

The fundamental associative principles of the daydreaming experience. A phenomenological study¹

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Resumo: No início do artigo, reconstruo a posição complexa de Husserl em relação à noção de fantasia. Por um lado, a fantasia aparece como severamente limitada, do ponto de vista da progressão da consciência na constituição de objetividades em um mundo objetivo. Por outro lado, uma vez esclarecidas as opções metodológicas de Husserl para dar destaque a essa constituição objetiva, aparece a riqueza da associatividade inerente ao fantasiar. Pretendo avançar essa investigação ao propor uma sistematização dos padrões de associação por semelhança das experiências comumente chamadas de “devaneios”.

Palavras-chave: fenomenologia, unidades intuitivas, associação por semelhança, devaneio.

Abstract: At the start of this article, I reconstruct the complex position taken by Husserl in relation to the notion of phantasy. On the one hand, phantasy appears to be severely limited from the point of view of the progression of consciousness in the constitution of the objectivities in an objective world. On the other hand, once one clarifies Husserl's methodological options for highlighting this objective constitution, the richness of the associativity inherent to phantasizing shows forth. I would like to make progress in this investigation by proposing a systematization of the patterns of association by resemblance of the experiences commonly called “daydreams”.

Keywords: phenomenology, intuitive unities, resemblance association, reverie.

¹ Translated from Portuguese by Daniel Nagase.

Introduction

Husserl's has a well-known saying, according to which “‘feigning’ [‘Fiktion’] makes up the vital element of phenomenology”². This saying highlights the irreplaceable role of imagination in the procedure of *intuitively seizing upon the essences* of the phenomenologically investigated topics. To fulfill this *desideratum*, one needs to start from the intuitive conscience of the individuals, or, better, of merely imagined quasi-individuals – imagined themes without an individualizing anchor in the objective spatio-temporality. The starting instances, being simply imagined, are easily confirmed as just that: possible instances or examples of a *kind* of object whose invariant features one needs to discover. The initially imagined case in the investigation of an essence is, precisely, *any* case, and, as a mere example, it can be varied into new *similar* examples, in such a way as to make seizable the identical aspects that are progressively emphasized in the sequence of arbitrary variations of the initial example. The imagination is, therefore, responsible not only for providing the initial case for an eidetic investigation, but also for indefinitely multiplying such a case into a series of similar examples.

It is important to note that the imagination or phantasy (here, I will not distinguish between those terms) is not merely a technical resource, that is, a resource with a central but unique function in the methodological architectonic of phenomenology. Imagination is, above all, a *modality of consciousness*, and, from this point of view, a *theme* of the discipline that seeks to distinguish and describe all the modes through which we experience something – one of the many ways through which Husserl presents phenomenology³. Nevertheless, one must assess whether the emphasis on phantasy as a methodological resource for eidetic investigation does not end up limiting the range of some of the phenomenological analyses concerning this intentional modality. Of course, it is not a matter of denying that Husserl dedicated himself for a long time to the analysis of imagination, bequeathing us a plethora of very rich manuscripts about this topic. Still, it seems that some of the results stressed in those texts were guided more by a perspective of *instrumentalization* of phantasy's power of variation than by the *intrinsic structuration* of such a power. Consider, for instance, an excerpt from his *Introduction to philosophy*, course taught in 1922-3. There, Husserl remarks on the role of phantasy in obtaining the pure eidetic possibilities. Phantasy's power is such that it can transform, “without limit”, any thematized object. Husserl then offers the following warning:

Indeed, we should not relinquish ourselves so much to the play of phantasy. In it, it is possible, and this is an empirically verified possibility, for the respective phantasized formations to mix and mingle in a dissonant conflict, and, in this way, the unity of the phantasized object is not kept. The centaur can be phantasized as blond and bearded, with a white horse body. But other colors and even, perhaps, another form can sneak in unnoticed: suddenly, we have a dark-haired centaur with another beard and face, etc. We go from one to the other, not as a modification, but rather as a dissonant alteration; the phantasized passively loses the originary objectual sense and admits in its inertia for a new sense to be taken over by the old one. It could be like in a kaleidoscope: always new forms and none of them has anything to do with the others (HUSSERL, 2002, p. 174).⁴

The above excerpt may suggest that the directionality of the imaginative experience is a result of the theoretical interest in producing a series of variations that would allow one to capture the eidetic aspects of the theme being analyzed. Thus, if there is any kind of unity in the experience of the free phantasy, this unity would be the result of the “attraction” suffered by the transformative capacities from the *eidós* underlying each arbitrary variation. Left on its own, without this active concentration around the essence, phantasy – in its passively configured manifestations – would be limited to a succession of disconnected fragments, with no intrinsic principle of unification.

² Husserl, 1976, § 70, p.148 /p. 160. References to Husserl's works will be done by first giving the pagination of the German edition and then of the English translation, if applicable. For the translations used, see the bibliography.

³ Cf. Husserl, 1973, § 20, pp. 84-5./ Husserl, 1960, § 20, pp. 46-8.

⁴ Husserl, 2002, p.174.

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This does not seem to be a satisfying phenomenological description. There are many texts in which Husserl insists that one must unveil the forms of experience in their immanent *legality*.⁵ True, it is not in principle excluded the possibility of there being chaotic or disorderly modalities of consciousness; however, the seeming fragmentation of the phantasizing could be more a result of certain perspectives that skew the analysis than of exhaustive scrutiny of its immanent configurations. In this article, I would like to, first, discuss how the general phenomenological theme of the *constitution of the object* often guides the descriptions of phantasy. After this, I will attempt to show that Husserl is aware of these thematic filters through which, in many texts, he approaches the imagining conscience, and that he developed conceptual resources for an autonomous analysis of the structures proper to the phantasizing. Nonetheless, I still consider that this analysis has not been fully carried out, and so I seek to sketch its continuity by elaborating on the phenomenological notion of *daydreaming*.

