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Derrida and the Future(s) of Phenomenology

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the significance of Derrida's work for an understanding of the basic tenets of phenomenology. Specifically, via an analysis of his understanding of the subject's relation to the future, we will see that Derrida enhances the phenomenological understanding of temporality and intentionality, thereby moving the project of phenomenology forward in a unique way. This, in turn, suggests that future phenomenological research will have to account for an *essential* (rather than merely a secondary) role for both linguistic mediation and cultural and political factors within the phenomenological subject itself.

Keywords

phenomenology, genesis, Husserl, Levinas, futurity, eschatology, messianic

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Abstract: This paper seeks to examine the significance of Derrida's work for an understanding of the basic tenets of phenomenology. Specifically, via an analysis of his understanding of the subject's relation to the future, we will see that Derrida enhances the phenomenological understanding of temporality and intentionality, thereby moving the project of phenomenology forward in a unique way. This, in turn, suggests that future phenomenological research will have to account for an *essential* (rather than merely a secondary) role for both linguistic mediation and cultural and political factors within the phenomenological subject itself.

Derrida and the Future(s) of Phenomenology

The relationship between Derrida and phenomenology seems to have reached a stalemate. On the one hand, Derrida's contribution to phenomenology is generally restricted to questions of historical influence and reception. On the other hand, many Husserlian scholars have troubles with—or flat out reject—Derrida's reading of Husserl as misguided, confused, or both. Reading Derrida's contribution to phenomenology solely through his reading of Husserl, then, enables us to broach the question of phenomenology from within Derrida's work, but its limited scope enables more phenomenologically-minded scholars to ignore Derrida as a significant contributor. Hence, the stalemate: either Derrida is an important interpreter of Husserl, or he is not; this—and this alone—will decide Derrida's relationship to phenomenology.

In this paper, I would like to push beyond this stalemate to study what Derrida's importance to the central issues of phenomenology itself. To do so, it will, of course, be necessary to examine the function that Husserl plays in Derrida's thought, but this function can only be properly understood in relationship to a third term: Levinas. In the context of this (un)holy triumvirate, we can learn three points that get at the heart of phenomenology itself: first, the fundamental necessity of futurity, not just to phenomenological temporality, but to the phenomenological method itself; second, a clarification of the concept of intentionality in a distinctly phenomenological register; and finally, a renewed vision of the central problems of phenomenology in terms of the scope and application of the phenomenological method. At stake in this discussion of Derrida, we will see, is the future of phenomenological research itself.

In order to fully understand Derrida's contributions to the future of phenomenology, we must first look at his contributions to understanding the future within phenomenology. To begin, then, we must highlight the centrality of futurity to two distinct accounts of phenomenology and phenomenological intentionality: first, the Husserlian account of subjective constitution within horizons; and second, the Levinasian account of the reversal of that sense of constitution in the relation to alterity (Section I). Then, we will be in position to understand Derrida's thought—from the early work on *differance* through the later work on justice and the messianic—in the context of these competing visions of phenomenology, as offering a phenomenology that holds in tension these two competing vision (Section II). From this, we will elaborate the resulting theory of intentionality that Derrida can be understood to offer (Section III), before moving on to discuss the implications of this theory for the future of phenomenological research

(Section IV).

I. Futurity and Phenomenology: Two Accounts

Before we can elaborate the contributions of Derrida to phenomenology, we must first explore the phenomenological context in which Derrida thought himself to be operating. This context fluctuates between two main poles: the notion of subjective constitution, on one hand, and that of openness to alterity, on the other. Let us look at the figures emblematic of each those two poles: Husserl and Levinas, respectively.

