingly, Heidegger holds Kant’s concept of time to remain basically within the compass of an understanding he takes to have dominated western thought since Aristotle, namely, the conception of time in terms of a sequence of punctual moments or ‘now-instances’. In his interpretation of the first aspect of the ‘threefold synthesis’, the synthesis of apprehension in intuition, Heidegger reconstructs Kant’s thought process in the following way. First, from the perspective of the pure flux of empirical data or ‘manifold of intuition’ each impression gives itself as something restricted to this or that virtually durationless instant. Thus, each impressional instant constitutes a now in the intuitive flux. Second, however, ‘now’ as a positive determination of the sensuous moment signifies a present that instantaneously becomes a past moment. Third, as a present now the impressional instant equally was, a moment before, a future now. In this way the now-determination of the intuitive instant provides a way of grasping (‘apprehending’) the present as unitary whole: ‘In the unity of the now the horizon is attained in which the manifold as such can be offered’ (GA 25, p. 345). As an original opening of the horizon of possible experience
at the basic level of intuition, the synthesis of apprehension cannot pertain to an act of combination on the part of the understanding or intellect. Instead, as a synthesis achieved in intuition itself, apprehension must be a radically pre-cognitive and, as relating to an immanent ‘organization’ of the manifold of intuition, not conceptually constructive but sensibly ‘donative’ in character. Again, such synthesis constitutes a basic aspect of time as the ‘pure form’ or ‘pure intuition’ of sensibility:

The pure intuition of time bears within itself a peculiar taking up (Aufgreifen) of the manifold that already belongs to the now; it bears within itself the originary, pure synthesis in the sense of the pure apprehension characterized. This synthesis of apprehension is the pure syndosis, i.e. a spontaneity of reception. In this synthesis of apprehension there resides no conceptual determination in the sense of comparison, reflection and abstraction, i.e. no logical function of understanding.

(op. cit., p. 347)

Manifestly attempting to link this first aspect of the threefold synthesis with Kant’s determination of the schema of reality as sensation (Empfindung) in the sense of the a priori ‘fulfilment of time’ (Zeiterfüllung) (cf. KR V, B184 ff.), Heidegger speaks of apprehension as a ‘construction’ (Ausbildung) of time (cf. GA 25, p. 348). This connection is eminently aided by Kant’s own characterization of the process of schematization as a ‘transcendental time-determination’ (transzendentale Zeitbestimmung) (cf. KR V, A139/B178). Heidegger claims in his 1925/6 lectures that the role ascribed by Kant to the transcendental imagination in the schematism chapter determines ‘time for the first time in philosophy in its transcendental function within the a priori constitution of the whole of transcendental truth, that is, of that which determines positively the possibility of appearance’ (GA 21, pp. 397–8). Accordingly, Kant’s notion of apprehension is presumably grasped by Heidegger as an initial ‘static’ characterization of time, whereas the schematism chapter is taken to offer a radicalized ‘dynamic’ articulation of the imaginative ‘realization’ of time in the form of ‘time-fulfilment’.

The second aspect of the threefold synthesis, the synthesis of reproduction in imagination, cannot, by virtue of it pertaining to the transcendental and not the empirical imagination, denote something akin to a pictorial consciousness that produces an image relating through similarity to an original. Rather, as immanent to sensible givenness itself, reproduction must contribute along with apprehension to the originary constitution of the field of experience. If apprehension stands for the ‘mental act’ whereby empirical data are received as heterogeneous contents in the flux of the sensible manifold, reproduction is understood by Heidegger to denote that aspect of the transcendental imagination that allows the mind to return to a particular content as something identical. Only such a fundamental power of re-identification can account for the fact that things are experienced as a seamless whole and not as a stream of atomic instants:

The horizon of possible unification cannot be restricted to the breadth or narrowness of the now respectively isolated in itself. The mind (Gemütt) would then stumble from one now-phase to another that is totally unrelated, such that the earlier [now-phases] would be absolutely lost. In
such a case, the mind would be surrendered to such a sequence of isolated perceptual states. Indeed, one cannot even speak of such a sequence as one of many [now-phases], as in every phase all earlier phases would be totally lost and each would be absolute, utterly without ties to the others.

(GA 25, p. 351)

For Kant it is only the reproductive aspect of the threefold synthesis that is to be ascribed to the imagination. Heidegger’s interpretation, by contrast, views the transcendental imagination as the unitary ground for all three aspects of the synthesis. This position follows directly from the basic preconception guiding his exegesis, namely that ‘[imagination] is itself time—in the sense of originary time that we call temporality (Zeitlichkeit)’ (op. cit., p. 342). By now we are familiar with the peculiar sense of this ‘is’ of identification in Heidegger: imagination ‘is’ time in the sense of it denoting the ‘subjective realization’ (Vollzugsmodus) of time. Heidegger underscores the pre-givenness of time precisely in order to forestall an obvious misunderstanding of his position. For he is not advancing the view that time is a purely subjective construction in the sense of a mental fiction. Instead he is saying, in Kantian fashion, that time is a pre-given structure of all possible human understanding. Kant’s basic dichotomy of material sense data and conceptual formation means that ultimately he is unable to offer any cogent account of time as a pure form of intuition. As a consequence there is a fundamental vacillation on Kant’s part as to whether time is itself a datum or structure of experience. The schematism chapter attempts to resolve this basic ambiguity with respect to his concept of time by introducing the transcendental imagination as the mediating power that temporalizes pure concepts. In the A-Edition of the first Critique, however, Kant explicitly ascribes only one aspect of the threefold synthesis—reproduction—to the imagination. Accordingly, apprehension is characterized as purely sensible and the third aspect, recognition, as purely intellectual in nature (cf. KRV, A97).

Heidegger’s reading of the threefold synthesis, by contrast, follows Kant’s determination of the imagination as the ultimate source of all synthesis (cf. KRV, A78/B103). Consequently his interpretation goes beyond the explicit Kantian understanding by attempting ‘to draw all three syntheses back into the originally grasped [i.e. non-Kantian] transcendental imagination’ (GA 25, pp. 342–3). Heidegger highlights this transgression of the immanent horizon of Kant’s thought within his interpretation of the third aspect of the threefold synthesis, namely, recognition in concepts (cf. GA 25, p. 359). The ‘violence’ of Heidegger’s hermeneutic transformation is motivated by Kant’s characterization of recognition as that ‘mental operation’ which grounds the unity of human experience and understanding in the form of ‘transcendental apperception’. Apperception signifies self-consciousness, so that the Transcendental Deduction’ of the first Critique (wherein the exposition of the threefold synthesis is carried out) constitutes the principal attempt on Kant’s part to reaffirm the Cartesian role of the ‘I think’ as the ultimate source for all intelligible knowledge claims. In accordance with Heidegger’s anti-intellectualist reading of Kant, the synthesis of recognition must by contrast be referred back to a precognitive source, namely, to ‘lived time’. In drawing the cogito back into its temporal ground Heidegger understands himself to be resolving a basic schism within Kant’s critical philosophy between the fundamental roles granted respectively to time and to transcendental apperception. According to Heidegger’s self-
understanding, the purpose of his appropriation is not simply to dismiss as empty Kant’s idea of the cogito but instead to reveal its true source within human experience. Consequently, Heidegger’s interpretation identifies an alternative unitary ground of experience in the form of the transcendental imagination. Such identification necessitates, as Heidegger explicitly acknowledges, going beyond the horizon of Kant’s thought.

According to Kant recognition stands for the self-identity of consciousness that provides the unitary source for all conceptual activity, just as space and time ground all sensible intuitions (cf. KRV, A107). Kant evidently views the three aspects of the threefold synthesis as indicating basic mental activities not to be placed side-by-side but rather grasped in an ascending, transcendentally hierarchical order. Accordingly, apprehension is empirically or genetically most primitive, but transcendentally (i.e. in terms of the conditions of possible cognition) most derivative. The synthesis of reproduction brings about a basic ordering of sense data that is essentially still sensible in character. At this level the mind does not apprehend a mere ‘buzz’ of sensory stimulation but rather distinguishable contents that can in some basic way be re-apprehended. True identification of objects, however, occurs on the Kantian account solely in virtue of conceptual formation. With the aid of concepts, the mind has at its disposal definite marks by which not just isolated data may be recalled but rather actual objects of experience repeatedly identified. Again, genetically speaking each level of synthesis is indispensable. But it is only in virtue of conceptual recognition that coherent experience of objects is possible. The ‘transcendental’ source of the mental ability to conceptually re-identify objects is precisely what Kant calls the ‘unity of apperception’. Recognition accordingly signifies the ‘necessary unity of consciousness’ (KRV, A109) or ‘thoroughgoing unity of self-consciousness’ (op. cit., A111–12). This characterization of recognition as something that refers to the ‘pre-structure’ of the field of experience is seized upon by Heidegger as a crucial clue for his attempt to interpret all aspects of the threefold synthesis in terms of time and the imagination.

Heidegger derives a further indication for his reconstruction from the manifest hierarchical sense of the three syntheses in Kant. Thus, Heidegger too seeks to ground apprehension in reproduction and reproduction, in turn, in recognition. Accordingly, if apprehension denotes the immediate and instantaneous grasping of sense data, and reproduction refers to the mental act whereby such transitory sensible givenness may be re-presented, recognition signifies the act of truly identifying an object as something to which the mind can reliably return. Heidegger initially describes recognition in the following way:

The basic act (Grundakt) that makes it possible to grasp something retained as that which we have already perceived, as the same, is the act of identification (Identifizierung). Without the synthesis of identification the grasping of a [i.e. of one] objective complex (gegenständlicher Zusammenhang) would remain impossible.

(GA 25, p. 361)

Whereas Kant, however, understands by unity the subjective act of conceptual ordering or unification, Heidegger grasps unity as the collective givenness of things within the
immediate perceptual horizon or ‘surrounding world’. The destruction of the intellectualist prejudice in Kant’s thought here takes the form of leading conceptual unification back to a more basic experience of the immediate unitary givenness of things. Following Heidegger’s radicalized notion of the ‘horizon’ of experience, unitary givenness cannot refer simply to the fact that things are always encountered as an interrelated plurality. Rather, as shown, it is a matter of the pre-givenness of a space of possible appearance for anything whatever. If the horizon stands for time, then recognition signifies the imaginatively actualized horizon in terms of what Heidegger calls ‘projection’ (Entwurf):

The synthesis named in third place is according to its nature and in the order of the construction (Aufbau) of the syntheses itself the first, and it is primarily neither recognition (Wiedererkennen) nor identification, but rather the anticipatory projection (der vorwegnehmende Entwurf) of a whole that can be revealed factically in this way or that and appropriated in apprehension and reproduction.

(op. cit., p. 364)

Heidegger designates his reconstructed sense of recognition in Kant ‘pre-cognition’ (Prae-cognition). In grounding recognition in self-consciousness Kant at once determines it as radically non-temporal in nature. In stark contrast, Heidegger grasps ‘pre-cognition’ as the primary temporal determination of possible experience in the sense of what he calls ‘anticipatoriness’ (Gewärtigsein) (ibid.). In BT this term signifies Dasein’s future in its inauthentic mode of realization (cf. SZ, p. 337), as opposed to the authentic future called there ‘precurrence’ (Vorlaufen) (cf. op. cit., p. 336). At this point in the course of his interpretation Heidegger reveals the ultimate aim of his reading of the threefold synthesis as a ‘leading back’ of Kant’s epistemological genealogy to its radical temporal foundation. Accordingly, each aspect of the synthesis is found to refer back to a distinct temporal dimension:

The synthesis of apprehension is related to the present, that of reproduction to the past and that of pre-cognition to the future. Insofar as all three modes of synthesis are related to time and these aspects (Momente) of time indeed make up the unity of time itself, the three syntheses attain their unitary ground in the unity of time.

(GA 25, p. 364)

Heidegger immediately makes clear what he takes to be the principal consequence of this grounding of the threefold synthesis in time. Whereas Kant himself grants epistemic primacy to a putatively non-temporal identification of understanding in the guise of the ‘transcendental unity’ of self-consciousness, Heidegger claims that his own interpretation reveals the ineluctably temporal nature of human understanding (cf. op. cit., p. 365). In applying the terms that signify inauthentic temporality in BT to the threefold synthesis, Heidegger is at once indicating that the phenomena in question (i.e. apprehension, reproduction and recognition) cannot constitute structures that ultimately pertain to Dasein in its concrete singularity. The general epistemological horizon of Kant’s thought
is for Heidegger guided in advance by an uncritically adopted intuitionist prejudice that takes *sensible presence* to be the ‘most proper’ sense of being. Such presence amounts in temporal terms to granting a basic primacy to the present (cf. op. cit., p. 366). As shown, this primacy has essentially the Cartesian sense of the intuitive self-evidence of consciousness given to itself in acts of reflection (‘apperception’).

However, despite Heidegger’s fundamental opposition to Kant on the question of the temporal character of human understanding what is of crucial importance is the fact that Heidegger in no way takes issue with the **goal** of Kant’s analysis, namely to *identify the ground of unity* for such understanding. For both here in the 1927/8 Kant lectures and elsewhere in the same period Heidegger speaks of the unity of experience as grounded in the unity of the three temporal dimensions of ‘time itself. In his reading of Kant, Heidegger accords the achievement of this unity to the imagination. It was suggested in the analysis of Husserl above that this alignment of imagination and unification appeals to only one of the generally recognized sides of imaginative activity. In his appropriation of Kant’s notion of the transcendental imagination Heidegger remains in basic agreement with Husserl’s characterization of imagination as productive of unity. Thus Heidegger too fails to acknowledge that other side of the imagination in virtue of which it disrupts, disorders and dissolves the connections of ‘average’ experience. Could it be that Heidegger, no less than Husserl, fails to appreciate and conceptually articulate the disruptive potential of the imagination? Is there a freedom of the imagination that Heidegger himself ‘shrunk back’ from in favour of an idea of human existence as lawfully determined in advance of all singular difference? To respond to these questions it is necessary to consider in some detail the idea that came to preoccupy Heidegger in the immediate aftermath of his protracted encounter with Kant, namely the idea of human freedom.
7

Human freedom and world-construction

Ecstatic temporality and human finitude

The notion of possibility stands at the centre of Heidegger’s account of human existence in BT. The idea of possibility proper to Dasein is not, we are told, the ‘freedom of indifference’ (libertas indifferentiae) but rather pertains to the very ontological constitution of this being. As Heidegger puts it:

Dasein is possibility that is delivered over to it (überantwortetes Möglichein), thrown possibility (geworfene Möglichkeit) through and through. Dasein is the possibility of being free for its own ability-to-be (Freisein für das eigenste Seinkönnen). Possibility is transparent to itself in various possible ways and degrees.

(SZ, p. 144)

As noted, Heidegger grasps ‘existence’ as a possibility of each human being, as something that requires grasping one’s being in a truly ‘authentic’ manner. In this he follows Augustine and Kiekegaard in regarding the basic sense of individual human life as a task, as something to be striven for. Within the first division of BT the fundamental possibility of each human being to exist is referred back to human understanding in the form of what Heidegger terms ‘projection’ (Entwurf): Projection is the existential-ontological constitution of the scope (Spielraum) of factical ability-to-be’ (op. cit., p. 145). The German term Spielraum means literally a ‘space of play’, ‘room for manœuvre’. Already in this choice of term a hint is given that human understanding is here being understood in the manner of some ‘free play’ analogous to that ascribed by Kant in the Critique of Judgement to the transcendental imagination (cf. KU, § 9.). Similarly, the strange mixture of autonomy and receptivity attributed to this faculty by Kant seems to be analogously reaffirmed by Heidegger when he speaks of the basic sense of Dasein’s freedom as a possibility that is ‘delivered over to it’ or into which it is ‘thrown’. In the previous chapter it was indicated that what makes human existence an ineluctably individual adventure for Heidegger is precisely mortality or finitude. It is this idea that increasingly dominates Heidegger’s appropriation of the Kantian notion of imagination, insofar as he takes mortality to be precisely that aspect of singular existence that makes any approach to and disclosure of it at all possible. When in his interpretation Heidegger refers to Kant as ‘shrinking back’ before the transcendental imagination as before an
‘abyss’ (cf. GA 25, p. 279; KPM, p. 168), the fathomless depths in question point back ultimately to the obscurity of human mortality. Thus, the pre-eminent role Heidegger grants to the imagination in his reading of Kant calls for a clarification of the basic relation between freedom and mortality in human existence. For just as the Kantian approach to the question of human knowledge leads back to the transcendental imagination as ‘at once receptive and spontaneous’ (cf. GA 25, p. 413), Heidegger’s renewed question of being in relation to human being centres on a notion of existence as received or \textit{thrown} possibility.

In BT Heidegger claims that the initial division of that work articulating the being of human being in terms of ‘being-in-the-world’ and a threefold constitutional structure of understanding, thrownness and discourse \textit{can make no claim to originarity} (SZ, p. 233). Division two thus takes the form of a radicalizing ‘repetition’ of the first division, where what might be called the ‘root concept’ is determined to be death in the form of ‘being for death’ (\textit{Sein zum Tode}) (op. cit., p. 234). The interpretation of \textit{Dasein} in its radical originality and authenticity (\textit{Eigentlichkeit}) attempts to lead human understanding grasped as ‘disclosedness’ (\textit{Erschlossenheit}) back to a situation of singular existence that Heidegger calls ‘resoluteness’ (\textit{Entschlossenheit}). The interpretation of resoluteness achieves an ‘emancipation (\textit{Befreiung}) of \textit{Dasein} for its most extreme possibility of existence’ (op. cit., p. 303), that is, it indicates the possible authenticity of a singular ‘being for death’. Resoluteness itself constitutes nothing less than ‘the originary truth of existence’ (op. cit., p. 307) and as such the truly ‘unshakeable foundation’ of \textit{Dasein}’s self-certainty. But if resoluteness with respect to one’s own mortality is what ultimately allows for individual existence to be grasped ‘as a whole’, such grasping is not taken by Heidegger to be a kind of fixing in place or definitive determination of the sense of human being in its concrete singularity:

[The certainty of resoluteness] precisely cannot become \textit{fixed} to the situation, but rather must understand that resolve, according to its own revelatory sense (\textit{Erschließungssinn}), must be \textit{kept open} and free for the respective factical possibility. The certainty of resolve (\textit{Gewißheit des Entschlüssees}) signifies: holding oneself free for one’s possible and in each case factically necessary retraction (\textit{Zurücknahme}) [...] resolute holding-oneself-free for retraction is \textit{authentic resoluteness} [resolved] to repeat itself (eigentliche Entschlossenheit zur Wiederholung ihrer selbst). (op. cit., pp. 307–8)

What Heidegger grasps as \textit{Dasein}’s possibility to ‘realize’ authentically its own being is thus determined as the individual’s resolve to reserve itself for ‘repetition’. In that sense there can be nothing final about the way singular existence relates to its own mortality. Rather, authentic relation to death is precisely this: keeping open the space of negotiation (\textit{Spielraum}) with mortality, always holding in reserve any ‘final word’ on one’s own death. What this makes abundantly clear is that any ‘immediate intuition’ or ‘primal impression’ of singular mortality is out of the question for Heidegger. On the other hand, it is equally evident that what Heidegger grasps as the authentic relation to death exclusively realizes the transparency of individual \textit{Dasein} with respect to its own concrete existence. \textit{Resoluteness can thus only signify an endlessly revisable disclosure of...}
the radically singular condition of concrete mortality. Could this power to ‘reproduce’ one’s own mortal condition return us once again to the figure of an imagination that never merely configures things but prefigures the very space within which anything at all might appear?