I – Phantasy and objectification

1. The intuitive unification based on relational perceiving

In order for us to advance in the clarification of the topics mentioned in the introduction, I will especially focus on *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl's posthumously published work of 1939.⁶ Very roughly, *Experience and Judgment* develops a genetic analysis of predicative thought, which is led back to its founding intentional basis, that is, to the passive operations of pre-predicative sensible experience. The objectivity of knowledge, which is reached by employing many kinds of judgments systematized in theories, is led back to a series of subjective operations, which are then studied in their gradual complexification. In this way, Husserl seeks to show that knowledge is not merely organized around autonomous logical evidence, but is erected upon pre-logical and intuitive foundations. In order to carry out this analysis, he needs to leave out of play many kinds of idealizations, which are partly derived from the sciences and which have become lodged in our ordinary experience of the world, thus blocking a clear apprehension of the originary intuitive sources of evidence. Husserl, therefore, proposes an "abstractive limitation of experience",⁷ suspending the validity of the judgments of knowledge and even of all significations whose origins lie in the socio-communicative interactions. Experience is thus reduced to sensible givenness;⁸ and, starting from this point, Husserl intends to rebuild all the strata of the operations by means of which logical thought is developed.

I will not reconstruct in all details the strata of intuitive experience genetically examined in *Experience and Judgment*. I will rather focus on the discussion of a kind of perceptual apprehension (called *relating*) that demands from Husserl a detailed exposition of imagination's intrinsic features. To give this topic a minimum of context, let us note that perceptual apprehension, in general, is not treated as a kind of inert receptivity, causally determined by sensory stimulation. When we perceive, we already exercise an *orientation* of our apprehensive capacities, directed to the sensible objects in accordance with several exploratory interests. In other words, to perceive is not to let one be indifferently filled by any sensible data. It is, rather, the actualization of an exploratory potential that, little by little, circumscribes the many kinds of features of the perceived objects. In order to better emphasize this *active* character of the perception

⁵ "In spite of that, however, the idea of an intentional analysis is legitimate, since, in the flux of intentional synthesis (which creates unity in all consciousness and which, noetically and noematically, constitutes unity of objective sense), an essentially necessary conformity to type prevails and can be apprehended in strict concepts." (Husserl, 1973, § 20, p.86/p. 49).

⁶ For details concerning the history of this book's composition, cf. Lohmar, 1996.

⁷ Husserl, 1954, § 12, p.57/p. 57.

⁸ "Accordingly, we leave as valid only pure sensuous perception and then experience in general; we look upon the *world purely as a world of perception*, and we abstract from everything which manifests in itself as regards familiarities and determinations which are not rooted in purely perceptive acts but in evaluative ones, ours as well as those of others" (*Id.*, p.56/*id.*, p. 56).

process, Husserl uses the expression “inspecting perception” [*betrachtende Wahrnehmung*].⁹ In the case of *relating perception*, one inspects the *external horizon* of the determinations of the thematic object, that is, one inspects the other objects that constitute the surroundings of the thematic object. In this kind of perceptual operation, there are in play different forms of “intuitive unity”¹⁰ between the object taken as a basis and the relational determinations: these determinations are not necessarily limited to the immediate sensible surroundings but can also involve connections with what has already been given or which will be given (thus forging unities between what is present and what is past and future), and even with that which could possibly be given. In other words, there can also be relations to merely imagined objectivities that are, nevertheless, still somehow connected to the thematic basis in the course of the relating exploration.

Let us follow more closely the Husserlian exposition concerning this relating exploration. This exposition goes from § 33 to § 46, a stretch that constitutes the third chapter of the first part of *Experience and Judgment*. There, in the beginning, Husserl makes clear that the relational inspection starts from an object taken as the main theme; the perceptual interest then exceeds this object’s intrinsic determinations, retaining it as a theme *in relation to which* other objects (initially from the coaffecting sensible field) are apprehended. In this way, determinations that are not contained in the internal features of the initial object are configured; these determinations are stabilized in the *transition* from the partial apprehensions according to which, for example, a pen appears *on* the table or *bigger than* an eraser, etc.

In addition to these minimal processual conditions (the transition from the exploratory interest to aspects of the object’s external horizon), Husserl investigates the *ultimate intentional conditions* for the formation of intuitive unities among different objectual substrata. The syntheses of the temporal determination are responsible for the passive structuring of the field of experience. The initial objectual givenness occurs in the exact measure of the *duration* of the perceptual experience. Hence, the constitution of objectual unities based on intuitive manifestations is due to the self-constitution of the immanent temporality.

Husserl emphasizes the intrinsically *objectifying* perspective contained in the temporal structuring of experience. In general, perceptual experience does not exhibit just a harmonious concatenation of phenomenal manifestations but seeks in these manifestations *existing objects*, worldly things with their own spatio-temporal determinations. The relating inspections extend this intrinsic objectifying perspective and seek to capture the relational unities as determinations grounded on the *objective spatio-temporality* of the related themes. Now, this appeal to worldly objectivity as a background to the relational inspection breaks the very limits of the genetic investigation: as we saw, this latter was initially circumscribed to the sensible experience free from all intentional contributions whose origins lay in the superior strata of intentional operations.¹¹ What is, then, the urgency that compels Husserl to deny the methodological presuppositions of his investigation, carefully upheld until that point? The answer is already sketched at the end of § 36: the reference to objective time is “unavoidable”¹² to establish the contrast between the forms of relational unities obtained in the domain of perception and those obtained by means of a synthesis between perceptions and presentifications (memory, expectation, phantasy).

Husserl then analyzes the formation of intuitive unities (a fundamental condition for the relating explorations) beyond the perceived data, when the objectivities brought close together are not simultaneously present

⁹ *Id.*, § 22, p.112/*Id.*, § 22, p. 103. The English translator opted for translating “*betrachtende*” as “contemplative”, thus masking the active component suggested by the German expression.

¹⁰ *Id.*, § 33, p.172/*id.*, p. 150.

¹¹ “These cases will compel us to go a little beyond the domain of that which is proper to oneself alone, a domain to which in other respects our study will remain limited” (*Ibid.*, § 36, p. 183/p. 159).