A. Husserl: Futurity and Subjective Constitution

Husserlian phenomenology shows a strong bias toward subjective constitution. His analyses focus, not only on how the subject is able to constitute a world, but also on how the subject is able to constitute its own subjective lived experiences.¹ Hence, Husserl divides subjective constitution into three main levels: first, that of the constitution of its own stream of experiences via the constitution of internal time; second, the passive or non-egoic constitution of the world; and third, the egoically-directed acts of consciousness within the world.²

At each of these levels, we see an essential role played by the future, suggesting that a distinctly futural temporality is essential to phenomenology. At the level of internal time-consciousness, the Bernau Manuscripts make clear that protention is a key concept in Husserl's accounts of absolute consciousness and of intentionality. Because of the distinction in modes of bringing to intuition (that is between clarifying and confirming modes)³ that protention alone provides, consciousness is able to confirm the present object as the fulfillment of the previously expected object,⁴ and therefore provide the fulfillment necessary for absolute consciousness.⁵

Protention is also essential to intentionality. Protention, as “an intention ‘directed’ at what comes later,”⁶ differs most notably from retention because only protention has the “striving” character of directedness⁷ that comprises “the fundamental character of [intentionality] in its most original essential composition.”⁸

Futurity, then, is essential to the functioning of the phenomenological subject on the most basic level of its own self-constitution. It also marks the level of the subject's passive constitution of the world: it is only because our previous experiences are retained in a horizon “of actual and possible expectations”⁹ that we are able to expect the non-present sides of a particular given object (for example, the back of a chair), and therefore apperceive what is in front of me as the object that it is (for example, a chair). Later, however, Husserl will want to separate the acts of egoic consciousness into those marked by absence and those that remain fully present (in enjoyment), and to tie futurity, via anticipation, solely to the former.¹⁰ This raises the question of how futurity could fail to apply to some egoically-directed acts, when it is necessary to the more basic levels of constitution that precede them. It is especially problematic when the non-anticipatory acts of enjoyment are supposed to occur in the interior mental life of the subject, yet it is precisely the subjectivity of the subject that must be constituted—and with an essential role played by futurity in that constitution—if Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is to move past Kant.¹¹

Husserl says that the forms of subjectivity are “only conceivable in genesis,”¹² and that this notion of genesis is what distinguishes his work from that of Kant (Hua XI, 126). This problematic notion of genesis in phenomenology provides the starting point for Derrida’s own philosophy, but before we move directly to that, let us finish examining the phenomenological context of Derrida’s work by elaborating the “other” side of Husserl, which he introduced but did not, perhaps, sufficiently develop. To do this, we must turn to the figure who did more than any other in phenomenology to develop this other side of Husserl: Emmanuel Levinas.

B. The ‘Other’ Husserl, an Other Futurity: Levinas and Alterity

Where Husserlian intentionality is premised on the directedness of subjective acts from the subject to the world, Levinas reverses this move in his characterization of his own work on intentionality as a reversal of sense-bestowal [*Sinngebung*].¹³ However, for Levinas this is not a move away from Husserl, but rather a reinvigoration of the “forgotten horizons” of Husserl’s thought,¹⁴ horizons which constituted Husserl’s most innovative breakthrough. Levinas understands intentionality as “essentially the act of bestowing a sense (the *Sinngebung*).”¹⁵ However, Levinas notes, following Husserl,¹⁶ that this sense-bestowal moves in both directions: intentionality is not merely the act of the subject’s bestowing meaning on the world, but is rather the act of the subject’s being in relation with the concrete.¹⁷

This act of the subject’s being in relation to something absolutely distinct from itself is characterized by Levinas as futurity.¹⁸ Whereas for Husserl futurity was about subjective constitution within horizons (of retention and expectation), for Levinas futurity is about the subject’s being-constituted by that which lies outside itself, and therefore comes to the subject in the mode of surprise (TO, 79). This reaches its zenith in Levinas’ understanding of the subject as hostage of, or substituted for, the Other, who calls, solicits or constitutes the subject in the mode of responsibility. *Otherwise than Being* is Levinas’ landmark attempt to explain this idea, and it claims to “remain faithful to intentional analysis” (OB, 183). It can be faithful to intentionality, however, only by reconceiving intentionality as a sense-bestowal that is “essentially respectful of the Other” (RR, 121). For Levinas, this respect can be maintained only by acknowledging the one thing that he believes intentionality makes apparent, more than anything else—that the subject is not (only) constituting, but is primarily constituted.