As noted, Heidegger locates the notion of finitude within Kant’s mental economy in two places: first, in the necessary ‘diversion’ (Umweg) of human thought and understanding via sensible intuition; and second, in the necessary temporal determination of all intuition (p. 111). As Heidegger sees it, the recourse of thought to intuition and intuition to time indicates in the most acute manner the finitude of Dasein. Signifying for Kant the merely epistemic restriction of human understanding, the transcendental imagination indicates for Heidegger something more radical, namely, the ontological ‘limit-situation’ of concrete human life. In Heidegger’s view it is due to an adherence to the inherited basic conceptual opposition of the sensible and intelligible from Plato and Aristotle onwards that Kant fails to draw out the radicality of his notion of an a priori power of imagination (cf. GA 25, p. 280). As shown, Heidegger’s interpretation accords a fundamental significance to the imagination by actually identifying it with time. Again, time is understood here phenomenologically as the ‘realizing’ experience of time in the sense of ‘lived time’ or ‘temporality itself. To distinguish such time from the measuring time frame relating to natural things (‘intramundane time’ or Innerzeitigkeit) (cf. SZ, pp. 420 ff.), Heidegger avers: Temporality “is” no being at all. It is not, rather it produces itself (Zeitlichkeit »ist« überhaupt kein Seiendes. Sie ist nicht, sondern zeitigt sich) (op. cit., p. 328). The German reflexive verb sich zeitigen is generally rendered in English translations of Heidegger as ‘to temporalize’. Although this translation follows a settled pattern in Heidegger’s writing (e.g. the ‘worlding’ of world), it must be noted that in this case there exists already a non-technical sense of sich zeitigen, namely, to produce or bring about.¹ In the present context this pre-theoretical meaning of the term ascribed to temporality as that which grants sense to human life is of great significance. For the Kantian notion of transcendental imagination upon which Heidegger’s destructive reading centres is at once that of a ‘productive’ rather than reproductive power (cf. KRV, B152). That is, the imagination (Einbildungskraft) in question is a power to construct unity (in-Eins-bilden) in the sense of what brings forth or produces (hervorbringen) the horizon of Dasein’s understanding.² Thus, in accord with its peculiar status as the fundamental ‘mental power’ that is equally passive and active in nature, imagination as originary existential time is at once auto-affectation and auto-poiesis (self-production).

In following Heidegger’s interpretation of the threefold synthesis held by Kant to lie at the basis of all human cognition, it was shown how Heidegger correlated each aspect of the synthesis to one of the three basic dimensions of time. It was also pointed out that whereas Kant grants primacy to the present by grasping the fundamental synthetic act of recognition as the realization of identity on the part of self-consciousness, Heidegger prioritizes the future and speaks of ‘pre-cognition’ instead of recognition (116–17). According to Heidegger, Kant’s exposition of the threefold synthesis bears out a basic prejudice of western philosophy that determines the ‘proper’ sense of being to be self-identical presence. In pointed opposition to this metaphysical construction Heidegger characterizes existential temporality as the dynamic non-identity of concrete Dasein in terms of an ‘ecstatic’ self-relation. The dynamic aspect is indicated through terms of
movement, while the notion of the ecstatic intimates the irreducible distance that holds apart the present from the future and past dimensions of lived time:

The future, having-been (Gewesenheit) and the present evince the phenomenal characteristics of the ‘towards oneself, ‘back to’ and ‘letting-be-encountered of. The phenomena of towards..., to..., and with..., make temporality apparent as the absolute ekstatikon. Temporality is the originary ‘outside itself in and for itself. The characterized phenomena of the future, having-been and the present we therefore name the ecstases of temporality. [Temporality] is not beforehand a being that must first emerge from out of itself, but rather its essence is [self-] production (Zeitigung) in the unity of the ecstases.

(SZ, pp. 328–9)

In the context of the 1927/8 Kant lectures Heidegger seeks to substitute his idea of ecstatic temporality for the Kantian notion of transcendental apperception or self-consciousness. Accordingly, Heidegger labels the temporal synthesis the ‘primal act of the ego’ (Urhandlung des Ich)3 of the ecstatically constituted ‘subject’ (cf. GA 25, p. 390). Such synthetic activity constitutes the horizon that ‘the I as transcendental, ecstatic apperception holds open before itself in advance’ (ibid.). Following Kant’s characterization of the transcendental imagination in terms of an action of the subject upon itself as passive—something, Kant remarks, ‘that appears to be contradictory’ (cf. KRV, B153)—Heidegger’s identification of time and the imagination at once comes down to a determination of the ecstases as basic modes of ‘pure auto-affection’ (cf. GA 25, p. 391). When it is borne in mind that time constitutes for Heidegger the very sense of being in the case of human being, it is noteworthy how he is willing in the lecture series in question to subordinate the ecstatic character of time to a principle of identity even when it is a matter of determining the authentic ‘truth of existence’:

The self as existing must be able to identify itself. It must be able to understand itself as the same futural having-been in the unity of resolve for a possibility and as being bound to the past at every concrete moment.

(op. cit., p. 395)

At the same time Heidegger suggests that temporality is prior to self-identity, insofar as the fundamental imaginative synthesis or ‘primal act’ of the self ‘at all times makes possible a self-identification of the self” (ibid.). Despite the seeming vacillation on the question of the relative priority of self-identity and time, Heidegger is sufficiently clear as to the basic consequence of his determination of the productive imagination as the fundamental ‘power’ of the mind, namely, an affirmation of irreducible human freedom. Here Heidegger’s interpretation characteristically shifts the original register of the text from epistemological to (proto-)ethical. Thus, the basic mental act of synthesis in Kant becomes an action of binding oneself to or letting oneself be bound by (sich binden lassen), whose essence, Heidegger says, lies in freedom (op. cit., p. 370).

From all that has been said thus far about the nature of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant it is apparent that his notion of existential freedom must be in principle opposed to
the Kantian idea of rational autonomy. Heidegger’s confrontation with the dominant intellectualist interpretation of Kant within contemporary Marburg neo-Kantianism leads him, as shown, to emphasize the power of mental receptivity or sensibility. Such receptivity is reconstructed by Heidegger as equivalent to his own notion of ‘thrownness’ as the basic determination of Dasein’s facticity. Following his passive or middle voiced interpretation of synthesis as the binding of or bounds set on human understanding, Heidegger offers the following characterization of the basic act of self-identification in apperception:

[Apperception means:] the understanding of having been already and respectively placed in one’s own position of power (Versetztsein in das eigene Vermögen). This being placed in position is in itself no condition, but rather this being placed (Versetzt-Sein) in one’s own position of power is the acting I-can.

(op. cit., p. 375)

The ‘faculties’ of mind are thus interpreted by Heidegger as indicative of a situation or position to which each of us is basically given over. Our individual powers thus have the sense of being limited or bounded from the first, that is, before all activation or application of them. Kant himself recognizes the essential limitation of the human powers of cognition and yet maintains as a limit-concept the notion of a superhuman intellect that might literally realize the objects it thinks through merely thinking them. Heidegger’s suspicion is that this shadow of the divine has a conspicuously Greek character and plays a surreptitious and yet decisive role within Kant’s cognitive genealogy in the guise of transcendental self-consciousness. But the real sense of freedom for Heidegger resides not in the I-think of an idealized subject but rather, again following Kierkegaard, in the I-can of concrete existence:

In the field of subjectivity where freedom primarily determines the mode of being of the subject and this mode of being is characterized by the I-can, capacity (Vermögen), i.e. possibility, is higher in relation to actuality (Wirklichkeit). Here it is not actuality that constitutes existence but rather the I-can as I-am-capable-of (das Ich-kann als Ich-vermag).

(op. cit., pp. 378–9)

Following the claim that in relation to human existence the notion of possibility comes before that of actuality, Heidegger’s affirmation of the fundamental significance of human freedom leads to the following radicalized determination of the cogito: ‘The ego is thus precisely in its reality pure possibility, this I-can is precisely existent existence (existente Existenz)’ (op. cit., p. 380).

Yet, just as it emerges through careful consideration that the precarious balance of ‘active’ projection and ‘passive’ thrownness in the Daseinsanalytik ultimately comes down on the side of projective activity, so too in the Kant lectures from 1927/8 Heidegger completes his analysis by underscoring the point that the temporal horizon is in the end a function of the imagination grasped as Dasein’s basic ontological creativity. As Heidegger points out, it would be absurd to ascribe to Kant’s transcendental imagination
a power to actually create the objects of cognition. Such a position would radically transform Kant’s transcendental idealism into some variety of absolute idealism. Nevertheless, it is consistent with Kant’s position, Heidegger argues, to view the a priori operations of the imagination as productive of the basic horizon of things: ‘the exhibitio originaria of the imagination is solely ontologically creative, insofar as it freely constructs (frei bildet) the universal horizon of time as the horizon of a priori resistance (Widerständigkeit), i.e. objectivity (Gegenständlichkeit)’ (op. cit., p. 417). The ontologically radical power of imagination is accordingly an originary ‘free construction’ (freie Dichtung) (ibid.) of the basic temporal sense or scope of things for human understanding. Indeed, in the final section of the Kant lectures under consideration Heidegger goes so far as to suggest that time itself is derived from the imagination when he says that the productive imagination ‘releases pure time from out of itself (entläßt die reine Zeit aus sich)’ (op. cit., p. 418). All this suggests that, rather than standing for the unitary ground of spontaneity and receptivity as Heidegger claims, his idea of imagination continues to subordinate the latter to the former. As stated, aligning imagination with spontaneity would follow the priority accorded to the projective over the thrown character of Dasein within BT. Yet, as Heidegger continues to elaborate his notion of the imagination in the form of ‘world-construction’ (Weltbildung) human finitude comes to predominate to such an extent than one might speak of a shift from the transcendentally productive to the mortally receptive imagination within the short but intense period of Heidegger’s development between 1928 and 1930. This shift can be made apparent through careful analysis of the subtle changes of register that characterize Heidegger’s articulation of his idea of human freedom in the period in question.

**The horizon of death**

In BT Heidegger famously sets out a programme of phenomenological ontology that never came to be realized. The published text of BT itself constitutes merely two of the three envisaged divisions of the first part. The second part of the project was to offer a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology from Kant leading back to Aristotle (cf. SZ, pp. 39–40). As the texts of the lecture courses from that period make evident, Heidegger struggled from 1927 to 1930 to extend his account of temporality as the horizon of human understanding to a more general clarification of time as the sense of ‘beings as such and as a whole’. This clarification was to have represented the third, concluding division of the first part of the project. The attempts made by Heidegger to carry out this investigation—entitled ‘Time and Being’—in the context of lectures will be considered in the following section. In the current section I shall attempt to clarify the significance of certain changes of emphasis in Heidegger’s reading of Kant offered in his second major publication, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* from 1929. As indicated at the close of the last section, Heidegger’s 1927/8 interpretation of Kant ends by characterizing the imagination as a spontaneous activity that creates the temporal horizon in virtue of which the human being in each case understands the world and its position within it. As Heidegger puts it, the imagination stands for Dasein’s ontological originary creativity. However, it was also pointed out that this characterization of imagination as the active production of the temporal horizon of human understanding (i.e. as
‘projection’) places it in tension with the other basic structure of Dasein’s ontological constitution that Heidegger calls ‘thrownness’. Thrownness is articulated by Heidegger in terms of individual human life’s ‘being given over’ (über-antwortet) to the singular possibility of its own existence.

Taken together, the two basic existential structures of projection and thrownness indicate that Heidegger’s explication of Dasein is at once an appropriation of the metaphysical conceptual opposition of activity and passivity, at work in western philosophy from Aristotle onwards. As indicated, however, in both BT and the 1927/8 Kant lectures Heidegger evidently grants primacy to projective activity over receptive passivity in his accounts of the temporal horizon of human understanding. Certainly, this primacy is in accord with the dominant theoretical and pre-theoretical understanding of the imagination as a spontaneous and creative human activity. For Heidegger, the Kantian characterization of the imagination as an indispensable a priori activity ‘hidden in the depths of the human soul’ (cf. KRV, A141/B180–1) indicates the necessary pre-givenness (Vorgabe) of the horizon of understanding before any individual acts of cognition. But the temporal sense of existence for Heidegger is determined ultimately by another figure that remains markedly absent in the 1927/8 Kant lectures, namely the figure of death.

In the opening section of the second division of BT the originarity of the first division is denied on the grounds that the being of human being is not grasped there in its ‘authenticity and totality’ (Eigentlichkeit und Ganzheit) (cf. SZ, p. 233). What is missing in the initial exposition of Dasein as ‘being-in-the-world’ is precisely the mortal sense of human life:

> There is in Dasein, so long as it is, in each case something absent, which it can be and become. There belongs to this absence (Ausstand), however, the ‘end’ itself. The ‘end’ of being-in-the-world is death [...] Yet in terms of Dasein death is only in an existentiell5 being for death. The existential structure of this being shows itself to be the ontological constitution of Dasein’s ability-to-be-whole (Ganzseinkönnen).

(op. cit., pp. 233–4)

Although Heidegger alludes briefly in the opening sections of his 1927/8 lectures on Kant to finitude as the basic sense of Kant’s restriction of the validity of thought to the field of sense-experience (cf. GA 25, pp. 84 ff.), this same theme constitutes from the outset the evident leitmotif of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics (cf. KPM, pp. 25 ff.). According to Heidegger, the status of metaphysics is problematic in Kant because the two basic sources of knowledge or cognition, sensibility and understanding, are grounded in a third (what Heidegger takes to be the ‘radical faculty’ of the imagination) that remains obscure or at best underdeveloped within Kant’s critical philosophy (op. cit., p. 37). For Heidegger this obscurity is clearly a case of motivated forgetting within the history of metaphysics. For Kant is unable to clarify the ‘hidden root’ that unites sensibility and understanding precisely because he fails to confront directly the ontological sense of human finitude and instead dwells exclusively on its epistemological significance. Although Heidegger retains in KPM the basic sense of the transcendental imagination as the productive source of the temporal horizon of human experience, it is noteworthy that
the attribution of creativity is decidedly restricted and muted in this later reading of Kant. Accordingly, Heidegger instead highlights what might be called the basic ‘transitivity’ of the imagination when he speaks of this principal transcendental faculty of the mind as a ‘going out towards…’ \textit{(Hinausgehen zu …)} (cf. op. cit., p. 119). However, as ecstatic temporality in its mode of realization, the transcendental imagination is here no longer characterized primarily as creative production of but rather as merely \textit{allowing access to} the horizon of human understanding:

\begin{quote}
Ontological knowledge ‘constructs’ \textit{(bildet)} transcendence. This construction is nothing other than a holding open \textit{(Offenhalten)} of the horizon whereby the being of beings becomes visible in advance. If truth signifies unconcealedness of…, then transcendence is originary truth.
\end{quote}

(op. cit., p. 123)

Similarly, the productive imagination is said to ‘constructively project in advance the totality of the possibilities towards which it “looks out”’ \textit{(entwirft bildend im vorhinein das Ganze der Möglichkeiten, in das sie „hinaussieht“)} (op. cit., p. 154).

At this point in his interpretation Heidegger introduces something not alluded to in his earlier accounts, namely \textit{practical} reason.\textsuperscript{6} Whereas the earlier lecture course had ended with a detailed exegesis of the schematism chapter of the first \textit{Critique}, Heidegger’s published text follows the clues of the former analysis that linked the transcendental imagination with human freedom. As he points out, Kant follows the classical determination of freedom as that which relates to the practically possible (cf. op. cit., p. 156). In light of the fact that Heidegger had earlier centred his appropriation of Aristotle on an effort to overturn the primacy of the theoretical over the practical,\textsuperscript{7} it should come as no surprise that a similar attempt is evident in his treatment of Kant. Here the accent falls on Kant’s notion in the \textit{Critique of Practical Reason} of ‘respect before the law’ \textit{(Achtung vor dem Gesetz)}\textsuperscript{8}. Kant grasps respect as a ‘moral feeling’ that relates to rational law not as to some alien power acting from without, but rather acknowledged in and through such feeling as rationality operative within me myself as a rational agent. Heidegger glosses this in the following way: ‘Respect is the manner of responsibility of the self with respect to itself, the authentic being of the self’ (op. cit., p. 159). This determination of practical reason as a self-relation whereby what is rationally laid down is affectively affirmed within one and the same subject, once again points towards a structure analogous to the one evinced by the transcendental imagination in the form of the spontaneous passivity of auto-affection. Heidegger remarks:

This essential structure of respect in itself makes apparent the originary constitution of the transcendental imagination. The self-subjecting and immediate giving oneself over to…\textit{(Die sich unterwerfende unmittelbare Hingabe an…)} is pure receptivity; the free self-prescription \textit{(das freie Sich-vorgeben)} of the law is however pure spontaneity. Both are in themselves originarily one.

(ibid.)
In the immediate context Heidegger leaves this indication that the Kantian notion of the transcendental imagination offers the basis for understanding the nature of practical reason conspicuously undeveloped. When he speaks in the section that follows of Kant’s relation to imagination as ultimately a ‘shrinking back before this unfamiliar root’ (op. cit., p. 160), then Heidegger’s failure to elaborate on the posited connection of practical reason and the productive imagination is presumably motivated by the fact that he takes his interpretation to be operating at this point still within the immanent horizon of Kant’s thought. Accordingly, it is not until the division of the Kant book where Heidegger goes beyond this horizon in an attempted ‘repetition’ of the Kantian foundation of metaphysics that the connection in question is taken up once again.

In this later section Heidegger centres his considerations on the notion of finitude introduced early on in his investigation. He begins with the indication that the finitude of human reason signifies for him ‘rendering finite’ (Verendlichung) in the sense of “care” for the ability-to-be-finite (das Endlich-sein-können) (op. cit., p. 217). In following this indication Heidegger seems to be intent on effectively overturning his former identification of the imagination as the creative power that constructs the temporal horizon in advance of all actual experience. If the work of the imagination is now taken to reside in a concern for individual finitude, then this concern is viewed as powerless in any radical sense to ‘realize’ such finitude. Instead, human understanding is grasped as finite precisely insofar as its original nature is conceived of as something to which individual Dasein is given over. Here Heidegger makes clear that this donative sense of human understanding is taken to be ‘older’ than any creative activity on the part of the transcendental imagination:

Only because the understanding of being is the most finite in finite being (das Endlichste im Endlichsten) can it make possible the so-called ‘creative’ capacities of finite human nature […] On the basis of the understanding of being the human is the There with whose being there comes about the opening access to beings (der eröffnende Einbruch in das Seiende), so that such beings can become evident as a [respective] self. More originary than the human is the finitude of Dasein in the human.

(op. cit., p. 229)

Whereas the earlier analysis of Kant had offered a basic determination of the imagination as a creative power, here imaginative creativity is manifestly made derivative of Dasein’s finitude. Heidegger indicates in the context of the Kant book that the key to understanding the notion of finitude here in question resides in a careful consideration of his basic characterization of human understanding as situated and thrown (cf. op. cit., p. 235). This requires a return to Heidegger’s earlier consideration of the ‘end’ of Dasein in terms of the notion of being-for-death set out in BT.