¹² *Ibid.*



in the sensible field but are partially reproduced in presentifications. In relation to memory, Husserl notes that the remembered object is not united with the immediately perceived objects, and, more generally, he recognizes that the “world of perception and the world of memory are separate worlds”.¹³ There are, nevertheless, specific forms of objectual connection between the themes of perception and those of memory. The disconnection between the remembered manifestation and the perceptual manifestation is relativized if one understands that both are posited in a *single* stream of consciousness, which extends to the past by means of the spontaneous entanglement of the lived phases, and is also constantly open to the future. When I remember something, I reproduce a section of a past experience in which this something was manifest and was there meant as an object determinable by a certain spatio-temporal location. This objectifying intention is implicated in memory, in such a way that what is remembered can be recognized relative to the currently perceived spatio-temporal situation (for example, there was, months ago, a book *on* this *same* table that I currently see). Thus, what appears in memory, while often immediately disconnected from the current spatio-temporal situation, can be reconnected to it as a manifestation that takes part in a single temporality, to which, then, corresponds the objectivities meant as existing in a single world.

That is not the case if one now asks about the possibility of intuitive unities between perceptions and non-positional presentifications (phantasies), that is, presentifications that intend fictitious objectivities and situations. The objects intended by phantasy cannot be continuously spatiotemporally determined, so it is not possible to recognize in them different manners of referring to a single objective world. It is not part of the essence of phantasy to progressively unveil objectivities that are verified as part of the existing world. As Husserl remarks, “imaginings [*Phantasien*] separate from one another have no necessary connection *a priori* and, as a rule, also have none in our actual experience”.¹⁴ The manifestations of phantasy are not intended as composing the objective world. True, what imaginatively appears can be temporally extended, which simply means that it is something configured according to the successive phases of immanent temporality. It is not, however, intended as an existing objectual pole, captured in a fragment of its objective time. That is why there is a radical separation between those objects intended by perception and those intended by phantasy. “One thing which distinguishes actually existing objects is necessarily lacking in the mere fiction: *absolute temporal position*, ‘actual’ time, as absolute, rigorous uniqueness [*Einmaligkeit*] of the individual content given in temporal form”.¹⁵ The imaginatively intended objectivities are not manifested as determined by the temporal relations that mark the objects as existing in an objective world; such objectivities are not characterized by a single temporal order, which would allow one to recognize them as the same objects occupying prior or posterior temporal locations.

Husserl concedes, in § 40, that an objectifying unification of the manifestations of phantasy is possible “to some degree”,¹⁶ for instance when we create fictional scenarios that involve a narrative development. In those cases, the acts of imagination converge to progressively qualify characters and situations that are intended as components of a single story. Relations of temporal and spatial determination (what happened before or after, what happened here and there) can then be fixed in the mode of “quasi”, that is, such relations are reproduced *as if* they constituted actual determinations of worldly objectivities, even while they are realized in a fictional scenario, a quasi-world in which one continuously intends only some of the features that minimally allow one to recognize quasi-individuals. In any case, there is still a background disconnection between the acts of phantasy: “in the nature of any two imaginings [*Phantasien*] there is nothing at all to imply that they *require* to be unified in a single act of imagination [*Phantasie*]”.¹⁷ As we have

¹³ *Id.*, § 37, p.184/p. 160.

¹⁴ *Id.*, § 39, p.198./p. 170.

¹⁵ *Id.*, p.197./p. 169.

¹⁶ *Id.*, § 40, p.200./p. 171.

¹⁷ *Id.*, p.201.

seen, this verdict is a result of the specific point of view by means of which Husserl analyzed imagination in *Experience and Judgment*, namely, the point of view of a progressive objectification of the phenomenal manifestations, from the pre-predicative level to the exercise of universal judgments. That is why Husserl once again highlights, at the end of § 40, the initial exclusion of phantasy from the intentional progression that was reconstructed in *Experience and Judgment*. From the beginning, he was interested in following the acts that originally identify objects, which was only possible through perceptual experience, as is confirmed by the presupposition of the objective form of time. As Husserl himself puts it: “Thus our initial exclusion of the sphere of neutrality for the purpose of laying the foundation of a theory of judgment proves to be justified, insofar as a theory of judgment must begin precisely with the experience of the individual as yielding ultimate self-evidence, and such an experience of the individual does not occur in imagination or in general in a neutral consciousness”¹⁸.

One finds here echoes of the same evaluative result from the excerpt of the 1922-3 course cited in the introduction to this article. By itself, imagination does not involve any objectifying directionality and, according to its essence, it manifests only disconnected intuitive configurations that add little or nothing to the objectifying ascension supposedly inscribed in the complexification of the operational strata of consciousness.

2. Intuitive unities by association

Until this point of the third chapter of *Experience and Judgment*, the analysis highlights what phantasy lacks, taking into account the objectifying progression inscribed in the passage from pre-predicative experience to predicative experience. Husserl considers the form “object” as a kind of teleological regulator of the functions of consciousness, a regulator that also becomes one of the keys of the phenomenological method, which starts, then, to consider objects as guides for conducting the analyses of the structure of consciousness.¹⁹ In *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl admits that an investigation of conscious lived experiences, of the processes in which a manifold of singular contents are continuously entangled in new formations, seems like a “highly questionable”²⁰ enterprise, since the lived “Heraclitean flux”²¹ is not shaped by identical and conceptually fixable elements in a definitive way. To avoid that transcendental consciousness appears as “a chaos of intentional processes”,²² Husserl considers the form object as a *terminus ad quem* of the lived multiplicities, as these multiplicities would now be ordered while making possible the reference to a manifold of objectual types. Phenomenology thus takes “the unitary objective world as a transcendental clue”²³ and, starting from stable and permanent objectual unities, regressively unveils the intentional operations responsible for the attribution of being “object” to the phenomenal manifestations.

Husserl has been often criticized for his emphasis on the form “object” as a kind of inescapable teleology of being conscious. Now, more than a naive objectivist bias, this emphasis is, as we have just seen, a methodological demand carefully elaborated with the goal of providing the foundation of a scientific-transcendental investigation of consciousness. Moreover, it should also be clear that the emphasis on objects is an epistemic strategy for the development of a rigorous analysis of consciousness, and that this *does not* mean that every intentional operation is necessarily directed to objectification. This supposition would

¹⁸ *Id.*, p.203/ p. 174.

¹⁹ Cf. Husserl, 1973, pp.90-1./pp. 53-5.

