

Comments and Questions on
Peter Manchester, "Two-dimensional Time in Husserl and Lamblicus"
Chapter One of *The Syntax of Time*

Colloquium, 4/19/07

1. There is much to commend this provocative and interesting chapter

- o For openers, Peter understands that when it comes to a thorough phenomenology of consciousness Hume is more interesting to Husserl than Kant (p. 20).
- o The approach to time as two dimensional is argued historically in a very suggestive fashion. Peter's focus: phenomenological ontology of temporality. My focus: more in the direction of phenomenological psychology.
- o This is the first and only study, as far as I know, that actually tracks the development of Husserl's various depictions of time:
 - o the "train of notes" table of 1904,
 - o the first drawing of 1904,
 - o the original 1905 (vs. published in 1928) figure of double continuity, which Peter, following Boehm, argues is the canonical depiction,
 - o the 1908-09 double drawing of the continuity of memory, where Husserl, faced with the threat of an infinite regress of recollections requiring yet other recollections to constitute continuity, finally fixes the difference between recollection and retentions. (I would have like to hear more about this pair of diagrams as the second has novel features.)
 - o a 1911 version, which adds little to the discussion.
- o There is an important and very helpful suggestion as to how one should read Husserl's two 1905 graphs of temporality. Peter suggests taking them as "one moving Figure under two aspects" (p. 35). The two figures taken together graph the double continuity of time-consciousness. The first upper figure is a "duration graph" and the second lower figure takes the form of a "propagation rule" (p. 35).

2. There are three *general requirements* for a phenomenological theory of temporality to be *philosophically solvent*.

a. If the flow of time is characterized as "an objective movement" and if, with that, movement is understood as something constituted through memory, then we will end up with an infinite regress of flows being constituted by yet other flows.¹ Treating the flow of time as movement is to treat it as something formed in time and this leads to "an absurdity."² Memory is not an event that has the same "now" as a sounding note. The basic mistake here is to treat the flow of the modes of consciousness as an occurrence or an event having an "objective" temporal marker "in immanent time"³---to press up against the bind in terminology created by the reduction.

Husserl does offer a good solution to this threat. To capture this in a sentence, "the consciousness of the now is not itself now." There is a difference between the recollection of a now, which does presupposed a now consciousness (the one being recalled) and a retention of the now, which does not. It is retention, not recollection, that "holds" phases of object-consciousness together and thereby propagates the continuity of the now. Retention was not in the original 1905 lectures but by 1909 Husserl fixes the difference between retention and recollection:

The retention that exists 'together' with the consciousness of the now is not *simultaneous* with the now

The mistake is made as soon as one characterizes retention in relation to the earlier phases of consciousness as *memory*.⁴ Memory is an expression that always and only refers to a constituted temporal object. *Retention*, however, is an expression that is used to refer to the intentional relation (fundamentally different) of phases of consciousness to phases of consciousness, whereby phases of consciousness and

¹ See Hul-10, 333 for this and what follows.

² Hul-10, 333.

³ Hul-10, 334.

⁴ Hul-10, 333.

continuities of consciousness should not themselves be regarded again as temporal objects.⁵

b. Husserl solved the threat of an infinite regress of the temporal continuity of consciousness being created by yet another temporal consciousness by contrasting retention to recollection (and protention to expectation). But this solution runs the added risk of placing that original consciousness constitutive of time completely *outside* time. Husserl immediately recognizes that phases of consciousness, such as retenting, perceiving, and protending (to clean up his list) are "*nontemporal, namely nothing in immanent time.*"⁶ How does Husserl handle the idea that if they are "nothing" in time or, what he really meant to say, they are no thing in time, they are not themselves in any sense temporal, that they lack any intrinsic temporality? This runs the risk of placing phases and the continuity of consciousness locating temporal objects *outside* time and leads to the nasty question of how the retentional continuity of phases of consciousness that lacks temporality can nevertheless constitute temporal objects. Would that not require yet another continuity to grasp the first as temporally deployed, which would put us back in the grip of an infinite regress? Whereas the first threat showed that the constitution of temporal objects with temporal markers does not require a second nontemporal consciousness creating the temporal spanning of the original consciousness grasping such objects, this second requirement is concerned with whether that original time-consciousness itself lacks any sort of intrinsic temporality. As Husserl confesses, "these are highly important matters, perhaps the most important in all of phenomenology."⁷

What follows is an analysis of pp. 36 to 41 of Peter's account. This may be where I find Peter's account most helpful. Our focus is on this question: what is the "double continuity" of time-consciousness? It is the two diagrams that give us our most accessible representation. Notice that Husserl calls it the "double

⁵ Hul-10, 333.