It was noted how in his 1927/8 lectures Heidegger claims that Kant’s notion of the transcendental imagination indicates a source of existential truth prior to the ultimate source of cognitive truth explicitly identified by Kant in the shape of transcendental apperception. In BT death is characterized as an ‘exceptional certainty of Dasein’ (eine ausgezeichnete Daseinsgewißheit) (SZ, p. 256) and the ‘taking-to-be-true of death’ (das Für-wahr-halten des Todes) said to be more originary than any certainty relating to
practical or theoretical matters (op. cit., p. 265). When Heidegger’s clarification of the sense of mortality is carried out in the name of determining human life in its totality, what guides such a clarification is his notion that ‘inauthenticity has possible authenticity as its foundation’ (op. cit., p. 259). Authenticity is intimately connected in Heidegger to human freedom, such that it is legitimate to say that he takes authenticity to be a function of freedom. That this is the case is borne out by his determination of authentic being-for-death as ‘freedom for death’ (Freiheit zum Tode) (cf. op. cit., p. 266) or, as we have seen, as resoluteness in the sense of ‘Dasein’s emancipation for its most extreme possibility’ (op. cit., p. 303). Yet in the closing section of the first division of the first division of BT that deals explicitly with the notion of truth in its fundamental-ontological sense, Heidegger insists that truth does not lie in the power of individual Dasein but is instead something that belongs to the existential constitution of this being as thrown:

We must presuppose truth; it must be as the revelation of Dasein, just as Dasein itself must be as in each case mine and concrete [i.e. as this being]. That belongs essentially to the thrownness of Dasein into the world. Has Dasein as itself ever freely decided and will it ever be able to decide about whether it comes into ‘being’ (Dasein) or not? In itself it is not at all clear why beings should be discovered, why truth and Dasein must be.

(op. cit., p. 228)

How can the truth peculiar to human existence be at once a function of human freedom and a matter of what must obtain prior to all individual volition? The resolution of the apparently contradictory determinations of such truth is attempted by Heidegger in his analysis of ‘conscience’ in BT. In Heidegger’s view existential truth in the sense of the truth of death as a radically singular phenomenon allows for ‘existentiell attestation’ (existentielle Bezeugung) (op. cit., pp. 267 ff.). It is such ‘proof that the clarification of conscience is meant to provide. Conscience according to the analysis in BT calls to individual Dasein in the sense of calling it forth in and into silence. This call is said to be at once strangely intimate and yet alien to my being:

The call is indeed precisely not and is never either planned or prepared or voluntarily realized by us ourselves. ‘It’ calls, counter to expectation and even to our will. On the other hand, without doubt the call does not come from another that is with me in the world. The call comes out of me and yet over me.

(op. cit., p. 275)

The ‘content’ of the call of conscience, such as it is, relates merely to the ‘fact’ that I am. It conveys nothing, Heidegger says, with respect to the question of why I am. That is to say, conscience says nothing about what I should do, but rather merely has the potential to make explicitly evident the fact that I am as something that must be in the mode of being-able or having-to-become (myself) (cf. op. cit., p. 276). Further, the call of conscience acts to isolate the self insofar as it discloses the fact that I am not at home with, but rather quite other than the things with which I for the most part concern myself. Thus Dasein’s ‘proper’ response to the call of conscience involves its being brought up
against its ‘uncanny’ sense of being or ‘homelessness’ (Unheimlichkeit) among the things of the world that ‘threatens its being lost in self-forgetfulness’ (op. cit., p. 277). That which the call conveys Heidegger further determines as Dasein’s guilt in the sense of its being the ‘ground of a groundlessness of itself (Grund einer Nichtigkeit seiner selbst)’ (cf. op. cit., p. 284). This groundlessness relates, Heidegger says, as much to Dasein as projection as to its essential thrownness. Surprisingly, however, Heidegger refers this groundlessness back to human freedom: The groundlessness meant belongs to the freedom (Freisein) of Dasein for its existentiell possibilities. But freedom only is in the choice of the one thing, that is, in bearing the not-having-chosen and alsonot-being-able-to-choose of the other’ (op. cit., p. 285). But the groundlessness (Nichtigkeit) that confronts Dasein in its radical singularity is taken by Heidegger to be a sign of nothing other than human finitude, that is, it testifies to the ‘nothingness’ (Nichts) that is my own death.

Ultimately, therefore, in BT Heidegger makes the figure of death subject to human freedom in the sense of the concrete possibility accorded to every individual to realize their ‘authentic’ being. Properly responding to the call of conscience requires facing the ineluctable singularity of one’s own mortality, that is, the fact that only I can assume responsibility for my mortal condition. Though the articulation of the phenomenon of conscience in BT makes evident the strange event whereby an advent into being necessarily comes before any volitional assumption of that being, in the final analysis Heidegger’s basic motivation is to articulate mortality as something to be made one’s own and so rendered ‘authentic’. This follows the pattern of the 1927/8 reading of Kant whereby the potential middle voice of transcendental imagination is ultimately given up in favour of a putative power of Dasein to creatively construct its horizon of understanding. In this way Heidegger suppresses a basic possibility of grasping the imagination as ineradicably receptive and responsive in nature. Traces of such a possibility, however, do appear to be present in Heidegger’s development of his notion of human transcendence in terms of ‘world-construction’ (Weltbildung), a development that accompanies certain shifts in his idea of freedom between 1928 and 1930.

**Transcendence and world-construction**

The current chapter as a whole has as its basic task a critical clarification of the connection between imagination and freedom in Heidegger’s work in the years that immediately followed the publication of BT. The principal result to have emerged thus far is a basic vacillation—analogous in form though distinct in motivation to that evinced by Husserl’s concept of imagination—within Heidegger’s account of how the horizon of human understanding is imaginatively realized. Both within BT itself and the 1927/8 lectures on Kant the source of this horizon is determined as a power of spontaneous creativity. The revised analysis found in Heidegger’s 1929 publication Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics shifts this emphasis towards an interpretation of existence that centres on finitude or mortality as a situation given to each human being to assume in advance of any spontaneous activity. Given the pre-eminent significance Heidegger grants to the notion of the transcendental imagination in his interpretation of Kant and the Kantian determination of that faculty as an action of the subject upon itself as passive, the
argument proposed is that the basic vacillation in Heidegger’s articulation of existence in the period in question can be clarified through an examination of his appropriation of the Kantian imagination. Arguing thus in no way implies, however, that the basic horizon of Heidegger’s thought is itself at all Kantian in nature. On the contrary, Heidegger’s central preoccupation is with the sense of singular existence as essentially finite and mortal, a preoccupation clearly alien to the immanent horizon of Kant’s thought. On the other hand, it would be naïve to assume that somehow the ‘content’ of Heidegger’s thinking might remain unaffected by adopting the ‘form’ of the Kantian figures of thought. If, as Heidegger holds, thinking is perhaps the most ‘historical’ of human enterprises, then it must be recognized that his own thought can in no way be seen as somehow operating above and beyond the flow of traditional schemes of thought. The ambiguous motif of ‘overcoming’ traditional philosophy from Plato to Hegel notwithstanding, Heidegger cannot be placed in a position of inaugurating a total break with what goes before. Accordingly, his appropriation of the Kantian imagination is itself confronted with the aporias of ‘spontaneous passivity’ to an equal if not greater extent than Kant’s own thinking. As shown, Heidegger’s negotiation of the basic difficulties inherent in his account of existence in BT takes the form of an effort to clarify the nature of human freedom. If the imagination is taken to signify the free play of the subjective faculties in Kant, Heidegger is attempting to articulate a sense of freedom that comes in some sense before the subject. The key term he chooses to denote such freedom is ‘transcendence’.

In the concluding sections of his Marburg lecture series from summer semester 192710 Heidegger at once recapitulates his account of Dasein’s temporality and attempts to bring about the transition from existential temporality to a notion of time that relates to the understanding of beings as a whole. In the penultimate section entitled ‘Temporality and Being’ he reaffirms his basic articulation of time in terms of ‘production’ (Zeitigung). Returning to his account of the ‘deficient modes’ of instrumental beings offered in BT, Heidegger speaks of the basic ‘presential sense’ (praesentialer Sinn) (GA 24, p. 433) of such being. With respect to the possible modification of the encounter with instrumental beings from unproblematic availability to unavailability or ‘being lost’ (Abhandenheit—literally ‘not-being-to-hand’), Heidegger remarks that ‘“being-to-hand” (Zuhandenheit) and “not-being-to-hand” (Abhandenheit) are specific modalities of a basic phenomenon that we denote formally as presence (Anwesenheit) and absence (Abwesenheit) and generally as praesence (Praesenz)’ (ibid.). ‘Praesence’ is not, Heidegger states, identical with presence either in the sense of the immediate availability of things of use (for their unavailability belongs equally to praesence) or in the sense of that basic aspect of Dasein’s projection that signifies its being-with (Sein bei) the things it encounters (what Heidegger calls Gegenwart). Instead, praesence signifies the horizon itself onto which Dasein projects in its being-with. The horizon as distinguished from the basic act of projection or ‘ecstasis’ is said to constitute in advance the ‘sense’ or directedness of the projection. Heidegger’s articulation of the horizon so understood makes clear that here Kant’s notion of the schematism of the transcendental imagination affords a crucial point of orientation:

Every ecstasis as removal to…(Entrückung zu…) has at once within itself and belonging to it a predelineation (Vorzeichnung) of the formal structure of the onto-which (Wozu) of the removal. We refer to this into-which
Heidegger’s choice of the term ‘predelineation’ to characterize his idea of the horizontal schema as at once distinct from and yet strictly correlated to ecstatic projection, indicates a structural analogy with the notion found in both Kant and Husserl of a ‘rational motivation’ at work in human understanding. Following the clue offered by the Kant book that what is ‘oldest’ in Dasein is its finitude that in some way predates its very humanity (cf. KPM, p. 229), however, Heidegger’s notion of the horizontal schema may be said to signify, in opposition to both Kant and Husserl, the ‘ante-human’ source of human understanding. Furthermore, when Heidegger explicitly refers the present in the sense of presentation (Gegenwärtigen) back to its source in presence it may be assumed that he considers all representation (Vergegenwärtigen) to issue from the same ground. In other words, the notion of presence denotes a unitary source of human understanding analogous to—though for Heidegger himself more ‘radical’ than—both Kant’s notion of transcendental apperception and to Husserl’s primal impression. Again, this indicates that Heidegger’s reconstructed notion of transcendental imagination is in question. But to what extent can Heidegger be said to transform such imagination from an eminently human power of mind to a decisively ‘ante-human’ source of existential understanding?

The projection or ecstasis of the present is characterized in the 1927 lectures as a ‘being-open for what is encountered, which is at once understood in advance with respect to presence’ (GA 24, p. 436). Here Heidegger introduces distinct concepts of time as Zeitlichkeit and Temporalität, a distinction not present in BT and difficult to render in English that only has the term ‘temporality’. The distinction suggests parallels with the Husserlian differentiation of act and object of consciousness in terms of noesis and noema, insofar as Zeitlichkeit denotes time as ecstasis and Temporalität time as horizonal schema or what is later called the ‘ecstema’ (cf. GA 24, p. 436). But what is of principal significance in the present context is the fact that whereas Heidegger characterizes Zeitlichkeit as ‘the originary self-projection as such’ (ibid.), this ‘projection onto time has its end in the horizon of the ecstatic unity of Zeitlichkeit’ (op. cit., p. 437; my emphasis). Rather elusively Heidegger remarks at this point:

We cannot account more originarily for this here, as we would thereby have to go into the problem of the finitude of time. In this horizon every ecstasis of time, i.e. Zeitlichkeit itself has its end. Yet this end is nothing other than the beginning and point of departure for the possibility of all projection.

(ibid.)

If understanding leads back to projection and projection to time, then projection itself has its ultimate source in the horizon of temporality, i.e. in time as Temporalität as opposed to Zeitlichkeit. Here Heidegger explicitly announces that the ground of understanding as set out in BT relates to the projection of the horizon rather than the horizon of projection. If the former is grounded in the latter then this means at once that ‘Temporalität as origin is necessarily richer and more productive than anything that might issue from it’ (op. cit.,
p. 438). In other words, human understanding does not end with human being and its activities (*Vollzüge*) or ‘achievements’ (*Leistungen*).

Does this shift from the recognition of time grasped as *Dasein*’s ecstatic activity to time as horizontal openness signify some basic change in Heidegger’s approach to the problem of the temporal sense of human understanding? An adequate response to this question must from the first acknowledge the *programmatic limitedness of the Daseinsanalytik of BT* as merely a ‘preparation’ for a repetition of the question of being.\(^\text{11}\)

This limitation is already made apparent by the plan of the project offered in BT itself. The lecture series that directly follows the 1927/8 interpretation of Kant crucially clarifies Heidegger’s programme. This final course of Marburg lectures given by Heidegger in 1928\(^\text{12}\) before his return to Freiburg is largely concerned with an interpretation of Leibniz and his ‘principle of sufficient reason’. Characteristically, however, the final sections of the text of the lecture course mark a shift from direct interpretation to a clarification of the broader context of the interpretation itself. Here Heidegger offers the following articulation of the basic problem areas of the project of phenomenological ontology:

> The whole of the foundation and development (*Ausarbeitung*) of ontology is fundamental ontology. It is: 1) The analytic of *Dasein* and 2) The analytic of the temporality (*Temporalität*) of being. This temporal analytic is however at once the *turn (Kehre)* in which ontology itself explicitly runs back into metaphysical ontic (*metaphysische Ontik*) wherein it always implicitly remains.

\[(\text{GA 26, p. 201})\]

Clearly, if the first, preparatory task of fundamental ontology is carried out in BT then Heidegger’s efforts following the publication of his *magnum opus* must be focused on the question of the temporality of being. This has been borne out by consideration of the 1927 lecture series. In the previous section it was shown how human freedom constituted a principal focus for Heidegger in the same period. What remains to be clarified, therefore, is the relationship between being as horizon and human being as free. Such a clarification must centre on Heidegger’s notion of *transcendence*.

In the Leibniz lectures Heidegger claims that the basic problem of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* is the question of transcendence, not in terms of human knowledge but rather in relation to human freedom (cf. op. cit., p. 210). Accordingly, Heidegger determines transcendence as ‘the originary constitution of the *subjectivity* of a subject’ (op. cit., p. 211). That towards which the ‘subject’ transcends is the ‘world’ (cf. op. cit., p. 212), so that transcendence at once signifies ‘being-in-the-world’. Thus, it is not the world that is transcended but rather beings encountered within the world. Such beings include the subject or *Dasein* itself, whereby such ‘self-overcoming’ is taken by Heidegger as the condition of the possibility of *Dasein*’s coming to be itself: ‘First in the transcendence (*Übersprung*) of itself there opens the abyss (*Abgrund*) that *Dasein* is respectively for itself, and only because this abyss of selfness (*Selbstsein*) is open through and in transcendence can it be covered over and rendered invisible’ (op. cit., p. 234). We have seen how the notion of ‘abyss’ makes its appearance at crucial moments in Heidegger’s analyses. In BT it signifies the ‘nothingness’ of singular existence that is to be assumed in its initial givenness or ‘facticity’. But equally it refers in the context of the
interpretation of Kant to the imagination as the ‘root faculty’ that binds sensibility and understanding.

In the current chapter both senses of the abyss as facticity and imagination have been traced back to what Heidegger grasps as the basic finitude of human existence in the form of singular mortality. As indicated, however, everything turns for Heidegger on the question of the realized ‘authenticity’ of mortality, that is, on the action that renders death truly one’s own. In the present context this possibility of authentic mortality resides in Dasein’s transcendence. At this point however Heidegger asserts a characteristic identification that leads transcendence back to human freedom: The transcendence of Dasein and freedom are identical!’ (op. cit., p. 238). Yet, if transcendence is Dasein’s being-in-the-world, can the very constitution of its being be in the hands of Dasein itself? If so, would this then not amount to a concept of the subject that sets no bounds to human freedom, that is, an idea according to which individual human sovereignty and autonomy is affirmed unconditionally? The notion of ‘worldconstruction’ developed by Heidegger between 1928 and 1930 would suggest just such an understanding. And yet a trace of the radical passivity taken up by Heidegger in his appropriation of the Kantian idea of imagination remains at work in his thought of the world as human ‘construction’.

Towards the end of the Leibniz lectures Heidegger glosses his notion of temporal ‘production’ (Zeitigung) as ‘free oscillation’ (freie Schwingung) (cf. op. cit., p. 263). Both projection and thrownness are said to be grounded in such productive movement. Heidegger is here undoubtedly in part following Aristotle’s characterization of phantasia as a kind of kinēsis (cf. De Anima, 428b10 ff.). That Heidegger’s discussion of transcendence should lead to freedom and then to a sense of freedom in terms of temporal ‘production’ or temporalization is unsurprising. What is surprising however is the fact that Heidegger grounds not only ecstatic projection but also the ‘ecstematic’ horizon in a free act of production: ‘The ecstematic produces [i.e. realizes] itself (sich zeitigt) in its oscillation as a worlding. Only insofar as such a thing as ecstatic oscillation produces itself as such a temporality (Zeitlichkeit) can world-access occur’ (op. cit., p. 270). Everything here turns on the sense of sich zeitigen. As mentioned, the term is usually translated as ‘temporalization’, though this is not its usual meaning and another word in German, Verzeitlichung, precisely captures such a meaning. In the present passage Heidegger appears to violate his own distinction of Zeitlichkeit and Temporalität by making both the act of access into the horizon and the horizon accessed ‘products’ of human freedom. By doing so the sense of existence as something given in advance of all choice, that is, as something into which Dasein is ‘thrown’ is suppressed. Such suppression seems to be indicated in the Leibniz lectures with the determination of world as a ‘free holding-over-against of Dasein’s for-the-sake-of-which’ (freier Widerhalt des Worumwillen des Daseins) (op. cit., p. 248). This conception of the sense of world as literally a product of human free will would align Heidegger far more with post-Kantian German Idealism than with Kant’s thought itself. Yet his further determination of the produced world as the ‘originary nothingness’ (nihil originarium) (cf. op. cit., p. 272) recalls Kant’s table of four senses of nothingness, amongst which there figures ‘empty intuition without concept’ as ens imaginarium (cf. KRV, A292/B348).

Heidegger’s 1929 lecture ‘What is Metaphysics?’,13 centres on a consideration of the sense of nothingness. Here, perhaps sensing that his earlier accounts had overemphasized the volitional aspects of existence, Heidegger dwells throughout on its situatedness
(Befindlichkeit) and thrownness. Returning to the account of moods as something that afflicts the individual and so makes manifest human impotence (cf. SZ, pp. 134 ff.), Heidegger now speaks of transcendence rather in a passive than active voice as ‘being held out into nothingness’ (Hineingehaltenheit in das Nichts) (GA 9, p. 115). Here priorities asserted earlier appear to be reversed, so that rather than freedom grounding openness, openness grounds freedom (cf. ibid.). Accordingly, the openness (i.e. truth) is not realized through an act of human freedom but instead is referred back to the ‘nihilating of nothingness’ (Nichten des Nichts). Here the human is grasped not as the free producer of its world but assigned the role of a mere ‘cypher of nothingness’ (Platzhalter des Nichts):

We are so finite that we are precisely incapable of bringing ourselves, through our own decision and will, originary before nothingness. Being rendered finite (Verendlichung) reaches to such unfathomable depths in Dasein that the most proper and profound finitude (Endlichkeit) is denied to our freedom.