²⁰ *Id.*, p.86./p. 49

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Id.*, p.90./p. 54

²³ *Id.*, p.89./p. 53

lead one, for example, to practically eradicate phantasy from the life of consciousness, since, as we have already seen, one does not intend – by phantasizing – objectual poles subject to objectively determinable spatio-temporal locations, but, rather, one intends (apparently) disconnected fragments. It is true that, on the one hand, there are many texts in which Husserl analyzes phantasy with the goal of showing what it *lacks* for constituting stable and permanent objects. On the other hand, the author also recognizes intrinsic principles that allow one to recognize the *positive* features of phantasizing, which are independent of the objectifying function. In other words, Husserl knows that his appeal to the form “object” can be a very comfortable sufficient condition to avoid considering subjectivity as a disordered multiplicity of contents, but he also knows that this is *not* a necessary condition for such a result. Other forms of ordering the lived experiences can be unveiled, forms that are even presupposed by the objectifying operations, though they are not reducible to the constitution of stable objectual poles and are also not progressively determinable in accordance to “in-itself” features. It is in this sense that, at the end of the third chapter of *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl explores the *associative relations by resemblance* as connection principles intrinsic to phantasy.

The study of phantasy can now lead us to “the *broadest concept of the unity of intuition* (...) and to the most inclusive kind of relations, namely, the relations of likeness and similarity, which are possible between all objectivities capable of being united in such a unity of intuition, whether they are objects of perception or of imagination [*Phantasie*].”²⁴ Even though the imagined objectivities – because of their intrinsic features – cannot enter in relational synthesis of progressively objectifying determinations with the perceptual objectivities, Husserl admits that there is an immanent ordering principle to phantasy, which leads him to recognize a more general sense of intuitive unity among different intentional modalities. As Husserl very aptly puts it: “Therefore, if the unity is not a unity of objectivities, it can only be a *unity of lived experiences constituting objectivities*, of lived experiences of perception, of memory, and of imagination [*Phantasie*].”²⁵ Hence, as they are constituted in the same consciousness, the lived experiences are part of a unified experiential stream. Still, this generic homogenization of lived experiences as temporalized experiential blocks can only guarantee the *possibility* that they all form intuitive unities. In the concreteness of conscious life, it is not the case that there is, first, a merely temporal unification and then, later, eventual connections among lived experiences that institute some thematic sense. In truth, the temporal unification, as an abstract form of what is lived, occurs concretely by means of ordering principles of intuitive *contents*, a result that is derived from *association*. Husserl had already dealt with this theme in § 16 of *Experience and Judgment*. Far from being reducible to unanalyzable singular mental events, association is there studied from the point of view of transcendental phenomenology. In Husserl’s own words: “The term ‘association’ denotes in this context a form of belonging essentially to consciousness in general, a *form of the regularity* [*Gesetzmässigkeit*] of *immanent genesis*.”²⁶ As one can see, association has a *legality*, a *Gesetzmässigkeit*; in other words, in addition to the singular manifestations, there are rules in it that *make intelligible* countless empirical cases ordered by this binding force. This fact – that association can be studied in terms of the legality immanent to consciousness – shows that it is not necessary to limit the phenomenological analyses to the form “object” in order to avoid the description of consciousness as a lived chaos. Association is not limited to the configuration of objective unities and it allows, as we will see, a systematic understanding of extremely basic operations of consciousness. In Husserl’s words,

However great and however continuous the efficacy of association is for the constitution uniformly interconnected objects, it is also efficacious where objects, so to speak, snow in upon consciousness without connection. It creates a bond , especially association according to similarity (*Id.*, § 43c, p.221./p. 187).²⁷

²⁴ Husserl, 1954, § 41, p.203./ p. 174

²⁵ *Id.*, § 42, p.205. /p. 175

²⁶ *Id.*, § 16, p.78./p. 74

²⁷ *Id.*, § 43c, p.221./p. 187



Thus, if, from the point of view of the intuitive unities progressively delineated as taking part in a single objective world, phantasies are considered as *limited* to the manifestation of disconnected fragments, now, from the point of view of the associative principles, it will be possible to reveal a power of interconnectivity with no precedent in other intentional modalities. In order to make this point explicit, it is necessary to describe in detail the foundational associative principles which regulate the phantasizing. Husserl sketches this task in very general lines: according to § 16, the fundamental associative rule responsible for the concatenation of successive lived experiences is the principle of resemblance, in two specific forms: likeness or uniformity [*Gleichheit*] and similarity [*Ähnlichkeit*].²⁸ As Husserl admits, “the relations of likeness and similarity are completely indifferent to such disconnectedness of things not actually joined together. They are indifferent precisely because they have their original source exclusively in the linkage which is preconstituted by the unity of association”.²⁹ As one can see, the free phantasizing is not a lived chaos, a disorder of isolated fragments, but, rather, a concatenation whose order is derived from the associativity of the contents.

It is exactly this type of dense lived experience, one which is internally articulated by the passively triggered associative links, that I would like to study following these Husserlian remarks. After all, it seems that lived episodes of this type are fairly common, episodes in which we let ourselves be absorbed by an obscure succession of “thoughts”, without necessarily instrumentalizing these experiences by any further determinate cognitive task. We know these episodes as *daydreams*, and they are, normally, experiences in-between the practical or theoretical activities to which we dedicate ourselves in our daily lives. Far from being a fringe of gratuitous manifestations, a kind of semi-sleep in which the intentional capacities are almost shut down – only preserved in order to be activated before important cognitive tasks –, I will argue that daydreams allow us to reveal specific operations of consciousness, which make more clearly understandable, for instance, how non-positional presentifications are intrinsically ordered. When Husserl formulated the concept of “intuitive unity” in its broadest range, he opened the path for us to investigate the forms of intrinsic legality by means of which thematic contents, disconnected from the point of view of the progressive determination of their objective character, still constitute ordered lived concatenations. Let us now explore the way that associations by resemblance offer the kinds of fundamental nexuses by means of which passively manifested phantasies are articulated.