⁶ Hul-10, 334. Also see §10.

⁷ Hul-10, 334.

continuity of the modes of running-off."⁸ I follow Manchester in thinking that two steps are involved in unpacking this double continuity.

(A) Husserl views phases (notes) of a single temporal object (melody) as abstract, as nothing that can exist for themselves, and so he begins with the primary continuity, the continuity of constant (steady, *stet*) changes that form an inseparable unity (the melody). There is a special problem for a melody as opposed to a chord, as Manchester points out, and for melodies are shapes in a "harmonic space" and in order to experience one "the notes must somehow span the disparity of their sequential occurrence."⁹ There is a certain simultaneity of the continuity of the modes of running- or shading-off of the duration of the whole melody, which is what is actually perceived. This is what can be called "spanned togetherness"¹⁰ and it must be grasped as a whole. But the melody is also built up gradually. So enclosed in this whole is the continuity of modes of running- or shading-off of each phase of the duration that preserves a relationship to the earlier and later phase (perhaps P'A' in figure), he claims. Husserl views each span in terms of a beginning point, a "source point," the actual now, that initiates the duration, and then a "comet's trail" of retentions that holds that phase present even as it slides into the past (EA' in the figure).

(B) But thus far we have only unpacked lines AE and EA' of the upper diagram of time, we have only established the internal continuity between the whole melody and its phases as temporal "immanent" objects of experience. This is but one (complex) side of the double continuity Husserl is after. This need to be complemented by an account of the phases not of the temporal object as experienced but of the experience of the temporal object. This is what the two arrows of the second diagram might indicate, not just the

⁸ Hul-10, 29.

⁹ Manchester, 25.

¹⁰ Manchester, 25.

movement into every new objects experienced but also the continuity of various phases of living-through the perception of the melody. Manchester argues with force that the second diagram gives us a propagation rule and it represents the succession of the flux itself.¹¹ What generates this steady "sinking down" and sequencing of the perception as lived-through, I would add, is the simultaneous movement down the vertical (ordinate) axis and to the right of the horizontal (abscissa) axis. This "thick" space between the two, with it breaches and fusions, represents is the second continuity.

Notice, though, that while there is not an identity between the phases of the perception and the phase of the object perceived, they are closely aligned. "There are only 'as many' phases as there are in the perceived object,"¹² which might point to the operation of reflexivity: "the flux of consciousness does not require a second flux in order to be a phenomena."¹³ But this pushes us toward the issue of the self-manifestation of the flux and, thus, toward the puzzling notion of the "double intentionality" of time consciousness.

c. The third requirement: any consideration of the nature of temporal consciousness must also account for the notion of self-consciousness (better: self-awareness) and that set of considerations is bound to the notion of intentionality. I will take this up as a separate consideration. The question that bridges us into this: given the "transparency thesis"—but you do call this an "indirect appearing-in-the-appearances" (p. 39) of the flux—and your suggestion that reflection is required for the flux to become given, how do you relate the question of self-awareness to the account of temporality? But at the same time, it seems that reflection is uncovering something that is already there and so it is double intentionality that gives you self-consciousness: "it is the nature of the flux to be resolvable into two 'sides,' time and [self]consciousness" (p. 40.2).

¹¹ Manchester, 28.

¹² Manchester, 31.

¹³ Manchester, 32.

3. The problem of double intentionality and temporality

The focus has to be on the double intentionality (transverse and longitudinal) and its relation to double continuity (point 2). Does double intentionality accounted for double continuity? Or are they only working in tandem?

a. What complicates the discussion is that Husserl makes the mistake of overextending the notion of intentionality. And so it becomes all the more important to anchor his account in the phenomena for which he is accounting. The issue is simply "how is it possible to know of the unity of the ultimate constituting flux of consciousness?"¹⁴ His working thesis is that

it is the one, unique flux of consciousness in which the immanent, temporal unity of the tone is constituted and, together with this, the unity of the stream of consciousness itself.¹⁵

This baffling idea, namely that "the stream of consciousness constitutes its own unity" is clarified through what, at first, seems like a Spinoza-type double aspect theory, with our gaze or regard (*Blick*) being directed first one way and then another:

The regard can be directed, on the one hand, *through* phases, forming the intentionalities [*sic*] of the tone, that "coincide" in the continuous progression of the flow. On the other hand, the regard can also aim at the flow and a span of the flow, at the transition of the flowing consciousness of the onset of the note to its end.