(op. cit., p. 118)

Such a description provides a sharp contrast to Heidegger’s earlier determination of human transcendence as the productive construction of the world as horizon. And yet, the text of a further lecture also given in 1929, ‘On the Essence of Ground’ (‘Vom Wesen des Grundes’), retains such a notion of transcendence and at once indicates its source as a transformed idea of the imagination. Accordingly, transcendence as ‘world-construction’ (Weltbildung) signifies ‘that [Dasein] lets world happen (Welt geschehen läßt); provides itself an originary view (image (Bild)), which does not itself grasp though indeed functions as a pattern (Vor-bild) for all manifest beings, among which respective Dasein itself belongs’ (GA 9, p. 158). Productive transcendence as the essence of freedom is further articulated here into three basic senses: founding (Stiften), situating (Bodennehmen) and grounding (Begründen) (cf. op. cit., p. 165). Insofar as the first two senses are clearly set out by Heidegger as elaborations of his notions of projection and thrownness respectively (the third correlating to discourse or Rede), the radical impotence of singular existence in the form of its being delivered over to its own mortal situation appears to be once more subordinated to a principle of free productivity.

The notion of world-construction remains pivotal in Heidegger’s Freiburg lectures from winter semester 1929/30, The Basic Concepts of Metaphysics. Here such construction is once again conceived of in terms of three basic actions, in this case as production, exhibition and definition (Herstellung, Darstellung, Einfassung) of world (cf. GA 29/30, p. 414). Further, world-construction is again ascribed to free will and called ‘originary freedom’ (cf. op. cit., p. 497) and its three aspects said to refer to the originary structure (Urstruktur) of projection as a ‘threelfold fundamental event’ (dreifaches Grundgeschehen) (op. cit., p. 527). Such an event or happening (Geschehen) constitutes the concrete realization of temporality that Heidegger calls ‘history’ (Geschichte). Consequently, the sense of time is ultimately grasped by Heidegger as the free construction of history.

Here we arrive at what is perhaps the decisive conjunction of imagination and time in Heidegger. For what remained markedly unresolved in BT was not so much the question
of singular temporality as collective history (cf. SZ, § 74, pp. 382 ff.). The constant efforts on Heidegger’s part to shift the register of both Husserl’s notion of intentionality and Kant’s concept of imagination from the epistemological to the (proto-)ethical suggests an underlying concern with collective existence. Heidegger introduces in BT an undeveloped idea of collective history in terms of ‘destiny’ (Geschick) (cf. op. cit., p. 384). By the time he comes to consider the ontological significance of the work of art in the mid-1930s his appropriation of the Kantian productive imagination seems to have disappeared without trace. However, closer consideration suggests that the unresolved aporias involved in the notion of such a spontaneously passive human power are merely hidden below the surface of Heidegger’s attempts to think through an idea of history articulated in terms of what he calls the ‘strife of earth and world’ at work in the artwork.
8

The absence of phenomenology and the end of imagination

Imagination as the obscure origin of truth

The preceding chapters have charted the development of Heidegger’s thought in the 1920s and demonstrated the pivotal significance of the idea of imagination within that development. Whereas the initial consideration of Husserl produced no fixed conception of the imagination within the immanent horizon of his general idea of phenomenology, Heidegger has been shown to consistently grasp imaginative activity in terms of the opening up or ‘constitution’ of the temporal horizon basic to human experience and understanding. On the other hand, just as Husserl ultimately fails to resolve a fundamental ambiguity in his notion of the imagination as either an essentially intuitive or signitive act of consciousness, Heidegger appropriates the Kantian transcendental imagination in the context of an unresolved opposition between projection and thrownness. On Heidegger’s own account this conceptual pairing central to the analysis of human existence offered in BT does not have the sense of an opposition, but instead indicates coeval or ‘equiprimordial’ (gleichursprünglich) aspects of a basic existential constitution ultimately unified in the ‘three-fold ecstatic unity’ of temporality. However, it emerged in following the attempts made by Heidegger to complete the projected whole of fundamental ontology that the effort to refer temporality itself back to human freedom merely deepens the unresolved aporia of ‘spontaneous passivity’ inherited from Kant’s idea of productive imagination. Accordingly, though Heidegger in this period basically emphasizes the spontaneous aspect of human existence, in key passages he insists that the sense of existence is one of being delivered over to a condition of being that can only be taken up as one’s own after it has been granted. Such passages suggest that thrownness is grasped as ‘older’ than any projective, and so for Heidegger properly imaginative, activity on the part of Dasein.

As shown, Heidegger grasps the project of fundamental ontology in terms of an immanent point of transition to come within the first part, where the preparatory articulation of the sense of existential time offered in BT leads to a ‘turn’ (Kehre) towards a clarification of time as the horizon of ‘beings as such as a whole’. This turn is attempted repeatedly and documented in the lecture courses held between 1927 and 1929/30. But such attempts ‘fail’ in the sense that they precipitate a turn away from the method that Heidegger developed throughout the 1920s. This method centres on the idea
of ‘repeating’ the basic question of western metaphysics—the question of being—such that the traditional ‘object’ of thought is preserved (‘being’) while the ‘sense’ of being is radically transformed into existential temporality. Heidegger alludes to the disenchantment with metaphysics, albeit in a somewhat obscure manner, in his ‘Letter on “Humanism”’ written almost twenty years later in 1946.\(^1\) The turn away from the notion of ‘repetition’ is indicated conceptually, however, already by the early 1930s\(^2\) with the abandonment of the ecstatic or horizontal articulation of temporality. The notion of time as horizon was linked to an essentially idealist direction in Heidegger’s thought according to which ‘being’ depends upon the being of Dasein (cf. SZ, p. 230). Within the framework of fundamental ontology ‘being’ basically signifies the ‘open space’ (Lichtung) within which beings can reveal what they essentially are. The problem inherent in such a conception is that it strongly suggests that everything within the space or horizon of encounter in some way already is illuminated, so that things cannot but give themselves as what they are. In other words, it fails to bring out the fact that ‘truth’—in Heidegger’s sense of ‘unconcealedness’—is in fact a rare occurrence and only achieved through a ‘countermovement’ (Gegenbewegung) to the forgetfulness basic to ‘factical’, that is, everyday life (cf. op. cit., p. 222). Furthermore, if holding open the horizon of human experience is the basic ‘act’ of Dasein which Heidegger equates with free imaginative activity, then the space and thus the ‘sense’ granted to such experience would appear to issue from an unbounded human power to ‘construct’ meaning. Heidegger’s linkage of the temporal horizon and the power of imagination thus tends to neutralize the dynamic or dialectical opposition between the authentic and inauthentic that lies at the heart of his idea of human existence. On one level this is hardly surprising, given that Heidegger explicitly espouses the imagination in the form of Kant’s ‘hidden root’ that unifies the basic division of mental faculties, sensibility and understanding.

The underlying intellectualism of Husserl’s thought means that he can remain essentially untroubled by the fact that he fails to accord to imagination a clear role within his cognitive economy. For in Husserlian phenomenology it is ultimately the figure of reason that provides a unifying foundation for the edifice of knowledge. For Heidegger by contrast there can be no such recourse to rational unity, although his sense of phenomenology also involves the postulation of a unitary source for the ‘sense of being’, namely time. As shown, in the immediate wake of BT Heidegger attempts to ground the transition from the ecstatic sense of specifically human being to the temporal sense of beings as a whole in his notion of ‘world-construction’. However, what seems to have overtaken this project is a radicalized notion of human finitude that fundamentally alters Heidegger’s understanding of truth. As a consequence, the idea of truth as located in Dasein’s encounter with things gives way to a notion of truth as something belonging in the first instance not to human being but to ‘being itself’ (das Sein selbst). This crucial shift is explicitly articulated for the first time in the 1930 lecture ‘On the Essence of Truth’.

After characteristically beginning with an exposition of the traditional concept of truth as the correspondence of proposition or presentation to a thing or state of affairs, Heidegger’s first major ‘destructive’ move in the 1930 essay is to identify freedom as the genuine essence of truth (cf. GA 9, pp. 185–6 [p. 142]). Although he then explicates his idea of freedom in terms of the ‘ecstatic’, the ecstatic itself is grasped not as construction
(Bildung) but rather as ‘exposure’ (Aussetzung) (cf. op. cit., p. 189 [pp. 144–5]). Heidegger offers the following indication of his idea:

Freedom is, before all such notions (of ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ freedom), to be granted access to the disclosure (die Eingelassenheit in die Entbergung) of beings as such. The disclosedness (Entborgenheit) itself is preserved (verwahrt) in the ec-sistent granting to oneself of access (ek-sistentes Sich-einlassen), through which the openness of what is open (die Offenheit des Offenen), i.e. the ‘there’, is what it is.

(op. cit., p. 189 [p. 145]; my emphasis)

Here freedom is clearly determined not as an activity or even capacity of human beings, but rather in terms of something given. Certainly, Heidegger holds onto the idea that freedom essentially entails the possibility of a ‘proper response’ to this ‘gift’ of freedom. However, the human activity essential to freedom is precisely grasped as a response, that is, as something that is not prior. This fundamentally ante-human turn in Heidegger’s concept of freedom finally overturns the privileging of spontaneity over receptivity that characterizes his understanding of human existence throughout the latter half of the 1920s. Heidegger leaves no room for doubt about this crucial transformation in his thinking. If one follows the indicated sense of freedom as something the human is at first granted ‘then human will (menschliches Belieben) does not have freedom at its disposal. The human being does not ‘possess’ freedom as a property, rather at most the opposite is the case: freedom, as ec-sistent and disclosive Da-sein, possesses the human being’ (op. cit., p. 190 [p. 145]).

Along with this basic shift in the sense of freedom from active self-realization to receptive response, goes an equally radical transformation in Heidegger’s articulation of truth. The indication for this latter change is given with the introduction of the notion of the ‘secret’ (Geheimnis) now said to lie at the heart of the phenomenon of truth. Whereas in BT and the lecture courses that immediately followed truth was grasped as Dasein’s holding open the horizon within which things are disclosed, now such existential activity of disclosure is said to be made possible by a ‘concealedness of beings as a whole’ (Verborgenheit des Seienden in Ganzen) that is ‘older’ than the ‘letting-be’ of beings by Dasein (cf. op. cit., pp. 193–4 [p. 148]). This concealment of things as a whole is what Heidegger calls the ‘secret’ in the sense of the ‘proper non-essence (Un-wesen) of truth’ (cf. op. cit., p. 194 [p. 148]). What is called here the secret stands for the intractable centre of the sense of being for human being. As intractable, being withdraws insofar as any disclosive human action can only take place against the backdrop of a total refusal of the originary sense of that disclosure, i.e. ‘being itself, to reveal itself.

Again, this indicates that something like a gestalt-shift has occurred in Heidegger’s understanding of the horizon: whereas before it stood for the illuminated field that must be realized by human understanding prior to all particular acts of perception, memory, etc., now it is grasped as the utterly dark region out of which things emerge as something given over to such understanding. Analogously, Kant’s often cited determination of the imagination as an ‘art concealed in the depths of the human soul’ (cf. KRIV, A141/ B180–1) indicates an obscure (i.e. non-conscious) essential aspect of this human capacity to bring things to light (phantasia leading back to phainesthai, to appear, and to φός, light)
(cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* 429a3–5). Retaining the idea basic to his articulation of truth throughout the 1920s that it signifies what is most temporal and ‘historical’ in human existence, Heidegger concludes his 1930 essay by determining the essence of truth as ‘the self-concealment of what is singular in the unique history of the disclosure of the “sense” of what we call being’ ([das sich verbergende Einzige der einmaligen Geschichte der Entbergung des »Sinnes« dessen, was wir das Sein nennen] (op. cit., p. 200 [p. 153]).

With this removal of historical truth from the sphere of human freedom and the assertion of the enigmatic refusal of being to reveal itself as origin of such truth, the imagination in its Kantian sense of a constitutive power or achievement of human understanding is displaced by Heidegger in favour of a figure that marks the bounds of human comprehension and freedom. At least explicitly, the traces of Heidegger’s positive appropriation of the Kantian productive imagination disappear with the abandonment of the notion of *Weltbildung*. When such notions as construction and formation do appear in Heidegger’s writing after 1930 they tend to be related back to a negative sense of human activity within the technological attitude of unbridled control over material reality. Yet, the critique of modern technology that grows in significance in Heidegger’s middle period is at once accompanied by a final divorce from Husserl’s scientific characterization of phenomenology towards an affirmation of profound affinities between thinking and poetry. For the present investigation these changes signify something of a paradox. For in relocating his thought from a scientific to a poetic framework Heidegger shifts his attention to that area of human activity pre-eminently associated with the imagination. At the same time he abandons phenomenology in any recognizably Husserlian form.

The following sections chart Heidegger’s move from a transcendentalaesthetic to a mythical-poetic figure of imagination. *This move is understood here as marking an absence of phenomenology in any meaningful sense*, that is, it constitutes the ‘absence’ of phenomenology within Heidegger’s thought following the attempt to articulate its ‘presence’ in terms of the ecstatic-horizontal articulation of human existence. This absence is nevertheless taken to signify at once a sense of phenomenology hidden from Husserl’s own explicit project. According to this sense *phenomenology can be said to make good its claim to illuminate the structures of appearance most productively through entering into a sustained dialogue with art*. This eminent possibility of phenomenological philosophy is at once indicated by the development of Heidegger’s thought in the 1930s and yet covered over due to his alignment with a mythopoetic conception of historical reality. Further, the resolution of the aporia of imaginative activity as spontaneous passivity in favour of a radically receptive notion of history will be shown to stem from Heidegger’s untenable notion of human freedom as ungrounded momentary selfrealization.

**The nation state as realization of collective historical existence**

The concentration of interest on Heidegger’s activities between 1930 and 1936 over the last twenty years particularly has centred on the question of the extent and nature of his engagement with the politics of German National Socialism. Apart from issues of individual responsibility for introducing the NS programme into the University of
Freiburg in the year of his rectorship from 1933 to 1934, the underlying question in discussions has concerned the relationship between the political ideology of Nazism and the underlying structures and motifs of Heidegger’s thought. On the basis of the recent publication of an extensive if not exhaustive collection of Heidegger’s writings from the period in question within the context of the Heidegger Gesamtausgabe, this question can be quite unequivocally answered: for Heidegger himself his thinking was not only compatible with the NS ideology, he actively modified key figures of his thought to bring it into line with the National Socialist programme. This is demonstrated by Heidegger’s explicit adoption of the key signifiers within the Nazi vernacular: terms such as blood, soil, people, etc. But the mere fact that Heidegger takes up such terms cannot assume central significance within the present investigation. As already indicated, it is rather a question of clarifying how the tension underlying Heidegger’s explication of human existence as at once heteronomously receptive and autonomously active is worked out by means of this active assimilation of his thought to the NS perspective. In this way the clarified significance of Heidegger’s appropriation of the productive imagination as the key faculty of human self-understanding can shed light on Heidegger’s alignment with National Socialism. Fundamentally everything turns here on the conception of concrete time or history as the horizon of human understanding.

A month after taking up the position as Rector at the University of Freiburg Heidegger delivered a speech that announced in a very public manner his adherence to National Socialism. The Self-assertion of the German University’ from May 1933 identifies the spiritual world of the German people as the primary matter of concern within the German academy. In grasping National Socialism as the promise of fundamental transformation within the spiritual condition of the German nation, Heidegger at once retains his notion of human existence as a possibility of self-realization or authentic becoming and yet shifts the concrete site of this possibility from an individual negotiation with one’s own mortality to a collective struggle to fulfill the task historically given to a people. As the collective analogue of what BT called ‘resoluteness’ Heidegger speaks of the ‘essential will’ (Wesenswille) of the German people as that which produces its spiritual world (cf. GA 16, pp. 111–12). Indeed, the ‘spirit’ of a people is explicitly identified as collective resolve:

For ‘spirit’ (Geist) is neither astuteness (Scharfsinn), nor the free play of wit (das unverbindliche Spiel des Witzes), nor the boundless drive of intellectual analysis, nor even world reason (Weltvernunft). Rather, spirit is originarily attuned and knowing resoluteness for the essence of being (Entschlossenheit zum Wesen des Seins).

(op. cit., p. 112)

Such collective resolve involves what Heidegger calls the ‘highest freedom’ of a people to give itself its law (cf. op. cit., p. 113). Just as in BT the authenticity and hence truth of individual Dasein was said to involve a counter-movement against the tendency towards the self-forgetfulness of an undifferentiated everyday being-with-others, national autonomy is here said to be realizable only through confrontation and struggle (Kampf) with other nations (cf. ibid.).
Along with the idea of struggle a notion of power stands at the centre of Heidegger’s articulation of the NS ‘revolution’ in Germany. In a speech addressed to a general assembly of students and teachers in November 1933 Heidegger sets out what he understands to be the relationship between the state and the realization of Germany as an autonomous ‘spiritual world’. If the German academy is a collective dedicated to the acquisition of knowledge, and the historical sense of such knowledge resides in a ‘knowing resolve’ to realize the spiritual destiny of Germany, then ‘this knowledge is the state’:

[The state] is the structure that awakens and binds. In accommodating itself (sich fügen) to the state the people is exposed to all the great powers of human being. The state becomes and is insofar as it asserts these powers in the existence (Dasein) of the people.

(op. cit., p. 200)

The freedom of the collective is thus realized not through rational negotiation aiming at a generally recognized consensual truth; nor does it take the form of an affective community bound by universal ‘moral sentiments’. Instead, Heidegger’s idea of political community involves wholehearted struggle with ‘the great powers’ shaping human society: ‘nature, history, art, technology’ (op. cit., p. 201). If in his 1930 lecture the essence or origin of truth was determined to be the enigmatic unity hidden within the various disclosures of the sense of being in western metaphysics, at the height of his engagement with Nazism Heidegger reconfigures this essence as the manifestation of these ‘great powers’ in and through the state. Exposure to the great powers through the state elicits at once the collective effort of self-realization in the form of art:

In the struggle to create the way (Bahn) and secure the continuity (Dauer) for its own being (Wesen), the people grasps itself in the developing state constitution. In the struggle to constitute in advance (sich vorzubilden) its capacity for greatness and determination as essential truth, [the people] presents itself in an exemplary way (maßgebend) in art. This attains the grand style only when it brings the whole existence of the people into the form of its being (Wesen).

(ibid.)

After giving up his position as rector in the spring of 1934 Heidegger maintains his idea of the state as that through which a people encounters the forces that shape its destiny. In two lectures on the German university delivered in the summer of 1934 Heidegger reaffirms his idea of the total state:

The state is not a mechanical legal apparatus that exits along with and in addition to the institutions of economy, art, science and religion. Rather, the state signifies the living order that is thoroughly dominated by reciprocal trust and responsibility, in which and through which the people realizes its own historical existence.