II – The lived nexuses constitutive of the daydreams

1. Forms of connection by resemblance

Even if it has only been considered so far in a very vague manner, daydreams can be considered as a specific kind of lived experience, one that is not to be confused either with the many varieties of perceptual exploration or with the voluntary exercise of our judging capacities. In this sense, daydreams can be studied at different levels of detail, according to whether one is seeking to elucidate its most general intentional features, how they are delimited, and how they are inter-related to other intentional functions (perception, directed cognition, dream, etc.), or whether one progressively analyzes its components according to the intrinsic stratification of its manifestation forms. Here, I will pursue only this second type of analysis, with a very circumscribed thematic reach.³⁰ I will consider here as daydreams only the lived experiences in which some scenes of pure phantasy – non-positional presentifications – succeed each other. This is, of course, merely a didactic delimitation and one that does not intend to ontologically identify daydreams

²⁸ Two terminological remarks. First, the translator of *Experience and Judgment* chose to render “*Gleichheit*” as “likeness”, but it also has a sense of “uniformity”, which will be important in the analyses that follow, so I will mostly render it as “uniformity”, except in quotations from this book. Second, Husserl does not always distinguish between the *genus* of associative relation, resemblance, and one of its *species*, similarity, using the same term for both (“*Ähnlichkeit*”). Since both the genus and the species will be relevant for what follows, I will here strictly distinguish these two.

²⁹ *Id.*, § 43c, pp.220-1.

³⁰ Some of the themes that are here only alluded to were developed in more detail in Sacrini, 2022.

with phantasies, since in concrete daydream episodes there is such an inter-intentional porosity that different presentifications (and even predicative thought) modalities are connected in very complex lived configurations. In any case, in the non-positional presentifications, there are fewer articulatory restrictions concerning the content, since in those cases one deals with merely “invented” contents, and so does not need to worry about correctly reproducing a certain lived sequence or about reliably anticipating some event. This makes it easier to see the spontaneous connection of contents by the simple association by resemblance. Once this elementary formation of nexus by resemblance between any presentified scenes is captured, it becomes possible to make explicit how positionality implies more complex thematic connections among the contents (for example, the connection by *contiguity* already presupposes the exploratory *continuity* of an object or a minimally *uniform* scenery). In this article, I am interested in showing that a fundamental *associative pregnancy* marks any presentified content, in such a way that each of its aspects *pulses* with minimal connections by resemblance.

Let us, therefore, exclude the theme of the connections between daydreams and modalities of presentation consciousness and even, within the daydreaming experience, the connections among the many presentifying modalities. Let us focus, instead, on capturing the *legal* forms of nexuses between successive phantasies, understood as elementary presentifying manifestations. As I have already mentioned, the most basic type of connectivity between contents is *resemblance*, effectively accomplished through two forms of relationality: similarity and likeness. Here, we can still base our analysis on some points of Husserl’s exposition in *Experience and Judgment*. The author distinguishes, first in § 16 and later in § 42b two levels of association between contents. At the fundamental level, there is the stabilization of the sensorial fields by means of which the sensible receptivity acts. In order for this to happen, there needs to take place either a *homogeneous* sensible unity, among the data from the same sensory field, or a *heterogeneous* sensible unity, among the data from different sensory fields. This unification of the sensible fields allows the different objectivities to be seized upon as intuitively present in experience. New associative nexuses are then formed over this homogenizing unification, between something that is actually manifested and something that is not present but which is *awakened* by what is manifested. It is at this level that I would like to analyze the relations of resemblance, taking into account the specificity of our case, since here the actual content is not a perceptual datum but any phantasized scene, *on the basis of which* another phantasized scene will be passively configured, thus generating a minimal lived nexus of presentifications. It is important to note, however, that, as we will see, the sensible homogeneity, as something that is reproductively operative in every presentification, will have a decisive role in the formation of daydreams.

What does it mean to say, more precisely, that resemblance is a unifying factor of phantasized contents? There will be a lived resemblance connection when the contents either partially or totally coincide. The phantasized scene C will be associatively united to scene B if at least some of the elements from the two scenes overlap. Scene B remains minimally retained in the elaboration of C, in such a way that the latter can be recognized as resembling the first one. In case of similarity, the intended contents *are similar* and can be brought closer together under different aspects without there being an identification or a perfect overlap. There are in these cases *dissimilar aspects* that are still in force and that, therefore, limit the coincidence of features highlighted by the resemblance. On the other hand, in case of uniformity, the prominent aspect of B adequately overlaps with the corresponding aspect of C, in such a way that in the transition from one content to the other there is an identity between the aspects, which are now *repeated* in each content as the same.

It is important to notice that similarity and uniformity are not determinations definitely associated with the contents, but qualifications that vary in degree and in the way they are actualized in accordance with the type of connection intended. Elements that appear as similar in a nexus may evidently appear as uniform in another one and *vice versa*. Moreover, generally speaking, there may be degrees of similarity,

with uniformity at one end, when there are no dissimilar aspects anymore (at least in relation to the element in question) that block the reiterative overlap of the two associated contents. Uniformity would therefore be the upper limit of similarity between contents. On the opposite side, there would be pure difference, when the intended elements are not at all similar relative to the relevant aspect in question. It is worth highlighting that, in the case of similarity, there is always some degree of internal difference, so that the elements brought closer together are only similar to each other and not identical. The types of differences in question will depend on the elements which are brought together as similar. In the case of abstract determinations (colors, shapes, roughness, etc.), there could be differences in scope, intensity, represented level of detail, or forms of connection among the intended aspects. In the case of elements represented as relatively independent (quasi-individuals), beyond such phenomenal differences, the way they stand out from the phantasized scenery, the imagined or stipulated spatio-temporal location, the articulation with other individuals, all of this could be dissimilar factors that block the overlapping coincidence.

As can be seen, one can establish possibilities of gradation between similarity and uniformity relative to the element that bears the resemblance and which triggers the lived connection. In § 45 of *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl seeks to systematize this analysis in mereological terms – which refer back to the third Logical Investigation. The resemblance relations can be accomplished among *concreta* (independent objects) or, in a more general sense, among *wholes*, and also among the *parts* of these wholes. In the case of the connection among lived phantasy experiences, each presentified scene can be considered as a whole, in the sense defined in § 21 of the third Logical Investigation: “a range of contents which are all covered by a single foundation without the help of further contents”.³¹ The presentified lived contents are united in the manifestation of the phantasized scene. This scene is, of course, only relatively independent, both in what concerns the nearby moments of the conscious flux from which it is detached and also in what concerns the foundational intentional dimension that keeps consciousness connected to the sensible world even while it is phantasizing.³² Husserl recognizes in § 13 of the third Logical Investigation that the relations of dependency and independency among the parts of a whole, and even the circumscription of the whole, are *relative*. Thus, an impressional moment of presentification – the current manifestation of the phantasized scene – can be taken as a relatively independent whole, in spite of the fact that, in an absolute sense, it still depends on the sensible rootedness of consciousness, and even on the continuous immanent temporalization of the lived experiencing.