Against the self-enclosed nature of subjective constitution, Levinas raises the specter of an “eschatological” (cf. TI, 22-26) understanding of the subject as being always oriented toward—and constituted by—what lies outside itself. But this is not our first invocation of eschatology in this paper. Remember that our Husserlian analysis of anticipation already introduced a certain eschatological character into the heart of experience, characterizing (almost all) subjective experience as already occurring in the present, but promising yet more fulfillment in the future. At stake here is the relationship between the phenomenological subject and that which is foreign to the subject; the relation, in other words, that Husserl meant to describe by the phrase intentionality.

II. Derrida’s Phenomenology of Tension

Two distinct accounts of intentionality can be deduced from the accounts of the relation to the future discussed so far: on the one hand, past experiences become the

horizons by which we constitute the present according to expectations of the future; on the other, we have a present that makes sense only because the future has reached back and offered itself to us partially, in the mode of a trace¹⁹ or promise.²⁰ These correspond to an intentionality that seeks to move from the subject to the world (a broadly Kantian or idealist understanding of intentionality) and an intentionality that seeks to move from the world to the subject (a naively realist and perhaps even reductively materialist understanding of intentionality). Neither of these accounts of intentionality is sufficiently phenomenological.

Husserl believed his phenomenology to be unique in that it alone dealt with the constitution of the stream of subjective experience (contra the *a priori* subjectivity of Kantian idealism and the lack of significance of subjectivity in materialism). Husserl attempts to explain this constitution via the notion of subjective genesis,²¹ while Levinas' sought the genesis of the phenomenological subject outside that subject. Both of these attempts, Derrida claims, fail to pay sufficient attention to the two-fold movement of intentionality necessitated by phenomenological genesis, and hence neither is phenomenological enough to adequately distinguish phenomenology from other philosophical disciplines.

A. The Necessity of Genetic Phenomenology

This issue of genesis is the starting point of Derrida's philosophy. Genesis is both central to phenomenology and yet constitutes a problem for it because genesis contains an apparent contradiction within its very nature: on the one hand, the notion of genesis requires a context that is "its own,"²² thus echoing the Husserlian notion of constitution with the horizons of the subject; on the other hand, the genesis can occur only in a context that "goes beyond" the subject and "envelops it from all sides,"²³ thereby echoing the Levinasian notion of the constitution of the subject by an Other who transcends that subject absolutely.²⁴

The significance of the future within the competing accounts of Levinas and Husserl is not accidental, but is necessary, Derrida claims, if phenomenology "wishes to respect the temporality of the originary lived experience,"²⁵ in which "it is always through an 'anticipation' which is at least formal, that any signification, founded on an *a priori* synthesis, appears, and appears to itself originally."²⁶ This is to say that the phenomenological principle of principles²⁷ is premised on the self-givenness [*Selbstgegebenheit*] of lived experience, and, since this lived experience gives itself in and as time, phenomenology must account for the temporalization of lived experience by matching that temporalization with an analogous temporalization in (phenomenological) analysis. This temporal analysis, as we will see, is genesis, and therefore every truly phenomenological analysis must be *genetic* phenomenological analysis.

B. Transcendental Genesis

While Husserl clearly recognized the need for genetic analysis,²⁸ his genetic accounts are insufficient because they fail to fully challenge the appeal to universal essences. Even in his latest works, where his analyses appear to take on their most genetic character, Husserl continues to maintain a rigorous distinction between transcendental constitution and empirical existence,²⁹ and decides stridently for the former. In doing so, he confines himself to a static search for that which is already

constituted, instead of that which is constituting. As with any static account, this method necessarily privileges one of the two poles of the constituting relation at the expense of the other: by focusing on the constituting power of the subject, Husserl runs the risk of psychologism, in its transcendental (Kant) rather than its mundane (Mill, Sigwart) variation.³⁰