(op. cit., p. 302)
In November 1934 Heidegger gave a lecture in Constance on the present situation and future task of the German university. Here we find him narrowing the compass of the ‘great powers’ through and against which a people’s struggle for the realization of its historical destiny takes place. Accordingly nature, science and technology remain absent, while three ‘basic powers’ (Grundmächte) are now identified as the source of collective historical realization: ‘Poetry, thought, political act in an essential sense are not phenomena and occurrences of a so-called “culture”…but rather basic, intrinsically interconnected events of the times and peoples and their hour of destiny (Weltstunde)’ (op. cit., pp. 318–19). Here repeated reference to Hölderlin as the poetic voice of the German nation signals the beginning of a marked aesthetisizing of Heidegger’s nationalist politics. In the years that follow the overt politicizing of his thought, Heidegger’s intense engagement with the works of Germany’s ‘lost poet’, Hölderlin, together with a protracted confrontation with Nietzsche as the pre-eminent German figure who thinks ahead towards a possible post-metaphysical future of philosophy, constitutes an effort to work out a notion of historical thinking in the form of a poetically realized national destiny. Thus Hölderlin is taken to be the ‘most German of all Germans’ (cf. op. cit., p. 333) insofar as the ‘ground of the inner possibility of history resides in language’ (op. cit., p. 329). Accordingly, the enigmatically invested task of a historical people is transmitted through the mythological constructions of poetic language. In such a way Heidegger reaffirms the salvationary potential accorded to art in post-Kantian Romanticism insofar as he repeats the Romantics’ call for a poetic constitution of community.6 This suggests a notion of imagination as divination, that is, as a form of seeing in which any human measure is lost sight of and a will to trace all phenomena back into an obscure, purely mythological origin is affirmed.

The mythopoetic imagination

In his 1929 lectures on German Idealism Heidegger recognizes that his identification of the transcendental imagination as the key to Kant’s account of human experience follows an insight in Hegel’s early critique of Kant, yet at the same time insists that Hegel maintains the subordination of imagination to reason. He clarifies his own position in contradistinction to Hegel as an effort to ‘[lead] the imagination as something originary and concrete back to temporality, [recognizing thereby that] the construction of reason is merely an empty abstraction from [temporality] but not reality’ (GA 28, p. 201). As a further note makes clear, Heidegger’s appropriation of the Kantian transcendental imagination concerns ‘the grasping (Aufnahme) of the inner, hidden history of metaphysics’ (op. cit., p. 337). This confirms the basic sense of Heidegger’s analysis of imagination that has emerged, namely that it aims to clarify the sense of historical temporality understood as the finitude of human existence. As indicated, however, with the ‘turn’ in Heidegger’s thinking after 1930, concrete historicity becomes increasingly schematized as a collective rather than radically individual adventure. Traces of this concern for time as collective history are present already in Heidegger’s magnum opus.

In the fifth chapter of the second division of BT entitled Temporality and Historicity’ Heidegger introduces two key notions, namely those of ‘destiny’ (Schicksal) and ‘fate’ (Geschick). Whereas the former term denotes the resolute state of individual Dasein with
respect to its own mortality, Geschick refers to ‘the happening of community, the people’ (Geschehen der Gemeinschaft, des Volkes) (SZ, p. 384). As Dasein is concrete only in the collective of Mitdasein, the ‘destiny’ of the individual is directed in advance by the shared ‘fate’ of a people. Heidegger articulates the authentic realization of individual historical destiny in terms of the three aspects of time. Primarily grasped with respect to the future, authentic collective existence appropriates its mortal condition through a ‘repetition’ that allows a people to become ‘momentary’ (augenblicklich) for ‘its time’ (cf. op. cit., p. 385). Though Heidegger insists on the priority of the futural dimension also in the case of collective authenticity, it is notable how in the account from BT he actually places the emphasis on the authentic past in the sense of ‘repetition’. Repetitive appropriation of collective finitude is said to constitute ‘explicit tradition’ (ausdrückliche Überlieferung) in the sense of liberating hidden possibilities in the past delivered over to a people (cf. op. cit., p. 385). If the imagination in Heidegger stands for the ‘power’ that places human existence in a position to reveal the hidden underlying possibilities within its own history, then clearly this power has the sense of grounding both individual and collective authenticity, both ‘destiny’ and ‘fate’.

Following the earlier account of the analysis of conscience in BT, it should come as no surprise that Heidegger grasps the imaginative appropriation of history as a free responsiveness (Erwiderung) of Dasein to the call of its own past (cf. op. cit., p. 386). The basic modification of the sense of freedom identified within the development of Heidegger’s thought from 1930 onwards involves the shift from a model of ‘auto-affection’ (internal receptivity) to what might be called ‘hetero-affection’ (external receptivity). This shift is accompanied, as noted, by Heidegger’s definitive abandonment of the Husserlian idea of phenomenology as scientific analysis and accompanying affirmation of a profound affinity between thinking and art, in particular poetry. In the mid-1930s Heidegger’s confrontations with the poetic thinking of Nietzsche and Hölderlin explicitly reject the former primacy of imagination and yet indicate, at an implicit level, a transformed notion of imagination as the mythopoetic realization of the hidden sense of collective history.

With the appearance of the seventh edition of BT in 1953 Heidegger finally announced that the project of fundamental ontology as this was set out in 1927 would remain unfinished. Here he refers the reader to the simultaneous publication of a lecture course given in 1935, Introduction to Metaphysics (EM), saying that it offers an ‘elucidation’ (Erläuterung) of the question of the ‘being of our existence (Dasein)’ (SZ, p. VII [p. 16]). The text of the 1935 lectures contains many clues indicating the political dimension of Heidegger’s thought in that period. In particular, Heidegger famously speaks of the Germans as the most endangered yet ‘metaphysical people’ (cf. EM, p. 29). The task given to this people is the ‘realization of its destiny’ (Erwirkung seines Schicksals) through a ‘creative grasp of its tradition’ (schöpferische Begrieffung seiner Überlieferung) (ibid.). In line with his accounts of the task of thinking in the late 1920s, Heidegger repeats his articulation of the question of being as a concern for ‘a hidden ground of our historical existence (Dasein)’ (op. cit., p. 71). Such a ground, as we know, marks the place where imagination and mortality cross in Heidegger’s thought. The crossing-place explicitly mentioned in the lectures is, however, the city-state or polis, which we are told stands for ‘the ground and place of the Dasein of humanity itself, the crossing-place of all its paths [into the manifold of beings]’ (op. cit., p. 117).
the term *polis*, Heidegger insists, is not made evident in its translation as ‘state’ or ‘city-state’, for this fails to grasp what the Greek term truly signifies, namely ‘the place (Stätte), the There, in which and as which *Dasein* exists as historical’ (ibid.). To this ‘place of history’ (Geschichts-stätte) belong essentially ‘the gods, temples, priests, festivals, games, poets, thinkers, leaders’ in such a way that the poets, thinkers, priests and leaders exist solely in virtue of their ‘political’ situation.

Yet, what has the sense of the Greek *polis* to do with the task of thinking? Heidegger’s response to this question remains consistent with his basic sense of hermeneutical phenomenology from the early 1920s on: such thinking is an engagement with the historical origins of western thought that seeks to ‘awaken’ present philosophy to its own ‘hidden ground’. Such thought requires a return to the ‘beginning’ of the tradition in the shape of the Greek inauguration of philosophy. But such a concern for ‘primal history’ (Ur-geschichte) is not, Heidegger maintains, a regressive move towards ‘primitive’ thinking, ‘but rather, when it is anything at all, *mythology* (Mythologie)’ (op. cit., p. 119; my emphasis). The mythological language that responds to the hidden ground of human history hints at the sense of finitude that is basic to human being: a finitude that is grasped here as thrownness in the sense of a being driven forth (fortgerissen) by being into a space where the openness (Offenheit) of the being of beings as a whole may be actualized (ins Werk gesetzt) (cf. op. cit., p. 125). Here the basic dynamic of projection/thrownness is evident while at once being articulated according to a mythopoetic register. In accord with the shift within Heidegger’s thinking towards a basically receptive sense of human freedom, here the fateful task given to a people is grasped as the responsive realization of its collective history in the form of mythological artworks. This position is made explicit by Heidegger in the following manner: ‘Human being is the need (Not) of sensing (Vernehmung) and gathering the necessitated freedom (Nötigung in die Freiheit) to undertake *techne* [as] the knowing actualization (Ins-werk-setzen) of being. Such is history’ (op. cit., p. 130). Here art is grasped by Heidegger not as one task among many but rather as the free activity imposed on a ‘historical people’ by fate. How is this idea of a poetic construction of authentic collective existence worked out by Heidegger in more detail?

The text of three lectures delivered by Heidegger in 1935/6 was first published in 1950 under the title ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’. In the pivotal middle lecture entitled ‘The Work and Truth’ Heidegger focuses his considerations on the example of a Greek temple. In contrast to the example of a Van Gogh painting selected in the first lecture, the temple offers an obvious lead into an appreciation of art not as an object of private consumption but rather as public manifestation. In line with his notion of the state as that which exposes a people to the ‘great powers’ that shape its fate, Heidegger offers the following description of the ‘work’ of art:

The temple-work first orders (fügt) and at once gathers around itself the unity of those ways and relations in which birth and death, the accursed and blessed, victory and disgrace, endurance and decay—grant humanity the shape of its fate. The governing extent (waltende Wette) of these open relations is the world of this historical people. Through it and in it [this people] comes back to itself for the completion of its determination (zum Vollbringen seiner Bestimmung).
In addition to this opening of the historical world of a people, the artwork sets this world back on ‘home ground’ (heimatlicher Grund) (cf. op. cit., p. 28 [p. 168]). Insofar as what Heidegger calls ‘earth’ stands for materiality and its resistance to human manipulation, the artwork exhibits an essential character of ‘self-concealment’ (Sichverschleißung) (cf. op. cit., p. 34 [p. 174]). What is ‘at work’ in the artwork accordingly takes the form of a primal ‘strife’ between the openness of ‘world’ and the closedness of ‘earth’. But this strife, Heidegger remarks, realizes the true sense of relation as the opposed self-affirmation (Selbstbehauptung) of different beings:

Self-affirmation of being (Wesen) is, however, never to remain fixed to an accidental condition, but rather for something to give itself up to the hidden originarity of the source (Herkunft) of its own being. In strife each bears the other out of itself […] The harder strife in itself (selbständig) exaggerates itself, the more unyieldingly those engaged in the strife release themselves into the intimacy of a simple belonging.

(op. cit., pp. 34–5 [p. 174])

A year before this aesthetic notion of belonging through mutual self-assertion Heidegger had articulated the same idea in a far more overtly political and concrete manner in the form of a rejection of the voluntary union of nations established to avoid war in Europe. Here in 1934 Heidegger at once underscores the notion of the polis as that which alone provides the place in which the fate of a historical people can be freely decided:

This genuine historical freedom as the autonomy of recognition from people to people has no need of the organized pseudo-community (Schein Gemeinschaft) of the ‘League of Nations’. The emancipation of a people for its own sake happens, however, by means of the state. The state, not as apparatus, not as artwork, not as limitation of freedom—rather as a removal of limits (Entschränkung) for the sake of the inner freedom of all essential powers of the people according to the law of their inner order of precedence. There is a state only insofar as it becomes, becomes the historical being of beings that is called the people.

(GA 16, p.333)

In the lectures on art Heidegger’s political conception of historical truth is subject to what can legitimately be described as an aestheticizing sublimation. Nevertheless, through this sublimation the outlines of Heidegger’s overt politics remain evident. Thus, when he speaks in the third lecture of the ‘few essential ways of truth’ one finds that along with the artwork the ‘act of state foundation’ (die staatgründende Tat) is named. These two ‘ways of truth’ are in turn complemented by a third, namely the ‘thinking of being’, so that thinkers and poets find themselves side by side under the aegis of the historical state (cf. H, p. 48 [pp. 186–7]).

Whereas the first two lectures of ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ select examples from painting and architecture respectively, in the final lecture—‘Truth and Art’—
Heidegger follows the lead of the traditional hierarchy of artistic modes in asserting that the essence of art is literature or poetry (Dichtung) (cf. op. cit., p. 58 [p. 197]). By thus privileging linguistic art forms Heidegger is able to retain a basic idea of his earlier thought that initially emerged through his appropriation of Aristotle. According to this idea the logos may indeed be identified as the ‘home’ of truth, but not in the sense of a thought or proposition that corresponds with reality (cf. SZ, pp. 214 ff.). As shown, Heidegger’s alternative notion grasps the logos instead as an articulation of the human understanding that becomes ‘authentic’ when singular Dasein responds to the call of conscience and ‘chooses’ itself. If the period of politicization is motivated by a basic concern for the authentic existence of a communal singularity or ‘people’ realized in and through the state, then the subsequent aestheticizing of this position elevates poetry and the poet to the status of privileged mediator of a historical destiny that is at once singular and yet shared.¹⁰

Explicitly relating the idea of truth realized in the artwork back to his notion of resoluteness set out in BT, Heidegger re-presents that idea through the modified understanding of truth announced in the 1930 lecture, ‘On the Essence of Truth’. Insofar as poetic truth is grounded in a ‘will for truth’, the artwork stands for a crossing-point of willing and knowing, standing equally in the domain of ‘science’ and ‘ethics’. Such knowing volition or wilful knowledge once again indicates the strange ‘middle voiced’ presence that Heidegger found at work in the Kantian imagination. For here too the realization of truth is expressed in the paradoxical form of spontaneous passivity:

The knowing that is a willing and willing that is a knowing, is the ecstatic giving-oneself-access (ekstatisches Sicheinlassen) to the unconcealedness of being of the existent human. Resoluteness (Entschlossenheit) is not thought in Being and Time as the decisive action of a subject (decidierter Aktion eines Subjekts), but rather as the releasing (Eröffnung) of Dasein from its ensnarement (Befangenheit) in beings into the openness of being.

(H, p. 53 [p. 192])

Whereas the positive appropriation of Kant allowed Heidegger to grant pivotal significance to the productive imagination, in the 1935/6 lectures the rejection of the philosophy of the subject is understood to make such accommodation with the horizon of transcendental idealism untenable. Accordingly, though the sense of truth with respect to Dasein remains that of a freely willed act of holding open the horizon of engagement and revelation of things, the artwork as the locus of such an act cannot be legitimately traced back to a power of imagination. As Heidegger remarks: ‘it becomes questionable whether the essence of poetry, and that means at once of projection (Entwurf), can be adequately thought on the basis of the imagination (Imagination und Einbildungskraft)’ (op. cit., p. 59 [p. 197]).

This explicit renunciation of his former recognition of the imagination as the ground out of which existential understanding issues is at once accompanied by Heidegger’s reaffirmation of mythology as the truly historical form of shared truth. As indicated, with this shift from the transcendental to the mythic imagination Heidegger announces his final break with phenomenology as an elucidation of human experience from within human experience. For truth grasped as mythology abjures any even attenuated notion of...
immediate givenness of things. Phenomenology, with its picture of experience as rooted in direct intuitive givenness and as itself an attempt to elucidate structures of experience by means of intuitive evidence, is irrevocably left behind with Heidegger’s transition into the mythological. For myth is quite opposed to direct evidence—it is the truth delivered only through an obscure medium of refraction. Though Heidegger never adhered to the letter of Husserlian phenomenology, throughout the 1920s he did remain loyal to its spirit. When the Kantian restriction of legitimate human thought and understanding to an analysis of the ‘transcendental’, immanent structures of experience is lifted and an attempt made to re-legitimize the ‘transcendent’, all claims of philosophy become subject to an ultimately opaque mediation. Such ‘transcendent’ thinking necessarily finds itself on the wrong side of the line that divides what Kant distinguished as enthusiasm and fanaticism.

With his espousal of what is being called here the ‘mythopoetic imagination’, Heidegger’s thinking operates within a landscape that possesses all the familiar conceptual topography of the ‘transcendental’ phase, and yet this landscape becomes increasingly obscured by the mists of poetic mythology. With the abandonment of the transcendental-horizon configuration of experience Heidegger’s thought breaks all ties with the former guiding principle of discovering ‘progressive’ potential within phenomenology. The following retreat from practical politics gives way to a poeticized conception of the German nation as the ground of truly ‘historical’ German thought. Such aestheticized politics, operating as it does without adherence to any phenomenological ‘reduction’, falls victim to the most spurious myth of all of Heidegger’s times, that is, the story that holds up one people as of exclusive world-historical significance. For by the mid-1930s Heidegger’s thought is not only characterized by a marked absence of phenomenology, it has fused together the idealization of the poet in German Romanticism with a nostalgia for the ancient Greek city-state as total-artwork (Gesamtkunstwerk). Within this horizon the poet does not merely create human works that ‘amuse and instruct’, rather he speaks of a sense of truth that utterly transgresses the boundaries of ‘possible experience’, that is, of truth as something arrived at through an enigmatic and singular communion with the divine. The ‘obscure power’ that directs human thought is thus no longer located in the depths of the human soul, but is grasped as a sphere of poetic divination: ‘Projective saying (Sagen) is poetry: the myth (Sage) of the world and the earth, the myth of the horizon (Spielraum) of their strife and thereby of the place (Stätte) of all nearness and distance of the gods’ (op. cit., p. 60 [p. 198]). With this mythopoetic transformation in Heidegger’s thought the absence of phenomenology is announced. Such absence indicates at once an unrealized future possibility of phenomenological thinking.

**Phenomenology as archaeological aesthetics**

Phenomenology has long since lost pretensions to being anything like ‘an unsurpassable horizon of our times’. The academic prominence of phenomenology on the European continent gave way to the dominance of structuralism and post-structuralism in the 1960s. A figure pivotal to this move away from phenomenology was, ironically, the French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty. A close collaborator of Jean-Paul Sartre’s in the
period immediately following the Second World War, already in the early 1950s Merleau-Ponty was raising the question of the place of language in phenomenology\textsuperscript{13} that was to become the initial focus of the influential post-structuralist, Jacques Derrida. But the question of language in the form of what Husserl calls the ‘signitive act’ was central to phenomenology from the beginning. In fact, the initial chapters of the present inquiry attempt to show how Husserl’s account of signification precisely offers an account of meaning that is radically \textit{non-intuitionist} in character. Through analysing his accounts of imagination it was shown how, despite this non-intuitionist idea of intentionality, Husserl’s phenomenology is fundamentally regulated by an idea of rational ‘sensedonation’. As a consequence, the initial rejection of the empiricist notion that perception is the legitimizing source of all claims to knowledge simply gives way to a species of idealism according to which meaning must be in some way ‘produced’ by the rational subject.