It can also be enlightening to understand the notions of *whole* and *part* in light of the notions of *substrate* and *determination*, as Husserl proposes in §§ 29-32 of *Experience and Judgment*. Indeed, anything that can be highlighted and become a thematic substrate for exploratory perception can be considered as a whole. Still, from a genetic point of view, there are certain affecting data that originally impose substrates, not depending in any way on some special exploratory operation of highlighting and isolating properties. These affecting data are those that present sensible individual objects, which are apprehended as beings that exist in- and for-themselves. The determinations, in their turn, are the dependent qualities that exist in the substrates or in their relations. Now, the fact that *relations* can be taken as determinations or dependent parts presupposes that the individual objects are not isolatedly given. In general, as Husserl himself puts it, “no individual body which we bring to givenness in experience is isolated and for itself”.³³ The objects presuppose their surroundings and, through various kinds of relations, are entangled with other objects and

³¹ Husserl, 1984, p.282./p. 34.

³² About this point, Husserl admits in § 42 of *Experience and Judgment*: “If, e.g., while I perceive my material environment, a flash of memory comes to me and I devote myself entirely to it, this world of perception does not then disappear; no matter how much this world may lose its ‘actuality’, may ‘withdraw from me’ perceptively it is always there, perceived, in the broader sense of the term” (1954, p.205/pp. 175-6).

³³ Husserl, 1954, § 29, p.156/p. 137..



with a background environment. One should, therefore, recognize a broader notion of substrate, namely, the context of mundane relations in which each object can be an individual. From the point of view that is here in question – the connections between presentifications – it is therefore plausible to consider each phantasized scene – as it represents a diversity of quasi-objects in a minimal surrounding – as the most general substrate in view. Inside this broad whole – the totality of figure-ground aspects of the phantasized scenes – different kinds of *parts* can be analytically distinguished:

- a) The particular imagined substrates, that is, the *quasi-individuals* detached from the background and that also appear as relative wholes in the global scene;
- b) The components of the imagined surrounding;
- c) The intrinsic qualities or determinations either of the individual substrates or of the surrounding, be they relatively independent parts (for example, fragments of imagined quasi-objects) or relatively dependent parts (color qualities, shape, roughness, etc.);
- d) The determinations derived from the total arrangement of the scene (a certain spatial disposition of the themes, a certain pattern of movement of something in relation to the background, etc.).

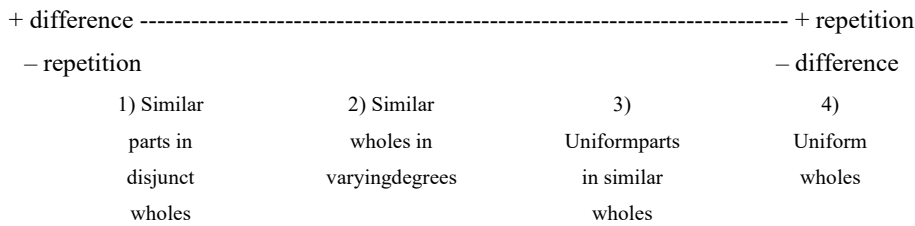
By means of this circumscription of the different kinds of elements that can fulfill the presentifying impressionable moment, one can track in which way the resemblance relations occurs in regards to each presentified unity, something that makes it much easier to understand how the elementary lived nexuses are formed.³⁴ According to § 45 of *Experience and Judgment*, the relations of resemblance, as the trigger of *intuitive unities*, occur relative to wholes or to parts of those wholes, be those independent (each quasi-individual must here be counted, as well as its independent parts) or dependent. It is then possible to highlight, in the continuous passage between similarity and uniformity, specific kinds of resemblance relations, in accordance with whether one takes into consideration the whole or part of the lived content as the trigger of the daydreaming nexus:³⁵

³⁴ The mereological notions are part of the framework of formal resources which can be used by phenomenology in its investigations. The establishment of relations of foundation between contents or the distinction between their dependent and independent parts are conceptual operations that can be applied to any kind of objectivities, without clarifying anything about the “material” particularities that make it that such objectivities present such and such ontological determinations. Husserl considers that even the immanent contents of the conscious flux “are only a special class of objects” (Husserl, 1984, p. 218/p. 309) and, therefore, are submitted to the *a priori* relations between parts and wholes that are valid for objectivities in general. I subscribe to this thesis throughout the study of daydreaming.

³⁵ I was here inspired by a similar table proposed by De Santis, 2012.



Resemblance



As one can see, the bringing together of presentified wholes, that is, the formation of the associative nexus which institutes an intuitive unity between two impressional moments, can occur relative to a (or to some) elements manifested in the presentified scene or even relative to the scene taken in its globality. Each relation marked in the above scheme constitutes a type of associative nexus among the impressional moments of presentifications. In the most elementary relation (1), some partial aspects are similar. Here, the differences between the presentified wholes prevail and, at the limit, there are no repeated (uniform) aspects between the two of them. On the opposite side of this continuum, there is the relation of complete uniformity (4), in which there is no difference.