Such a move is not sufficiently phenomenological, Derrida argues, because it misses “the origin and becoming of logic” in genesis.³¹ But as long as the sharp distinction is maintained between transcendental constitution and empirical existence, the significance of genesis for phenomenology can never be appreciated. That this genesis cannot be purely empirical is obvious, given Husserl’s adamant rejection of mundane psychologism in volume I of *Logical Investigations*. But the possibility of “transcendental” genesis—that is, the attempt to account for the fact that sense and meaning are essentially becoming, as the subject is simultaneously constituted and constituting itself and the world—is problematized by its own genetic sense: as an essential becoming, “transcendental” genesis must not take place within the realm of what is already constituted (if it is to be originary and transcendental), and hence cannot appeal to universal essences or constituted subjects. For this reason, a transcendental sense of genesis must not reduce historical and factual existence to some universalized essence, which would be “no more than a concept in disguise” (PG, xxxviii). Indeed, transcendental genesis “must not be the object of a reduction,” for if it is to be an *originary* becoming, “what subject will absolute meaning appear for? How can absolute and monadic transcendental subjectivity be at the same time a becoming that is constituting itself?” (PG, xxxix). Derrida’s answers by suggesting that, rather than being reduced or being revealed by the reduction, transcendental genesis makes possible the reduction itself (Ibid.). In order to accurately account for transcendental genesis, then, empirical and factual existence cannot be reduced. Yet, simultaneously (and this is the paradox, the problem, the seemingly contradictory double-necessity) they *must* be reduced, for it is only after the reduction that something can be rigorously and properly transcendental, that is to say, phenomenological.³²

This problem, then, establishes a fundamental “dialectic” at the heart of phenomenology, a dialectic that is ontological in nature.³³ “This ontology,” Derrida claims, “will show, by deepening the phenomenology of temporality, that at the level of the originary temporal existence, fact and essence, the empirical and the transcendental, are inseparable and dialectically of a piece.”³⁴ Because, in Husserl’s analysis of time, “every constituting moment . . . brings with it a constituted moment in the intimacy of its foundation,”³⁵ the very absolute of time-constituting consciousness is itself always already composed of constituted moments. “This essential intrusion of constituted time into constituting time does not allow us to make the distinction rigorously between” pure, transcendental constitution and the facticity of existence,³⁶ and so Derrida calls for a fundamental reorientation of phenomenology that would “put us in contact with the existent as such.”³⁷ The “originarily synthetic identification of consciousness and time” prevalent in phenomenology “is equivalent to confusing the pure subject with an originarily historical existence that is . . . the very ‘existence’ of the subject. This existence, as originarily temporal and finite, is ‘in the world.’”³⁸

Hence the problem of genesis, the problem of identifying the relationship between constituting and constituted, the problem of the passage between “primitive existence”

and “originary sense,”³⁹ arises precisely because of Husserl’s temporal analyses. It is the purpose of genetic phenomenology to speak to this problem, to “retrace the absolute itinerary that leads from prepredicative evidence to predicative evidence” (PG 106; translation modified⁴⁰), to explain, in other words, the passage from primitive existence to sense. We can now understand the claim already cited that a “phenomenological philosophy must be genetic if it wishes to respect the temporality of the originary lived experience.”⁴¹

C. Phenomenological Genesis

Derrida attempts to provide such a genetic phenomenology, or at least a phenomenological account of genesis. This account grows out of the analysis of the originary “dialectic” at the heart of phenomenology. To understand the importance of phenomenology to Derrida’s work—and vice versa—we must first understand the central importance that this “dialectic” has in Derrida’s philosophy. While this may seem surprising, given the fact that this word seems to drop out of Derrida’s work already by the early 60s, we will see that, as Derrida continues to explore the idea expressed by this term, he is forced to change how he talks about it, ultimately tying such key deconstructive themes as difference and the messianic inexorably to the originary dialectic that characterizes phenomenology.

i. From Dialectic to difference

In his preface to the 1990 edition of *The Problem of Genesis*, an older (and perhaps wiser and more cautious) Derrida explains that the “law of differential contamination” which “imposes its logic from one end of [*The Problem of Genesis*] to the other” received, in 1953/53 a “philosophical name that I have had to give up: *dialectic*, an ‘originary dialectic.’”⁴² This dialectic is a kind of “hyperdialecticism,” a going beyond dialectic “in the course of a very respectful critique,”⁴³ and it will never cease to function in Derrida’s work.