For French post-structuralism in the 1960s it was a question of insisting that the production of meaning does not have its source in subjective rational activity. Within the immediate compass of French thought in the twentieth century, surrealism, with its adherence to the Freudian notion of the unconscious as a source of meaning that is non-rational and yet comprehensible with reference to a structured sign-system, offered just the resources needed for the post-structuralist departure from phenomenology. In an interview from 1966 Foucault draws attention to this connection and at once indicates the centrality of an idea of imagination quite distinct from the Kantian concept of this ‘power’:

First, Breton remoralized writing, as it were, by de-moralizing it completely. The ethic of writing no longer comes from what one has to say, from the ideas that one expresses, but from the very act of writing […] Further, at the same time that writing is remoralized, it begins to exist in a kind of rocklike solidity. It asserts itself apart from everything that might be said through it. Which explains, no doubt, the rediscovery by Breton of the whole dynasty of imagination that French literature had driven out: the imagination is not so much what is born in the obscure heart of man as it is what arises in the luminous thickness of discourse. And Breton, a swimmer between two words, traverses an imaginary space that had never been discovered before him.\textsuperscript{14}

In other words, what Foucault understands by the surrealist imagination is not some unconscious activity ‘hidden in the depths of the human soul’, but rather something that operates in language as the essential medium of the social that is at once material and symbolic. But such an imaginary horizon of the social cannot signify here some form of discourse regulated in advance by an ideal of rational transparency or even pragmatic consensus. Instead, language must stand for the ‘space’ of the social, or community, \textit{before all human acts and agency}. Yet, this is not to say that language becomes something transcendent as is the case in Heideggerian mythopoetics, but rather that language is not simply an instrument adaptable to the rational agent’s will to make themselves understood. The diaphanous qualities of language are to be found necessarily ‘in the flesh’, so that meaning is caught up, as Foucault indicates, in the ‘thinkness’ of a
medium that refracts and distorts as much as it relays and focuses. As a consequence, imagination in the ab-sense of phenomenology relates in the first instance not to time but rather to space.

The analysis of the role of the imagination in the explicitly phenomenological period of Heidegger’s thought set out in the second part of this book charted a shift from the transcendental to the mythopoetic imagination. With reference to this transformation I drew attention to the fact that Heidegger’s departure from any recognizably Husserlian figuration of ‘scientific’ philosophy towards an alignment with art and poetry is paradoxically accompanied by an explicit rejection of the imagination as fundamental to any account of human understanding. The interpretation put forward here counters Heidegger’s self-interpretation in insisting that, in fact, the development of his thought in the 1930s follows a path well trodden by proponents of German Romanticism from Hölderlin to Nietzsche. The Romantic conception of imagination is intrinsically linked to the notion of community, more precisely, to the supposition of the inauguration of national community through myth. Here, if anywhere, would be the place to identify Heidegger’s ‘myth of origins’ in the form of the mythic origin.

What is equally clear, however, is that the ‘turn’ in Heidegger’s thought is at once a turn away from phenomenological inner time-consciousness towards a recognition of space, or rather place, as key to any elucidation of concrete experience that is from the first social. The place for Heidegger’s poetic schematization of experience was the site of mythic memory in the wake of Romanticism, namely the Greek city-state. But here, as indicated, the autarchic individual is simply replaced by the autarchic community. Against such a conception, the ‘place’ of imagination would rather be something that is precisely not owned or ‘proper’ to the human individual or collective, either immediately or in the form of a future task. Against Husserl’s primal topos of the immediate impression and Heidegger’s utopos of the mythic nation-state, Foucault offers a schema of the imagination in terms of material heterotopos:

There are, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places, actual places, places that are designed into the very institution of society, which are sorts of actually realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable. Because they are utterly different from all the emplacements that they reflect or refer to, I shall call these places ‘heterotopias,’ as opposed to utopias […] One could imagine, I won’t say a ‘science,’ because that word is too compromised now, but a sort of systematic description that would have the object, in a given society, of studying, analysing, ‘reading,’ as people are fond of saying now, these different spaces, these other places, a kind of contestation, both mythical and real, of the space in which we live. This description could be called ‘heterotopology’.15

The heterotopia is thus a material, real place where a community ‘schematizes’ itself, that is, produces an empirical representation of itself. Insofar as it is representative, such a
place is not in any real sense in space, that is, it cannot be located indifferently in relation to other places. On the other hand, this ‘product’ of the imagination is the very materialization of social understanding. The proposed form of concrete analysis to be called ‘heterotopology’ would disclose a form of imagination that is at once analogous to the idea of ‘passive synthesis’ in Husserl and in agreement with Heidegger’s basic concept of imagination as a constructed ‘horizon’ of experience. Accordingly, what might be called the ‘heterotopic’ imagination would work in advance of all individual acts of perception and conception. However, just as language at once facilitates and restricts individual acts of discourse, such imagination resists as much as it conducts what the individual means to say.

In the present investigation an attempt has been made to clarify the sense of phenomenology through an analysis of the sense of imagination within the phenomenological project. The sense of imagination in the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger has been shown to have one basic common feature: the construction of experience as unified self-understanding. This phenomenological sense of imagination has been placed throughout in the context of Kant’s critical thought with its reorientation of philosophy from a concern with things beyond to things given within appearance. In attempting to overcome the basic duality in Kant’s theory of experience, both Husserl and Heidegger continue efforts made since Schelling, Fichte and Hegel to recover a sense of original unity in experience. What I have called the ‘ab-sense’ of phenomenology follows indications gleaned from Heidegger’s negotiation with imagination that point towards something like Foucault’s idea of analysis as ‘heterotopology’. According to such an idea the imagination would be removed from the basic phenomenological economy or dynamic of intention/intuition or inauthentic/authentic. Instead of being a ‘root power’ of human understanding the heterotopic imagination would stand for the historical sense of experience as something always materialized in the form of a place symbolizing an actual community and yet situated in some way outside the general economy of substitutable signs. Such products would be ‘artworks’ in a sense broader than that usually acknowledged, namely, artworks grasped as places that grant historical community without underlying unity. Such works of the imagination would belong to no individual or group but still serve, as Foucault indicates, to represent a community to itself.

The sense of phenomenology common to Husserl and Heidegger has served here only to indicate the ab-sence of such a figure of imagination. In following the development of his thought up to the mid-1930s, it was shown how Heidegger abandons phenomenology in any genuine sense with the turn towards art. I wish to propose in conclusion that it is precisely with respect to the experience of artworks in the sense indicated that phenomenology—as a concern for the direct description of what is given ‘in appearance’ alone—may still have something to offer. Such a proposed sense of phenomenology would avoid the naivety of ‘naturalizing’ tendencies in retaining the ineliminable historical dimension of experience recognized by Heidegger’s hermeneutical transformation of the Husserlian project. Beyond both Husserl and Heidegger, however, phenomenology as aesthetics would have to become ‘archaeological’ in Foucault’s sense of being directed towards the historical dimension of experience as discontinuity and rupture rather than continuity and integration. Above all, such a sense of phenomenology would stand opposed to any notion of imagination as the inauguration or disclosure of an ‘originary sense’ and recognize that ‘artworks’ provide a place of experience that alters
with every repeated encounter in their very ‘grounding’ of concrete community. Phenomenology in such a sense does not exist. It has been the purpose of this investigation to show not that it should, but that it might.
Notes

Introduction

1 The authoritative study of Husserl’s relationship to Kant and neo-Kantianism is Iso Kern’s *Husserl und Kant* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964). According to Kern, up to the time immediately before publication of his *Ideas* (i.e. 1911/12) and beyond Husserl’s relationship to Kant is characterized by a rejection of the Kantian notion of a productive or creative synthesis as basic to mental economy. With the development of the idea of ‘genetic phenomenology’ from around 1918/19, however, Husserl is able to offer a positive articulation of Kantian productive synthesis. What is most telling about this positive appropriation is that such productivity is ascribed by Husserl not to the transcendental imagination as it is by Kant but without exception to the understanding. Kern’s explication of this move at once supports the general line of argument advanced in the present study: ‘According to Kant understanding (at least “human understanding”) is not intuitive and so possesses by itself no relation to impressions and to the intuitively grasped environment. Rather, the understanding’s act of formation (*Formung*) has need of the mediation of the imagination that grants the categories of the understanding corresponding intuition… Husserl overlooked this unintuitiveness of Kantian understanding because his *own* concept of understanding in no way excludes intuition—not even sensible intuition, as in Husserl sensibility and understanding absolutely cannot be strictly differentiated’ (pp. 262–3). What remains constant, therefore, in Husserl’s interpretation of Kant is the idea that all synthesis is either explicit or implicit intellectual activity. As Husserl works out his idea of ‘passive synthesis’ in the early 1920s it becomes increasingly clear that even the acts of ‘sensibility’ have their source in an ‘unconscious’ proto-understanding (cf. op. cit., pp. 268 ff.) rather than in the ‘blind’ workings of a productive imagination.

2 In two articles, ‘Neo-Kantianism and Phenomenology’ (*Kant-Studien*, 82 (1991), pp. 303–18) and ‘Two Idealisms: Lask and Husserl’ (*Kant-Studien*, 83 (1993), pp. 448–66), Karl Schuhmann and Barry Smith show the filiations of the Marburg and Baden schools of neo-Kantianism with Husserl’s phenomenology by way of a consideration of the Kantian Emil Lask. Lask died in action in 1915 and his work has received little attention. He is mentioned by Heidegger on occasion and Lask’s notion of ‘dedication’ (*Hingabe*) even appears to be crucial in the early Freiburg lectures (cf. *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (1919/20; GA 58), ed. H.-G.Gander; Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1993, pp. 133 ff., p. 168). In the latter article cited the authors point out that ‘from *Ideas I* onwards Husserl explicitly interpreted his phenomenology as a sort of Kantian transcendentalism’ (op. cit., p. 452). What emerges through the comparison of the work of the Freiburg neo-Kantian and Husserl is that both thinkers subscribe to a form of transcendental philosophy in the Kantian sense. The points on which they differ to some extent reflect the difference between Husserl’s and Heidegger’s respective sense of phenomenology. Thus on the issue of the sense of subjective life the authors point out: ‘In Husserl it consists in the “self-actualization” of a transcendental subjectivity: that the latter becomes worldly is just one aspect of its unfolding [cf. Hua III/2, p. 640]. In Lask, on the contrary, mundane life is the ultimate horizon in which cognitive as well as practical life is forever enmeshed’ (op. cit., p. 456). On the point of the ‘abyss’ separating the empirical and the transcendental, Heidegger’s opposition to Husserl is again reflected in Lask’s view according to which ‘there is no longer any need to assume either
things-in-themselves or a transcendental subjectivity in order to explain our everyday experience of the world and of ourselves’ (op. cit., p. 459). In this respect ‘Husserl is without doubt a more orthodox Kantian than Lask’ (op. cit., p. 458).

According to the present investigation, however, both versions of phenomenology propounded by Husserl and Heidegger respectively must be understood within a wider intellectual climate dominated by Kantian thought. Everything suggests that Husserl’s phenomenology becomes more Kantian as it develops, whereas Heidegger works through Kant to arrive at a position that abandons phenomenology in any real sense. For a recent analysis of Lask that places him in relation to the early Heidegger see Steven Galt Crowell’s article ‘Emil Lask: Aletheiology as Ontology’ (Kant-Studies, 87 (1996), pp. 69–88). Of the many further indications offered by Crowell of Heidegger’s alignment with Lask, his remark that Lask opposes Kant in refusing to grant to subjectivity in the form of the ‘transcendental unity of apperception’ the role of grounding categorial determinations (cf. ‘Aletheiology’, p. 71), points towards a key move in Heidegger’s reading of Kant considered below.

1

Intuition and expression in the early epistemology

1 This central issue of the ‘being-with’ of concepts or forms in relation to the empirical is of course the key problem of Platonic philosophy. As a problem it is not something essentially resolvable by Plato but rather the tension that motivates his continual efforts of thinking. Thus, in the Sophist (253b ff.), the problem leads to the determination of philosophy as the ‘science of dialectic’ as the analysis of things according to mutually exclusive class concepts, whereas the conclusion of the Parmenides (166a f.) suggests that any notion of a coherence or correspondence of many elements points back to a unitary sense of being. In the Timaeus (35a ff.), by contrast, Plato’s ‘mythological’ discourse insists on the necessity of positing a ‘third kind’ to mediate between the basic concepts of identity and difference, ideal and empirical being. This negotiation of the problem of participation points the way forward to Aristotle’s concept of imagination as a power of the mind that mediates between sensation and thought (cf. De Anima, 427b 14 ff.), an idea that is manifestly at work in Kant’s notion of the transcendental imagination. In relation to what follows, it is interesting to note that the Timaeus, immediately following the introduction of matter (chōrd) as a third type, goes on to consider the nature of time and determines it to be ‘a moving image (eikon) of the eternal’ (37d 5). These two aspects of imagination as material and temporal will prove to be central in the following investigation.

3 There is nothing new in this claim. In fact it constitutes what Derrida calls the ‘prime intention’ of his early study of Husserl, *Speech and Phenomena*. Derrida acutely diagnoses Husserl’s ambivalence or ‘doubt’ with respect to the imagination in the following way: The power of pure repetition that opens up ideality and the power which liberates the imaginative reproduction of empirical perception cannot be foreign to each other; nor can their products’ (*Speech and Phenomena*, trans. D.Allison, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 55). Five years earlier Derrida had linked the pivotal significance of imagination in Sartre with a veritable transformation of the phenomenological terrain: ‘It is by beginning with a direct thematization of imagination in its situation as an original *lived experience* (utilizing imagination as the operative *instrument* of all eidetics), and by freely describing the phenomenological conditions for fiction, therefore for phenomenological method, that Sartre’s breakthrough has so profoundly unbalanced—and then overthrown—the landscape of Husserl’s phenomenology and abandoned its horizon’ (*Introduction to the Origin of Geometry*, trans. J.Leavey, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978, p. 125)

4 *Ideas I*, p. 132.
6 For Husserl’s notion of ‘profiles’ see *Ideas I*, § 44.
7 Cf. J.-P.Sartre, *The Psychology of Imagination*, trans. M.Warnock, London: Methuen, 1972, pp. 141 ff. Ed Casey in *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), under the acknowledged influence of Sartre’s analysis, characterizes the imagination as a power to present what is purely possible beyond all empirical restrictions. According to Casey’s view there are thus no real aspects of imaginative presentations, so that ‘as soon as a new viewpoint is assumed, I have to do with a new imaged content: *to imagine something differently is to imagine something different*’ (p. 159). Not only does Casey here fail to grant the manifest role of imaginative in ‘filling in’ within the immediate fabric of perceptual acts, such a concept of imagination as total discontinuity with perceptual consciousness cannot, as he goes on to claim, capture the basic sense of imagination in Husserl (cf. op. cit., p. 225). As I shall attempt to show, the difficulty and essential ambiguity of this sense resides in the fact that the imagination in Husserl stands at once for the power of consciousness to reflectively grasp itself in the act of imparting ‘sense’ to empirical givenness and the basic receptivity of consciousness as temporal. But in both cases it is clear that the imagination has a *positive* sense in Husserlian phenomenology only insofar as it stands for an integrative power or activity.

8 In his analysis of the spatiality of the ‘lived body’ that takes its cue from Husserl’s *Ideas II*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty indicates that it is precisely in embodied experience that the genesis of meaning in the phenomenological sense is to be sought. Whereas Sartre tends to link embodiment with imagination as the grounds for dissimilation on the part of consciousness, Merleau-Ponty grasps the ‘body image’ as ‘that meaningful core which behaves like a general function, and which nevertheless exists, and is susceptible to disease’ (*Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C.Smith, London: Routledge, 1989, p. 147). Indeed, Merleau-Ponty operates with such a broad notion of perception that it is questionable whether it would not be more aptly called imagination. His account of temporality in particular points in this direction (cf. op. cit., pp. 415 ff.).

10 Cf. *Ideas I*, § 27.
12 See the critique of this theory in LU II/2 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993), Investigation V, Appendix to § 11 and § 20, pp. 421 ff. [125 ff.]
14 What Husserl calls here the *Bedeutung* is thus equivalent to Frege’s notion of *Sinn* as the mode of presentation of something meant (Frege’s *Bedeutung*). Cf. G. Frege, ‘On Sense and Meaning’, *Philosophical Writings*, 3rd edn, eds P. Geach and Max Black, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988, pp. 56–78. It is interesting to note that one of Frege’s criticisms of Husserl’s *Philosophy of Arithmetic* concerns a putative ‘blurring of the distinction between image and concept, between imagination and thought’ (op. cit., p. 79). This indicates that Husserl’s rejection of psychologism after this work also essentially involves imposing this strict differentiation between image and concept that Frege calls for.

2

**The extended sense of intuition in the *Logical Investigations***

1 Cf. Husserl’s forward to the second edition of the first volume of *LU* from 1913.

2 This is the question of the ‘phenomenological epoché’ and more broadly of the ‘phenomenological reduction’. For Husserl’s mature account of this cf. *Ideas I*, § 32.; Ch. 4, pp. 108 ff. I.Kern offers an extensive consideration of the affinities between Husserl’s idea of reduction and the Kantian conception of the transcendental, in particular with respect to the ‘Transcendental Deduction’ of the first *Critique*. He concludes: ‘The influence of Kant and above all of Natorp on Husserl’s idea of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction is of great significance’ (I.Kern, *Husserl und Kant*, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964, p. 239). Kern rests his conclusion on consideration of Husserl’s writings from the 1920s and 1930s, a period in which Husserl is certainly more explicit in acknowledging alignments with other thinkers. However, his work as a whole demonstrates conclusively that Husserl worked out his sense of phenomenology in the context of a continuous and profound negotiation with Kant’s critical philosophy.

3 As one might expect Emmanuel Levinas accentuates the alterity of the intentional relation. The analysis offered in his essay ‘Intentionality and Sensation’ from 1965 also anticipates Derrida’s key notion of the role of *iteration* in time-consciousness and thereby identifies one of the central instances of a reproductive activity being at work where Husserl insists it must be a case of pure productive intuition (cf. E. Levinas, *Discovering Existence with Husserl*, trans. R. Cohen and M. Smith, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998, pp. 140 ff.). Much has been written in recent years on the concept of alterity in relation to Husserl. Whereas from Heidegger onwards one of the principal grounds of criticism levelled at Husserl was that his sense of phenomenology was basically regulated by the idea of egological self-presence, over the last decade a line of interpretation has emerged according to which Husserl’s very sense of intentional consciousness is characterized by self-differentiation and alterity. An early move towards this interpretation is made by R. Bernet in ‘Phenomenological Reduction and the Double Life of the Subject’ (Reading Heidegger from the Start, eds T. Kisiel and J. van Buren, New York: SUNY Press, 1994, pp. 245–67). Here Bernet makes a decision which he admits may appear somewhat strange (op. cit., p. 248), namely to determine the nature of the phenomenolog-ical reduction in Husserl not with reference to a Husserlian text at all, but rather to Fink’s *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*. The purpose of this choice of text is clearly that is allows the introduction of a notion of splitting within the phenomenological account of consciousness. But there are good reasons for supposing that Fink’s notion of chasm or cleft (*Kluft*) (cf. op. cit., p. 251) in consciousness has more to do with the author of *Being and Time* than with Husserlian phenomenology. As Bernet is well aware, this 1932 text of Fink’s falls in a period when he is attempting at once to clarify the sense of Husserlian phenomenology and *point out the shared ground between this and Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology*. Consideration of essays in Fink’s *Studien zur Phänomenologie 1930–1939* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1966) reveals the extent to which he had appropriated key motifs of Heidegger’s thought from the late 1920s. Thus, in
his celebrated study *Vergegenwärtigung und Bild* from 1930 Fink poses the question of the historicity of the stream of consciousness and relates it to the phenomenological theory of constitution by speaking in a conspicuously non-Husserlian manner of the ‘finitization (*Verendlichung*) of the pure subject’ (op. cit., p. 53). In his 1934 essay ‘Was will die Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls?’ from the same collection Fink takes Heidegger’s term ‘world-construction’ (*Weltbildung*) to gloss Husserlian ‘constitution’ and goes on to give the following interpretation of phenomenological eidetic method: ‘From the countless different, intuitively presented possibilities of alterity (*Anderssein*), the sameness (*Selbigkeit*) that make possible all alterity distinguishes itself; from the multifariously possible, possibility, [that is,] the possibilitizing essence emerges (*das ermöglichende Wesen springt heraus*)’ (op. cit., p. 216). The very language here indicates that Fink is interpreting Husserl along Heideggerian lines, something that would remain unproblematic if it were presented as interpretation and not as the official account of ‘the master’s’ own position.