It is worth noticing that it is possible to distinguish subtypes of nexuses inside each of these types. For example, Husserl recognizes different forms by means of which the *transference* of similarity between wholes (2) takes place. The similarity relation can occur between aspects or parts of wholes and, in that case, the “wholes participate in a similarity in consequence of the similarity of the subordinate features to which the similarity belongs”.³⁶ In this case, for example, the similar wholes B and C are brought together and taken as similar because they respectively share similar features *a* and *a'*. In addition to this case, wholes can also be considered similar because their parts correspond to each other and can be coordinated (*a— a', b— b', etc.*). Hence, “here the wholes are not similar ‘in consequence of’ the similarities of the parts. On the contrary, the similarity of the parts is here merely ‘transferred’ to the similarity of the wholes”.³⁷

It is also possible to recognize many subforms of connection in item 3. For example, either the dependent parts of certain scenes (certain identical coloration, even though it is instantiated in very different quasi-objects) or the relatively independent parts could be uniform, and this includes, as we have seen, the imagined quasi-objects themselves as focal themes that are repeated in different scenes. And here, new distinctions are possible. The objectual genera could be uniform without an individual identification: two objects of the same type are imagined as sharing all their phenomenal qualities without being numerically identical (for example, a copy of a book in a scene and *another* copy of the same book in the next scene). On the other hand, an individual could also be uniform: a quasi-object is represented in two scenes as the same. In this case, however, the numerical identity (in the two scenes, the quasi-object is a *single* object) does not imply that there could not be phenomenally distinguished qualitative differences (for example, in one scene I imagine a *young* person and, in the other, the *same* person *older*). Moreover, for all the above cases, it is worth noting that there could be *similar* co-given elements in each scene. Indeed, the existence of uniform aspects guarantees that the wholes in view are not completely disjoint and, in this sense, are already similar.

³⁶ Husserl, 1954, § 45, p.227./p. 192.

³⁷ *Id.*, p.228./p. 192.

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It is clear that similarity between wholes does not exclude that some of their parts can also be uniform. However, in order for the wholes to be globally uniform, it is logically demanded that their parts also be uniform. That is the case of item 4 in the above scheme. That case is distinguished as the limit, in which there is total uniformity and there are no differentiating elements that could block the content coincidence. Since in this study the wholes are presentified scenes, total uniformity would mean that there would not be a nexus, properly speaking, among the contents, but rather their continuous manifestation, in such a way that the *impressional moments* would blend or be extended *as if* they also remained the same. While I will not explore this case here – I intend to do so in a broader work –, let us note that there are important phenomenological consequences for the understanding of the immanent temporalization, consequences that may be more easily shown not by supposing a seamless maintenance of an identical content in the modification of the temporal phases, but rather by the absence of any presentified content, as, for example, in deep meditative states, in the sense systematized by some Buddhist traditions.

As one can see, it would be possible to ramify on several levels the forms of connection presented above. And even if that scheme does not intend to be an exhaustive review of types of resemblance nexuses, it already offers precise analytical resources to capture the legality instantiated in the passive succession of apparently random phantasized scenes. The lived intuitive unities – even if they are severed from the exploratory processes that determine the form “object” – are clearly ordered by associative principles. Nevertheless, we still don’t have, considering the phenomenological resources historically developed, detailed expositions of the micro-associative rules by means of which the contents can be effectively connected. The systematic analysis of the manifestations of phantasy in terms of wholes and parts offers a typology of the nexuses which ground the institution of the intuitive unities. Taking the association by resemblance as the most elementary form of lived connection, one that is in force when the presentified contents are united without any direction by a cognitive interest, it is still possible, as one can see, to distinguish the nexuses according to their different modalities (if they are united by similarity or uniformity) and applied to distinct components of the presentified manifestation (whole or parts). Thus, between presentified contents B and C – passively lived through in sequence – could occur, in principle, any of the cases enumerated in the above scheme: B⁻¹-C, B⁻²-C, B⁻³-C, B⁻⁴-C.

One should at least mention that not all of those connection rules are equally neutral in relation to their actualization potential. In nexuses with uniform elements, there is a total coincidence between at least part of the themes in the transition of contents, something that fosters the prominence of those that remain the same. In this kind of content succession, it is highlighted *what remains the same*, even if it is recontextualized in conformity to the thematic configurations of each new impressional moment. Here, one finds the rudimentary demands for *narrative* concatenations to take place: an element sustained as the same is highlighted in a succession of scenes, which is then lived as a minimum “plot”. The identifying overlapping of the element is emphasized and promotes the thematic continuity in the presentified succession. Indeed, daydreaming episodes in which we figure ourselves or other characters in a sequence of actions are very common. We have here the minimal associative conditions for the creation of the imaginary quasi-world of fictions, mentioned by Husserl in § 40 of *Experience and Judgment*. The uniform element (be it uniform in an absolute or relative way, in accordance with the transformations undergone throughout the figured scenes) makes it easier to recognize that there is *unity* in daydreaming, since its manifestation overlaps in the scenes and acts as a kind of anchor that attests the lived unification. In any case, even when the unification is less evident, such as in the case of nexuses 1 and 2 – in which there are no uniform elements anchoring the associative unity – there is still a *legal* character in the connection of the contents, a character that is derived solely from the *similar* aspects.

In order to emphasize the striking disconnection among contents of phantasy and between the contents of phantasy and the contents of perception, Husserl gives as an example the succession of two apparently

random impressional moments followed by a perception: “The centaur which I now imagine, and a hippopotamus which I have previously imagined, and, in addition, the table I am perceiving even now have no connection among themselves, i.e. they have *no temporal position in relation to one another*”.³⁸ While effective in making explicit that the phantasy figurations essentially do not accomplish an exploratory path by which objectual poles are determined as part of a single objective world, the example suggests a certain unanalyzable arbitrariness as being constituent of phantasizing. The considerations adduced in the previous paragraph allow us, however, to reject this suggestion. That a centaur is phantasized following the phantasizing of a hippopotamus is not random, but refers to the highlighting of certain aspects of the former which are reconfigured in the second, such as the animal body or, at least, its being-quadruped.³⁹ The figuration of the centaur is *motivated* by the figuration of the hippopotamus, and this motivation accomplishes itself by the prominence of the abstract part x (the body of the hippopotamus), reconfigured in the similar abstract part x' (the body of the centaur). There is no pure randomness, but, instead, a minimally ruled nexus, a nexus among at least one similar aspect inside the associated wholes.