But Husserl is keen to link them through a scheme of constitution supplied by the notion of *retention*. He introduces it this way:

¹⁴ Hul-10, 80.

¹⁵ Hul-10, 80.

Each running-off of consciousness of the type "retention" has a double intentionality. One serves for the constitution of the immanent object, of the note, what we call the "primary memory" of the (just sensed) note or, even clearer, the retention of the note. The other is constitutive for the unity of this primary memory in the flow, namely, retention is one with the flow [*in eins damit*] since it is still-being-consciousness, a consciousness that holds back, precisely retention of the note-retention flowing away. Retention in its continuous self-running-off in the flow is continuous retention of the continuously preceding phases.¹⁶

The outcome he is after could hardly be clearer:

In the one, unique flow of consciousness we find two inseparably united *intentionalities* woven together like two sides of one and the same thing. By means of one, immanent time is constituted, an objective time, a genuine time in which there is duration and alternation of what endures; in the other, the quasi-temporal ordering [*Einordnung*] of the phases of the flow, which always and necessarily has the flowing "now"-point, the phase of actuality, and the series of pre-actual and post-actual (the not yet actual) phases. This pre-phenomenal, pre-immanent temporality is constituted intentionally as the form of time-constituting consciousness and in it itself.¹⁷

What gets Husserl there is his contrast between "transverse" and "longitudinal" or "horizontal" intentionality (*Querintentionalität* vs. *Längsintentionalität*)

Horizontal intentionality

- Accounts for the unity of retending "in the flow" One retention "holds" not just the prior object but the prior retending of the object.

¹⁶ Hul-10, 80-81.

¹⁷ Hul-10, 83.

- There is a continuous retending of the continuously preceding phases of the flow.
- Focus: the flowing phases of temporal consciousness.
- The retendings have a retentional being-all-at-once.
- Result: the unity of the flow itself “becomes constituted” by virtue of “the continuity of retentional modifications.”¹⁸
- This is really a form of passive noetic synthesis between various *Erlebnisse*. As such it accounts for the continuity of self-awareness.
- What I am doing is replacing horizontal intentionality with reflexivity, reflexive manifestation or, if one insists, reflexive intentionality.
- *But even bigger than that, what I am after is getting rid of the notion of self-affection to account for self-awareness.¹⁹ The term self-affection seems to just repeat the problem.

Transverse intentionality

- Focus: object with temporal feature. Ex: enduring tone constantly expanding its duration.
- Real focus: duration and the alteration of what endures

Husserl speaks here as if consciousness intends itself in the intending of intentional time²⁰ but, given the account of horizontal intentionality, consciousness is not itself an intentional theme, feature or object. Rather consciousness *manifest* itself in the intending of intentional time. Just as intentional time-objects depend upon temporalizing intentional consciousness for their manifest features, so the manifestation of temporalizing consciousness, its *self-awareness*, is dependent upon its involvement with temporal object. As soon as we tether the manifestation of

¹⁸ *HuI-10*, 86.

¹⁹ See Zahavi, 2005, 71.

²⁰ Manchester, 40.

consciousness to the intention of objective time, we have introduced reflexivity. As Manchester puts it,

Two-dimensionality must suffice for the structure of disclosure--the twofold must somehow comprise a unity---or else the flux will need a third dimension in which the two are united, and so on ad infinitum.²¹

With reflexivity I am after is the constitutive condition of the self-appearing of the flow and of its unity with appearing time.

The flow of immanent time-constituting consciousness does not simply *exist* [*ist nicht nur*] but, rather, is so remarkably and intelligibly composed that in it a *self-appearance* of the flow subsists and hence the flow must itself be apprehensible in the flowing. The *self-appearance* of the flow does not require a second flow but, rather, it constitutes itself in itself as *phenomena*.²²

The obvious problem is what generate the view? If it is reflection, the game is over. The term "intentionality" at least serves to bind the two internally and so Husserl gives us a deeper account:

My thesis: Reflexivity "marks" Erlebnisse, which for their part manifest or exhibit the general temporal form of Erleben (retention, registration, protention) that characterizes self-awareness.

4. Contextualizing my chapter two
 - a. Oddly, I am really interested not in the problem of temporality but spatiality in this book! And I have not (yet) attempted in this chapter to build a bridge to spatiality from within temporality.
 - b. Note that I do not use Husserl's melody, a case of hearing, but a complex object (soccer ball) or event (scoring a goal) that is seen.
 - c. The tie between temporality and self-awareness prevails in my account.

²¹ Manchester, 41.

²² Hul-10, 83. *Italics mine.*