Following Fink’s lead and its espousal by Bernet what might be described as the new ‘radical orthodoxy’ in Husserl studies has emerged in the recent work of such figures as Dan Zahavi and Natalie Depraz (cf. *Alterity and Facticity*, eds N. Depraz and D. Zahavi, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998; *Self-awareness, Temporality, and Alterity*, ed. D. Zahavi, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998). The problem with their shared approach, as I see it, is not their desire to offer novel analyses within a broadly conceived phenomenological area, but rather the fact that through the almost exclusive reliance on texts and fragments written by Husserl in his 70s (i.e. from the late 1920s onwards) they pretend to offer a new official Husserl that is opposed on all basic issues to the manifest position adopted in his earlier definitive determinations of phenomenology. In fact, this work has all the trappings of deleterious revisionism: it profits from the conscientious work of such thinkers as Heidegger, Levinas, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Derrida in exposing the immanent limits of Husserlian phenomenology and without adequate recognition goes on to affirm the line of critique from Heidegger to Derrida as the ‘real Husserl!’ One aim of the present investigation is to show the extent to which Heidegger’s reading transgresses the immanent horizon of Husserlian phenomenology. Thereby it is at once a question of acquiring a sense through Heidegger for what it really means to arrive at such a transgressive, that is, deconstructive reading of Husserl. The dominant strand in current Husserl studies patently lacks the art of hermeneutic dismantling and falls short of what Husserl called ‘scientific conscientiousness’ by disingenuously presenting as facts what are manifestly interpretations of Husserlian phenomenology.

4 In LU VI Husserl refers to his 1894 article and notes: ‘I have given up the concept of intuition supported there, as the present work makes plain’ (cf. LU II/2, § 8, p. 32 [vol. 2, p. 356]). Husserl refers us back specifically to his earlier grounding of intuition in ‘the immediate psychical experience that what is intuited is also what is meant, as consciousness of the fulfilled intention’ (Hua 22, p. 109). Here Husserl’s concept of intuition is still tainted which psychologism. In LU the breakthrough consists in recognizing that intuition is simply the immediate givenness of something meant, not the consciousness of this givenness. In other words, the idea of intuition in LU is of something being given as what it is before all conceptual activity on the part of consciousness. Such an idea indicates that the basic ‘act’ of consciousness that Husserl calls in LU ‘objectivation’ is what Heidegger goes on to determine in BT as ‘letting something show itself as itself from itself’ (cf. SZ, p. 34). This notion is later transformed into what Husserl calls ‘constitution’, a concept which he determines in his five lectures on phenomenology from 1907 as the self-presentation (*Selbstdarstellung*) of the object in the mental act of perception, imagination, memory, predication, etc. (cf. *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, ed. P. Jannsen (follows Hua 2), Hamburg: Meiner, 1986, p. 120. *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. W. Alston and G. Nakhnikian, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982).

5 Husserl’s term *Objektivierung* has two recognized translations in English, ‘objectivation’ and ‘objectification’. I use exclusively the former in order to avoid the false assumption that this
notion signifies a theoretical act whereby consciousness ‘steps back’, so to speak, from what it is conscious of. This is precisely not the sense of the term in LU insofar as it is means the pre-conceptual (i.e. pre-objectified!) givenness of something to consciousness.

6 Cf. Die Idee der Phänomenologie, p. 4; Ideen I, p. 53.
9 Given Husserl’s manifest engagement with Hume at the time of LU such statements as the following from Hume’s Treatise assume significance in the present context: ‘’Tis an established maxim of metaphysics, that whatever the mind clearly conceives includes the idea of possible existence, or in other words, that nothing we imagine is absolutely impossible’ (Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature (Bk. 1, pt. 2, sect. 2); Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 26).
10 Husserl does not make this explicit until the 1920s. Cf. Hua 23, Nr. 19, ‘Reine Möglichkeit und Phantasie’, pp. 546–64.
12 Sartre puts this in the following way: ‘the image and the perception, far from being two elementary psychological factors of similar quality and which simply enter into different combinations, represent the two main irreducible attitudes of consciousness’ (op. cit., p. 138).
13 Cf. LU, pp. 442–3 [vol. 2, pp. 137–8].
14 This translation of these key terms in Husserl seems to me justified in light of the fact that Husserl himself speaks of Präsentation and Repräsentation as equivalent to Gegenwärtigung and Vergegenwärtigung respectively (cf. Hua 22, p. 87).
15 Cf. LU, pp. 130–1 [vol. 2, pp. 272–3].
16 It is noteworthy that Derrida’s critique of Husserl in Speech and Phenomena nowhere alludes to this notion of ‘supplement’ explicitly named by Husserl in Investigations five and six. Given the well known emphasis Heidegger places on the significance of these particular Investigations it is indeed curious that a reader as scrupulous as Derrida should fail to draw attention to Husserl’s use of the term Überschüβ. Of course through this omission Derrida preserves more revelatory force for his own concluding chapter on ‘The Supplement of Origin’ (cf. op. cit., pp. 88–104). At the beginning of this chapter Derrida equates the notion of supplement with his idea of différance grasped as ‘the operation of differing which at one and the same time both fissures and retards presence, submitting it simultaneously to primordial division and delay’ (op. cit., p. 88). In his 1971 essay ‘The Supplement of the Copular: Philosophy before Linguistics’ (cf. Margins of Philosophy, trans. A. Bass, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982, pp. 175–205) this all too Husserlian topic is again passed over in silence.

Leonard Lawlor’s scrupulously detailed discussion of Derrida’s notion of the supplement in his Derrida and Husserl (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 195 ff.) also fails to draw attention to the key term present already in Husserl’s text. It is certainly to Derrida’s great merit that he draws out this notion primarily through his analysis of Husserl’s account of inner time-consciousness. The interpretation worked out in the present investigation is in fundamental agreement with Derrida’s reading, but differs from it insofar as it tries to show that the very sense of the intentional within the immanent horizon of Husserl’s phenomenology is that of deferred presence. The difficulty I have with Derrida’s interpretation is that, in failing to acknowledge Husserl’s concept of supplement, his own notion of supplementarity that proposes a priority of difference and otherness over identity and sameness fails to emerge with sufficient clarity as that very idea which transgresses in principle the horizon of Husserlian phenomenology. In other words, it is a question of ascribing neither too much nor too little to Husserl.
3

Time, image, horizon

1 Iso Kern shows in his study Husserl und Kant that Husserl’s positive appropriation of the Kantian transcendental aesthetic is intimately connected with his move from static to genetic phenomenology. This involves a positive appraisal of precisely the Kantian notion of a productive or creative synthesis, that is, of the epistemological legitimacy of positing something like a transcendental imagination. Kern states: ‘Husserl grasped the idea of phenomenological-genetic constitution that allowed him to affirm Kant’s “synthesis” of natural experience (Naturerfahrung) in its productive sense in 1918/19 […] As soon as Husserl pursues the “history” or genesis of apperceptions as acquired habitualities, this acquisition—that as a “result” always constitutes its pregiven “accomplished” (fertig) possession, the “surrounding world” (Umwelt)—becomes evident to him as a production’ (op. cit., p. 260). Husserl’s texts in this period are considered below.


4 That Husserl thematizes time in terms of a now-series at all is indicative for Heidegger of a failure to break decisively with the Aristotelian conception of temporality as natural time. For Heidegger’s own interpretation of the ‘vulgar concept’ of temporality in Aristotle cf. Sein und Zeit. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993, pp. 420 ff. (Being and Time; Oxford: Blackwell, 1973). In Heidegger’s view the Aristotelian concept of time as now-series is also retained by Kant (cf. Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit (GA 21), Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976, p. 397) and constitutes a crucial aspect of the ‘theoretical prejudice’ that prevents Kant, on Heidegger’s view, from realizing the radical potential of his insights into the transcendental imagination. A celebrated ‘radicalizing’ reading of Heidegger’s exposition of the vulgar concept of time in western metaphysics is offered by Derrida in his essay ‘Ousia and Grammê: Note on a Note from Being and Time’ (cf. Margins of Philosophy, pp. 29 ff.). A more charitable interpretation of the ‘primal impression’ in terms of Husserl’s insights into the ‘transcendence’ of primary sensibility is given in Levinas’ essay already referred to, ‘Intentionality and Sensation’ (Discovering Existence with Husserl, p. 135 ff.).

Insofar as the primal impression in Husserl’s account of time-consciousness performs a role at the level of immediate (pre-reflective) experience analogous to that attributed by Kant to the ‘I think’ in the guise of the ‘transcendental unity of apperception’ (cf. KRV, B 131 ff.), it is interesting to note how already Fichte in his Wissenschaftslehre from 1796 points to the imaginative foundation of possible self-knowledge with respect to the Kantian cogito: ‘This act of self-determining is the absolute beginning of all life and all consciousness and—for this reason—it is incomprehensible, for our consciousness always presupposes something’. While the cogito is incomprehensible it can nevertheless be grasped in an imaginative mode of consciousness: The act of self-determining can be observed only through the medium of the imagination; for this act is supposed to be thought of as a process of flowing forth, and only by means of the imagination is it possible to think of it this way’ (Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy, trans. D. Breazeale, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 414). I am proposing
an analogous role for the imagination in relation to Husserl’s account of time-consciousness. Once again Derrida’s interpretation of Husserl’s concept of time offers vital clues (cf. *Speech and Phenomena*, pp. 60 ff.).

5 Derrida says of the imagination with respect to its role in geometry as an eidetic science: ‘[The imagination], whose operative role is nevertheless so decisive, never seems to have been sufficiently enquired into by Husserl. It retains an ambiguous status: a derived and founded reproductive ability on the one hand, it is, on the other, the manifestation of a radical theoretical freedom. It especially makes the exemplariness of the fact emerge and hands over the sense of the fact outside of the factuality of the fact. Presented in the *Crisis* as a faculty that is homogeneous with sensibility, it simultaneously uproots morphological ideality from pure sensible reality’ (*Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, p. 125). In light of comments that immediately precede these remarks, it is evident that Derrida here has in mind something like the Kantian transcendental imagination and is drawing attention to its absence in Husserl’s account of the origins of knowledge.


7 The restricted scope of the present enquiry to Husserl’s thought up to 1925 is not merely a consequence of the fact that Husserl’s explicit work on the imagination appears to end around that time. In marked contrast to the tendency of more recent commentators on Husserl (though such tendencies can also be traced back as far as Fink and certainly to Merleau-Ponty) that take their point of departure from writings in the late 1920s and beyond, I regard Husserl’s work following the first publication of *Being and Time* in 1927 as primarily negotiations with Heidegger’s transformation of the inaugural sense of phenomenology. Although the particular emphases of the dominant interpretation of a thinker naturally shift over time, exegetical honesty is in question when patently marginal aspects of a philosophical position are presented as the genuine centre of concern *without acknowledging that a consciously deconstructive procedure is at work*. Present claims to dismiss a hard won and nuanced critique of Husserl’s phenomenology in terms of his adoption of traditional philosophical prejudices as ‘outdated’ notwithstanding, the present investigation as a whole is concerned with what the ‘absence’ of phenomenology signifies for possible future thought, rather than with an interpretation that seeks to ‘renew’ an idea of phenomenology that has long since ceased to provide a ‘lively intuition’ within the horizon of contemporary thinking.

8 Given Brentano’s exhaustive treatment of Aristotle it would be surprising if, alongside the overt Cartesianism, certain ideas central to Aristotelian thought were not also at work in Husserl’s thinking. Such filiations were certainly exploited by Heidegger in his intensive appropriation of Husserlian phenomenology in the late 1910s and early 1920s. This is perhaps most in evidence in Heidegger’s working out of an idea of truth that seeks to reconcile Husserl’s idea of evidence from LU with Aristotle’s notion of the intuitive or non-discursive truth of *nous* (cf. GA 21, § 10, pp. 109 ff.).

4

**The genesis of experience and phenomenological method**


4 For Husserl’s consideration of Kant in relation to the latter’s ‘deduction’ of the categories in the first *Critique* see I.Kern, op. cit., § 15, pp. 150 ff.
5 In its reflexive form the verb *denken* signifies ‘to entertain the thought’, to suppose, intend, or more generally to imagine.
6 Cf. LU I, § 51.
7 Husserl distinguishes between what is *real* as factual and empirical and what is *reell* as that which belongs to the act of consciousness as such. On the latter notion see *Ideas I*, § 36.
8 As Derrida puts it in relation to Husserl’s time lectures: ‘Without reducing the abyss which may indeed separate retention from re-presentation, without hiding the fact that the problem of their relationship is none other than that of the “history” of life and life’s becoming conscious, we should be able to say *a priori* that their common root— the possibility of repetition in its most general form, that is, 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 through the very movement of difference it introduces’ (SP, p. 67).
9 Norman Kemp Smith in his analysis of the first *Critique* denies that what Kant calls ‘synopsis’ can denote any operation of combination or synthesis whatever: The term synopsis, as used by Kant, is, however, decidedly misleading. His invariable teaching is that all connection is due to synthesis. By synopsis, therefore, which he certainly does not employ as synonymous with synthesis, can be meant only apprehension of external side-by-sideness. It never signifies anything except apprehension of the lowest possible order’ (*A Commentary to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, London: Macmillan, 1923, p. 226). Such a view, however, raises the question why, if Kant intended to indicate with the term ‘synopsis’ a form of sensible apprehension that lacks all power of combination, he should have chosen a word that suggests so obviously an affinity with the term ‘synthesis’. The present investigation proposes that Kant’s notion of synopsis points towards a basic aspect of conscious life that Husserl attempts to explicate in detail as ‘passive synthesis’. As I.Kern makes clear, Husserl himself consciously followed this indication from around 1916 onwards (cf. op. cit., pp. 261 ff.).
13 ‘Bewusstsein und Sinn—Sinn und Noema’ (1920 ff.), Hua 11, pp. 304 ff.
15 Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 525e ff. Aristotle offers a critique of Plato’s articulation of the unity of being and scientific discourse according to the Platonic principle of ‘one over many’ (cf. *Metaphysics*, 990a33 ff.). Admittedly the leitmotif of the *Metaphysics* is that ‘being is said in many ways’, but what Aristotle rejects at the level of discourse he underscores at the ontological level in his account of the ‘unmoved mover’ as ‘thinking of thinking’ (cf. op. cit., 1030b9 ff.).
17 Paul Ricoeur articulates this opposition between two basic models of imagination with obvious allusions to the Kantian distinction between reproductive and productive imagination: ‘On the one hand imagination may function to preserve an order. In this case the function of imagination is to stage a process of identification that mirrors the order. Imagination has the appearance here of a picture. On the other hand, thought, imagination may have a disruptive function; it may work as a breakthrough. Its image in this case is
productive, an imagining of something else, the elsewhere’ (*Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. G.H.Taylor, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 265–6). In another essay Ricoeur puts forward with an idea of imagination that precisely allies it the disruptive potential of difference rather than conjunctive identity as in Husserl: ‘Imagination is that stage of the production of genre, where the generic relationship has not acceded to the quietness of the concept, but lives in the conflict of “proximity” and “distance”. We have arrived here at what Gadamer calls metaphoricity in general […] Imagination thus identified is doubtless the productive, schematizing imagination’ (‘The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality’, *Man and World* 12, no. 2 (1979), pp. 123–41; pp. 125–6).

This disruptive potential of the productive imagination is precisely the aspect of imagination that Husserl continually represses and resists. This active repression in Husserlian phenomenology is noted by Derrida where he too speaks of ‘metaphor in general’. While acknowledging that Husserl’s late work *The Origin of Geometry* shows that meaning is dependent on the act of writing or some form of material schematization, Derrida insists that ‘one would seek in vain a concept of phenomenology which would permit the conceptualization of intensity of force’ (‘Force and Signification’, *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass, London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 3–30; p. 27). To the Apollonian formality of Husserlian phenomenology that remains in thrall to a basic regulative principle of transparency and order Derrida opposes the potential of a Dionysian figure of thought as an interpellation of metaphor in metaphysics ‘in which Being must hide itself if the other is to appear’ (op. cit., p. 29). Here Derrida’s notion of différance is articulated precisely through referring the production of meaning back to a basic play of imaginative transformation that inaugurates the possibility of language as *response*.


19 A coinage to offer a German equivalent for Kant’s *aeternitas* (cf. KRV, A146/B186).

5

**Historicity and the hermeneutic conversion of phenomenology**


2 This notion of destruction is undoubtedly one of the aspects of Heidegger’s thought positively appropriated by Foucault in his early articulation of an ‘archaeology’ of knowledge. In explicating his idea of archaeology Foucault identifies a shift in the true ‘objects’ of historical research from facts deduced from textual records (‘documents’) to texts themselves as records of historically specific clues as to human self-understanding. This decidedly hermeneutical understanding of historical science is expressed in the following way: ‘To be brief, let us say that history, in its traditional form, undertook to “memorize” the *monuments* of the past, transform them into *documents*, and lend speech to those traces which, in themselves, are often not verbal, or which say in silence something other than what they actually say; in our time, history is that which transforms *documents* into *monuments*’. Cf. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), trans. A.M.Sheridan Smith, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 7–8. Foucault’s stated aim to cleanse the history of thought ‘of all transcendental narcissism’ (op. cit., p. 224) also carries a clear echo of Heidegger’s critique of the Cartesian intellectual prejudice he takes to be basic to modern thought.


1985), instead of the original terms surrounding world, with-world and self-world (Umwelt, Mitwelt, Selbstwelt) Heidegger speaks of one’s own surrounding world, public world and natural world (eigene Umwelt, öffentliche Welt, Welt als Natur) (GA 20, p. 264). It is thus the term ‘self-world’ that is eliminated on the way towards BT, presumably as its distinction from ‘surrounding world’ is liable to denote some attenuated solipsism of the subject. With-world becomes Mitdasein in BT, though there Heidegger’s explication of sociality is notoriously inadequate (cf. op. cit., p. 333).


6 In the context of his 1920 lecture course Heidegger is earnestly attempting to produce a description of concrete existence free of all explicitly theological conceptuality. However, despite these efforts, this is rarely in fact the case. For example, the analysis of fallenness and ‘average everydayness’ worked out from 1921 to 1926 is manifestly drawn from Heidegger’s reading of Book X of Augustine’s Confessions in his 1921 lecture series. For a broader discussion of Heidegger’s early lectures on religion see my article ‘Existential Scepticism and Christian Life in Early Heidegger’, The Heythrop Journal, vol. XLV, London: Blackwell, 2004.