This analysis shows that wholes (understood here – it is important to insist on this point – as scenes phantasized each at a time) that are not in any way contiguous, that is, that do not represent progressively explored objects or environments, can still be articulated in the lived experience. The fact that the wholes are disjoint in regards to their global sense does not block them from sharing, according to various degrees of resemblance, at least their dependent parts; and this is enough for the establishment of ordered nexuses among the contents, which can then succeed each other in an associated way. Nevertheless, this fundamental nexus (highlighting and reconfiguration of similar dependent moments in wholes that are in general disjoint) occurs almost invisibly, since the global dissimilarities are phenomenally more imposing. After all, as Husserl remarks in § 45 of *Experience and Judgment*, the whole is “what is primarily given”⁴⁰, and, in the case of disjoint (in relation to the global sense) wholes connected just by dependent moments, this general disjoint character overrides the fleeting motivation between the moments. The abstract dependent feature x in B triggers the manifestation of C, in which it appears as x' . But that which immediately manifests itself is B, followed by C; as C appears in its general sense as separated from B, the association among some of the parts may remain obscure and, in a hurried rememorative reflection, B and C may be taken as randomly brought together. Before subscribing to this type of judgment, it is important to remark that *the nexus between similar aspects of disjoint wholes is the minimal form of an always pulsing or latent connectivity in any presentified content*. After all, as Husserl had already emphasized, the interconnectivity of separated contents presupposes the homogeneity of their generic manifestation form. That contents are presentifiedly *intuitive* means that they share aspects that delimit, in general, the intuitive phenomenalization. In other words, what allows the intuitive representability in general (aspects of the figure and ground ordering, thematic substrates, colors, shapes, etc.) is always actualized in a concrete lived whole as a *power of connecting* with other possible wholes. Presentification, as a field of intuitive representability, operates over the fundamental associativity that allows homogeneous terms to be brought together. From here on, that any presentified contents may articulate themselves presupposes, even if in a minimum degree, this *homogenizing approximation* of what is intuitively imaginable.

³⁸Husserl, 1954, § 39, p.196./p. 168.

³⁹The prominent similar aspect can already be noticed if one understands well the words used in Husserl's example. “Centaur” designates a mythological being with a human upper's body and the lower body and legs of a *horse*. The term “hippopotamus”, in its turn, refers etymologically to “river horse”. In the German language, the closeness of the “equine” character of the centaur and the hippopotamus is even more evident, since the term “horse” [*Pferd*] is part of the German word used to refer to hippopotamuses [*Nilpferd*].

⁴⁰Husserl, 1954, p.228./p. 193

2. Forms of connection by resemblance The associative concatenation

The background homogeneity between the abstract moments that can figure in any presentified scene guarantees the *possibility* of minimal associative nexuses between the lived contents. This, however, still does not clarify how these nexuses are effectively established.⁴¹ More than the clarification of why *certain particular contents* appear interconnected – which would demand considering aspects of the individual historicity of the person who daydreams – , what is interesting here is the study of how the process of connecting phantasized scenes actualizes, in terms of its *general legality*, this *associative pregnancy* distinctive of every presentified content. Husserl explores the theme of the *associative awakening* – the dynamics by means of which a present content “reminds” us of something and motivates the figuration of this something – in many texts, particularly in some parts of his course *Analysis concerning passive synthesis*. Let us recall here at least one of his reflections concerning the relations among lived experiences, with the goal of elucidating the intrinsic operations of daydreaming. In Appendix 18 to this course, Husserl proposes that it “is a universal law of consciousness that a resonance proceeds from every special consciousness or from every special object, and similarity is the unity of the resonating element”.⁴² The notion of resonance – understood as the amplification of a vibration of a physical system stimulated with the same frequency – is a metaphor that makes sensible the idea of a constant openness of each element of a lived experience to consonant elements in other lived experiences. Limiting ourselves to the case of phantasy, one should here emphasize that each imagined scene does not exhaust in itself, but rather pulses in the direction of congruent elements. The general sense of a phantasized scene, or even of some of the parts there prominent, awakens the configuration of a similar whole or of similar parts. Hence, there are congruent elements that harmonize themselves even while remaining separate, that is, lived in different impressional moments. In other words, what is prominent resonates in such a way that it keeps the highlighted material aspect vibrating in consonant contents. Similarity, in its many degrees and, at the limit, uniformity, are the result of this congruence among elements in different impressional moments: content C does not haphazardly succeed content B, rather, C succeeds B by the resonance of an element that is prominent in B. There is, thus, a minimally orderly *transition*: the highlighted elements coincide, in different degrees, in the sequence of contents, which do not burst arbitrarily, but, rather, fulfill the unending succession of the temporal phases by means of several forms of thematic consonance.

As we have seen, in order to make apparent the eidetic legality of daydreams, I proposed to schematize each impressional moment of a presentification as a whole, and the succession between two contiguous moments as a kind of discrete nexus, represented by a dash. It is clear that the experience of daydreaming does not take place by means of the joining together of isolated contents by an autonomous “connector”; there is a continuous filling of the impressional focus by successive contents, each of them detaching itself and submerging as a just lived phenomenal trail. In any case, the proposed schematization allows one to consider the mere form of spontaneous reposition of the temporal impression as a lived *concatenation*, that is, as a sequence distinguished by a minimal order intrinsic to the contents. For example, during a relaxing moment, in which I am not paying attention to the urgent tasks of the day, I remain absorbed in multiple phantasized scenes. The distinction of the contents in accordance with the impressional moments and the making explicit of the possibilities of nexuses by resemblance among such contents wards off any simplifying ideas according to which such episodes could barely be taken as lived experiences. Consider a sequence of scenes passively manifested, R to X. Such contents can be connected (without considering other particularizing factors of the lived experiences) by any of the nexuses previously studied – for

⁴¹ Note that it is not just the phenomenal aspects of the presentifications that constantly suggest associative connections. The knowledge *stipulated*, to a greater or lesser degree, in each phantasized scene also opens the possibility of associative nexuses. I will not develop this point in this article.

⁴² Husserl, 1966, p.406./p. 505-6.

instance, R⁻¹-S⁻³-T⁻³-U⁻²-V⁻²-X, among many other possibilities. That sometimes a certain feeling of disconnection prevails – whose source is frequently to be found in disattention –, this does not mean, however, that it would not be possible to capture the ordering intrinsic to daydreaming by employing an appropriate methodology.

After this long expositive path, phenomenology students and teachers do not need to feel guilty anymore if they do not heed Husserl's advice – contained in the long quotation mentioned in the introduction – and surrender themselves to the play of phantasy. After all, even if they are not employing their imagination to track the pure *eidos* and, instead, are merely enjoying passively ordered daydream connections, they can still dedicate themselves to a topic of great phenomenological interest.

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