8 In §24 of Ideas I the ‘principle of all principles’ is articulated in the following way: ‘that every originary presentive intuition (jede originär gebende Anschauung) is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak in its “personal” actuality) offered to us in “intuition” (»Intuition«) is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there’ (Ideas I, pp. 43–4).


13 Cf. GA 60, pp. 222 ff.

14 The notion of Selbstentfremdung (self- alienation) is a constant in Heidegger’s thought and again presumably has its source in an early alignment with Kierkegaard. In the context of his early lecture courses this notion is essentially worked out in the form it takes in SZ already in the 1921/2 lectures on Aristotle (cf. GA 61, pp. 100 ff.). Two key structures of alienation are determined there to be ‘dispersal’ (Zerstreuung) and ‘duplicity’ (Zwiespältigkeit), structures first identified by Heidegger in his lectures on the tenth book of Augustine’s Confessions (cf. GA 60, § 12, pp. 205 ff.).


In addition to specific absence Heidegger also speaks of the potential of the use of signs to bring about an appresentation of the surrounding world (cf. GA 20, p. 281).


6

Heidegger’s appropriation of kant

1 Theodore Kisiel in his monumental work The Genesis of Being and Time (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1993, pp. 227 ff.) offers a wealth of detail concerning Heidegger’s lectures courses on Aristotle from 1921 to 1925, many of which have been published in German for the first time only recently and mostly remain to be translated into English. In an earlier article, ‘The Missing Link in the Early Heidegger’ (Hermeneutical Phenomenology: Lectures and Essays, ed. J.Kockelmans, Washington: 1988, pp. 1–40), Kisiel reconstructs the events surrounding Heidegger’s plans to publish a book on Aristotle. Since the time before his move from Freiburg to Marburg (i.e. from 1921 onwards) Heidegger had been under pressure to produce a significant publication (he had published nothing since the appearance of his Habilitationsschrift on Duns Scotus in 1915), so that the Education Ministry in Berlin would be in a position to approve his transition to the status of permanent university professor. As Kisiel relates, Heidegger’s projected work on Aristotle was to appear in the 1924/5 (vol. 7) issue of Husserl’s Jahrbuch (cf. Genesis, pp. 248–9). Beyond Heidegger’s own doubts about the intrinsic merits of the project, the hyperinflation ravaging the German economy at the time made printing the journal unfeasible. Following a significant change of direction in the wake of the presentation to the Marburg Theologians’ Society of his lecture The Concept of Time in July 1924, the Aristotle project disappears from view in the summer of 1925 to give way to the study which came to be BT (cf. Kisiel, ‘Missing Link’, pp. 18–19; Genesis, pp. 315 ff.).

2 In the autumn of 1922 at Husserl’s request Heidegger produced a highly condensed sketch of his envisaged book project on Aristotle. The text was submitted to Natorp at Marburg University in order that Heidegger might be considered for a vacant position of professor there. Though Heidegger’s text had been alluded to much early by Gadamer it was not until 1989 that it was finally published in the Dilthey-Jahrbuch (no. 6, pp. 237–69) under the title Phenomenological Interpretations relating to Aristotle (Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation). For an analysis of the text and assessment of its significance within the development of Heidegger’s thought in the 1920s cf. Kisiel, Genesis, pp. 248 ff. See also my article, ‘Heidegger and Aristotle on the Finitude of Practical Reason’ (Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, May 2000, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 159–83).
3 Cf. G.Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1986. *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. H.Harris and W.Cerf, New York: SUNY, 1988. In this early text Hegel attempts to overcome the Kantian proscription of positive self-knowledge on the part of the subject by grasping the transcendental imagination as the sensible manifestation of the self-knowing conscious subject: ‘This imagination, as the originary two-sided identity that, on the one hand, becomes absolute subject and, on the other, becomes object, and is originally both, is nothing other than reason itself, but reason as it appears in the sphere of empirical consciousness’ (p. 18).

For an excellent analysis of Hegel’s early critique of Kant and Schelling’s contemporaneous philosophy of the imagination see John Llewelyn (*The HypoCritical Imagination*, pp. 50 ff.). The first part of Llewelyn’s text explores much of the same territory as the present work with extraordinary richness of insight and breadth of scope. As an inspiration for certain aspects of his own work on the imagination Llewelyn refers back to John Sallis, whose book *Spacings—Of Reason and Imagination* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987) offers a nuanced and lively discussion of the treatment of imagination in Kant and later German Idealism. The final chapter of Sallis’ book complements Llewelyn’s consideration of the early Hegel with an enquiry into Hegel’s mature concept of imagination in the *Encyclopaedia* (cf. op. cit., pp. 132 ff.). Sallis initially draws out some significant parallels between Hegel’s concept and the Aristotelian characterization of imagination.


6 Given that Husserl’s principal example of categorial intuition in the sixth investigation of LU is that of the ‘being-white’ ascribed in the proposition or judgement ‘this paper is white’, such intuition indicates for Heidegger precisely the pre-givenness of being as understood by *Dasein*. In attempting at once to avoid psychologism and yet remain faithful to the empiricism inherited from Brentano, Husserl introduces the notion of non-sensible intuition while insisting it must be in each case grounded in sensible givenness. This prompts the question: is this asserted priority of sensible intuition to be understood as empirical-genetic or transcendental-logical in nature? Husserl opts for the former, Heidegger’s notion of the ‘pre-understanding of being’ implies that true transcendental priority belongs to neither sensible nor intellectual intuition, but instead to a prior horizonal presence ‘older than’ any possible mode of human intuition or thought. But in attempting to trace this original source of presence it is legitimate to say, roughly speaking, that Heidegger opposes an idea of *a priori* sensibility to Husserl’s *a priori* rationality.


8 Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 10, 1177a-b.

9 Cf. Kant’s definition of ‘object’ (*Objekt*) as ‘that in whose concept the manifold of a given intuition is unified’ (B137).

10 To avoid confusion, it should be noted that the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of BT has ‘anticipation’ for Vorlaufen (cf. BT, p. 306, footnote 3). I prefer in this case a neologism that at once offers an exact etymological equivalent of the German in terms of a ‘running ahead’ and avoids the connotation of ‘presenting to oneself in advance’ suggested by the word ‘anticipation’. This notion is much better suited to Heidegger’s *Gewärtigen* that has the basic sense of being sensible or conscious of something. The ‘precurrent’ future is authentic in Heidegger’s sense precisely to the extent that it relates to my own being and the singularity of my inevitable and yet unforeseeable death. In ‘authentically’ realizing my future there is thus no-thing before me whatever. That is, I have no object in view but rather
let each of my acts be guided by a sense of a possible terminal condition intervening at any moment (cf. SZ, § 53, pp. 260 ff.).

7  
Human freedom and world-construction

1 Macquarrie and Robinson use ‘temporalize’ throughout their translation of BT, though they do allude to the more common sense of the German term in their glossary (cf. BT, p. 522).
5 Heidegger terminologically distinguishes between ‘existentiell’ meaning that which pertains to existence in its concrete singularity and ‘existential’ signifying what essentially characterizes existence as such. An analogous distinction is in play in Heidegger’s differentiation of the ontic (singular beings) and the ontological (a region of being or beings as a whole).
6 Heidegger offers a detailed interpretation of Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason* in his lectures from summer semester 1930 (*Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (GA 31), ed. H. Tietjen, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982). This lecture series is not explicitly considered here as nothing is fundamentally added there to Heidegger’s accounts of imagination and human freedom.
9 Emmanuel Levinas offers a powerful critique of Heidegger’s interpretation of death in terms of individual authenticity and self-realization in *Time and the Other* from 1947. He puts the opposition in the following stark terms: ‘Death in Heidegger is an event of freedom, whereas for me the subject seems to reach the limit of the possible in suffering. It finds itself enchaîned, overwhelmed, and in some way passive. Death is in this sense the limit of idealism’ (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1997, pp. 70–1). Schematically, Levinas accordingly grasps death as signifying nothingness in terms of individual *impossibility or being unable* and so as calling for a rejection of the autarchic individual as a basic ethical regulative idea. Heidegger, on the contrary, sees in death quite literally the ‘ultimate possibility’ of the individual, that is, he grasps it as an opportunity for genuine self-realization or ‘becoming what one is’. Two chapters of J. Llewelyn’s *Appositions* offer acute
analyses of The Impossibility of Levinas’ Death’ and ‘The Possibility of Heidegger’s Death’ respectively (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 105 ff.).


11 The numerous analyses of BT that speak of the collapse of Heidegger’s project of fundamental ontology (cf. for example, D.Wood, ‘Reiterating the Temporal’, Reading Heidegger: Commemorations, ed. J.Sallis, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, pp. 136–59, p. 139) fail to acknowledge what is explicitly said towards the end of the 1927 publication in relation to the provisional character of the analytic of Dasein: ‘It is a matter of seeking and traversing a way towards the clarification of the ontologically fundamental question. Whether [this way] is the only or the right one at all can only be decided upon after the traversing. The dispute concerning the interpretation of being cannot be settled because it has yet to be kindled. And in the end this cannot happen suddenly, but rather the enkindling of the dispute requires a preparation (Zurüstung). It is to this end alone that the present investigation is underway’ (SZ, p. 437).

Following Heidegger’s insistence here that the analysis in BT has no definitive but rather a preparatory sense, Thomas Sheehan’s comment on the sense of the ‘turn’ in Heidegger’s thinking seems closer to the mark: ‘We must say from the outset that the turn is not a move away from the fundamental standpoint of SZ (being as pres-ab-sence); it is not a new phase in Heidegger’s development after the collapse of the SZ programme in all its various forms. Rather, the turn was built into Heidegger’s programme from the start, and it always meant an overcoming of (1) the metaphysics of actuality and (2) the humanism of subjectivity’ (cf. “‘Time and Being’: 1925–7’, Thinking about Being: Aspects of Heidegger’s Thought, eds R.Shahan and J.Mohanty, University of Oklahoma Press, 1984, pp. 177–219).


2 Heidegger remarks in ‘Letter on “Humanism”’: ‘The lecture “On the Essence of Truth”, conceived and delivered in 1930, though published for the first time in 1943, offers a certain insight into the thinking of the turn (Kehre) from “Being and Time” to “Time and Being”. This turn is not an alteration of standpoint, rather, therein the thinking attempted enters for the first time into the locality of the dimension (Ortschaft der Dimension) from out of which “Being and Time” is experienced, and indeed experienced in the basic experience of the forgetting of being’ (GA 9, p. 328 [p. 250]). Presumably Heidegger is here alluding to the idea of what he calls in his 1930 essay ‘the concealment of beings as a whole’ as ‘older than any openness of this or that being’ (GA 9, pp. 193–4 [p. 148]). This withdrawal of the being of beings as a whole Heidegger calls the ‘mystery’ (Geheimnis) (ibid.). Here it is noteworthy that Heidegger determines freedom to be the essence of truth in terms of correctness, a form of truth he takes to be derivative rather than originary (op. cit, p. 186 [p. 142]). Even Heidegger’s notion of what he calls in BT the originary truth of existence—‘resoluteness’—is here characterized as a mere relation to the origin of truth announced in 1930 as the basic phenomenon (or non-phenomenon par excellence). Thus, resoluteness no longer produces but instead bears witness to truth: The thinking [of philosophy] is the collectness (Gelassenheit) of mildness that does not refuse the concealment of beings as a whole’ (op. cit., p. 199 [p. 152]).

In the context of the present inquiry, this apparent move from an articulation of existence according to a basically active voice to one with an underlying passive voice, offers only a specious resolution of the antinomy of the imaginative middle voice. This shift at once marks the ‘ab-sence’ of phenomenology insofar as what grants sense to concrete human existence is precisely something non-phenomenal in principle, that is, the concealment of things as a whole. From this point in Heidegger’s thinking one can say, in Husserlian terms, that intuition is not simply the deferred promise of truth, but that truth becomes in essence the impossibility of intuitive fulfilment. Something akin to this notion of infinite deferral is manifestly at work in Derrida’s reception of Heidegger. Jean-Luc Marion’s notion of what he calls the ‘saturated phenomenon’ is also—contrary to his self-interpretation—remarkably close to Heidegger’s post-‘turn’ idea of truth (cf. J.-L. Marion, Being Given, trans. J.L. Kosky, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 189 ff.). Following the line of argument proposed in the present study it is therefore questionable whether Marion’s saturated phenomenon can in any legitimate sense be called a phenomenological phenomenon at all. For a concise account of Heidegger’s turn away from the ecstatic-horizontal concept of time after BT cf. F.-W. von Herrmann, Heideggers, Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie”. Zur,, Zeiten Hälfte“ von,, Sein und Zeit“, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1991.


5 This idea of the ‘grand style’ is a motif from Nietzsche that Heidegger goes on to grant central significance in his first series of lectures on this thinker, The Will to Power as Art (cf. Nietzsche I, 5th edn, Pfullingen: Neske, 1989, pp. 146–62. Nietzsche (vols 1 and 2), San Fransico: Harper, 1991). Heidegger’s engagement with Nietzsche is, along with his turn to
Hölderlin, the decisive confrontation for the development of his thought in the 1930s. Given the centrality of the notion of strife (beyond its obvious resonance in direct relation to Hitler’s ideology) it is evident that Heidegger’s intense study of Nietzsche is already underway by 1933, some three years before the lecture series mentioned. For the sake of brevity and in order that the theme of imagination remains to the fore, the present study restricts itself to a consideration of Heidegger’s understanding of art as articulated by the 1935/6 essay ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’. However, it is clear that Heidegger’s negotiation with Nietzsche’s understanding of art constitutes the genuine horizon of the essay, something again intimated by Heidegger’s characterization of the artwork in terms of a strife that gives rise to truth.

6 In this connection the following sentiments expressed by Hölderlin and Nietzsche respectively give some sense of the continuity in Romantic aesthetic politics represented by Heidegger’s thought in the mid-1930s. The first passage is taken from the so-called ‘Oldest System Programme of German Idealism’ (1796/7), and though the attribution to Hölderlin is contested (the original is in Hegel’s handwriting and the diction is conspicuously that of Schelling), it expresses well the fusion of the aesthetic and political and so the political dimension of the subject of imagination in German Romanticism. ‘Monotheism of reason and of the heart, polytheism of the imagination and of art—this is what we require…we must have a new mythology; but this mythology must remain in the service of ideas, it must become a mythology of reason. Before we make ideas aesthetic they have no interest for the people, and inversely: before mythology becomes rational the philosopher must be ashamed of it […] Then perpetual unity will reign among us. Never the contemptuous look, never the blind fear of the people before its wise men and priests. Only then awaits us equal cultivation of all powers respectively and of all individuals. No power will continue to be repressed, so that then general freedom and equality of all spirits will reign!—A higher spirit, sent from heaven, must establish this religion among us; it will be the last and greatest work of humanity’ (F.Hölderlin, Werke in einem Band, 2nd edn, Munich: Hanser Verlag, 1996, pp. 672–3).

Second, a passage from Nietzsche’s first major work, The Birth of Tragedy (1872): ‘Thus, in order to measure correctly the Dionysian capacity of a people we should not only think of the music of a people but also necessarily of the tragic myth of this people as the second witness of that capacity. Now, with this closest of relationships between music and myth, it must equally be supposed that with a degeneration (Entartung) and depravation of the one there is connected a decline in the other, […] A look at the development of the nature of the Germans (das deutsche Wesen) should leave us in no doubt about both […] Let no one believe that the German spirit has lost its mythic home forever when it still understands so clearly the songs (Vogelstimmen) which tell of that home. One day it will awaken’ (F.Nietzsche, Geburt der Prägodie, Werke in drei Bänden, vol. I, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997, p. 132. The Birth of Tragedy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 115). Here Nietzsche’s position as a late Romantic thinker comes through in all clarity, and whatever ironizing strategies he went on to deploy the basic idea of the salvationary potential of art remains a constant in his thinking and cultural critique.


9 Drawing on lectures held at the University of Basel in 1872 at a time of intense mutual engagement between himself and his young colleague, Friedrich Nietzsche, the Swiss classical historian Jacob Burckhardt gives the following characterization of the Greek polis that finds its echo in Heidegger’s account of the temple. Burckhardt was an influential figure in cultural history for the German speaking world in the last third of the nineteenth century.
(largely due to his only major publication from 1860, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*), a period with which Heidegger seems to have particularly identified. Given his eminent status, additional factors such as Heidegger’s confrontation with Nietzsche and the geographical closeness of Basel to Freiburg make a close acquaintance with Burckhardt inevitable. For present purposes it is Burckhardt’s depiction of the *polis* as a collective autonomy with a sudden mythic birth that presents striking parallels with Heidegger’s aestheticized politics: ‘The *polis* was the definitive form of the Greek state; it was a small independent state controlling a certain area of land in which scarcely another fortified position and certainly no secondary citizenship was tolerated. This state was never thought of as having come into being gradually, but always suddenly, as the result of a momentary and deliberate decision. The Greek imagination was full of such instantaneous foundings of cities, and as from the beginning nothing happened of itself, the whole life of the *polis* was governed by necessity’ (*The Greeks and Greek Civilization*, trans. S. Stern, New York: St Martin’s Press, 1998, p. 43).

10 An intimation of this poetic founding of communal historical truth is given already in BT when Heidegger claims in the section on language that ‘in the end it is equally the business of philosophy to preserve the power of the most elemental words in which *Dasein* expresses itself from its being levelled down to nonsense by common sense (*nivelliert zur Unverständlichkeit durch den gemeinen Verstand*)’ (SZ, p. 220). The interpretation advanced claims that Heidegger succumbed to the enticement of the very ‘word-mysticism’ (*Wortmyistik*) he himself warns against in the same passage.

11 The notion of the mythopoetic as characteristic of middle and late Heidegger recalls the work of J. Caputo in *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). While acknowledging a certain obvious affinity with Caputo’s line of argument here, it is telling that he actually repeats Heidegger’s Romantic gesture in calling for yet more myths. He characterizes his basic position as follows: ‘it is not a question of getting beyond myth…but rather of inventing new and more salutary myths, or of recovering other and older myths, myths to counter the destructive myths of violence, domination, patriarchy, and hierarchy’ (op. cit., p. 3). As subsequent moves towards a postmodern ‘phenomenology’ of ‘religion’ have shown, this talk of replacing ‘oppressive’ with ‘empowering’ myths offers a palatable postmodern version of Augustine’s myth of how the violent god of the Old Testament was replaced by the charitable god of the New Testament. Admittedly, the present enquiry merely offers indications for an alternative strategy of ‘demythologizing’. It should be sufficiently clear, however, that the idea of viewing history as a neutral store of mythic constructions that can be arbitrarily taken to suit this or that purpose is in principle opposed here. Caputo wishes to convince his reader that history contains no genuine nightmares, but that it simply and inexplicably falls victim to those individuals who choose to support the ‘wrong’ kind of myths.

12 The Krell translation in *Basic Writings*, by rendering *Sage* as ‘saying’, fails to acknowledge the primary meaning of the term in German, namely fable or myth. Many of the earlier English translations of Heidegger fail to draw attention to vital secondary or even primary senses of German terms, which in the case of a writer such as Heidegger renders them practically useless. The contemporary tendency approaches the opposite extreme in attempting to place all semantic filiations in the main body of the text. An exemplary case that avoids both vices remains the first translation of BT from 1962 by Macquarrie and Robinson.

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