The word dialectic, however, does cease to function as a positive aspect of Derrida’s work, by 1967. Already in the preface to the 1953/54 version of *The Problem of Genesis*, Derrida speaks of “unperceived entailment or of dissimulated contamination.”⁴⁴ This theme of contamination emerges more forcefully into Derrida’s lexicon once the word dialectic ceases to play a significant role. Indeed, Derrida himself says that “the very word ‘contamination’ has not stopped imposing itself on me from thence [that is, 1953/54] forward” (PG, xv), as it seeks to show that two things that we take to be necessarily separate (like, for example, the subject and the other) are in fact always already intertwined (the other is “in” me, to use the phrase of *A Taste for the Secret*).⁴⁵ This preaccomplished intertwining repeats the “originary dialectic” that sought to make fact and essence, the empirical and the transcendental, “inseparable and dialectically of a piece” (PG, 159).

The language of intertwining or contamination can suggest that, rather than being originary, the intertwining is of two pre-existing and originally separate things, and that the contamination is therefore a negative situation that longs nostalgically for an earlier situation of purity. In suggesting that contamination is but a temporary and secondary problem to be overcome, such thinking does not give enough weight to the fundamental

necessity of the “contamination,” to its productive aspect.

In this regard, the language of economy, which comes to emerge in “Violence and Metaphysics” proves useful. In an economy, there is a reduction to a symbolic valuation (for example currency) that opens the door to Baudrillardian hyperrealism,⁴⁶ but also, and more importantly for Derrida, to the possibility of exchange, “commerce,” or “discourse” between the interested parties. Such symbolic valuation and exchange enables, not just the passing on of information, but also the passing on of tradition (and hence the progress of science, including philosophy),⁴⁷ and even, as Derrida is at pains to show, the very possibility of discourse with the Other that characterizes Levinas’ ethics,⁴⁸ which themselves both presuppose and are presupposed by phenomenology.⁴⁹

Economy, then, refers to both the (productive) exchange between the two inter-contaminated poles and the (ontological? transcendental?) condition that necessitates and makes possible that exchange. But these two meanings are always interwoven, always “dialectically” intertwined. In his discussion of Levinas, for example, Derrida will show that Levinas fails to capture the radicality of phenomenology (both his own and Husserl’s) because he, too, like Husserl, fails to adequately account for the interconnection of both sides of economic debate. Derrida speaks of the “transcendental origin” that ties together the alterity characteristic of Levinasian ethics and the subjective constitution of Husserlian phenomenology as an economy which “will permit access to the other to be determined, in ethical freedom, as moral violence or nonviolence,”⁵⁰ only because it is both a pre-condition and the product of such an economic exchange: the economic “inter-contamination” is itself the product of such an economy, an originary economy that enables the Greek and the Jew to have productive exchange.⁵¹ The distinction between the two senses of economy, then, must be kept firm (for the sake of philosophical rigor), even as what it distinguishes can have no real difference. It is, like the distinction between the “parallels” of the transcendental and the empirical in Husserl, an unreal distinction which separates (via) nothing.

In Husserl, these strange distinctions can be held together only by the invocation of “life”⁵² as the basis of the lived experiences that make up the subject matter of phenomenology. This life is nothing other than a self-relationship that “is its own division and its own opposition to its other.”⁵³ Life here does not refer to “day to day life or biological science,” but to an “ultratranscendental concept of life” which “requires another name.”⁵⁴ This idea of that which “produces sameness as self-relation within self-difference,” which “produces sameness as the nonidentical,” and for which, in order to understand, “it was necessary to pass through the transcendental reduction” will come to take the name difference.⁵⁵

Differance first emerges in Derrida’s work as his name for that movement which comes closest to describing the paradoxical genesis or economy at the heart of subjectivity. In the sentence immediately following its introduction as a term in *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida states that the “movement of differance is not something that happens to a transcendental subject; it produces a subject,”⁵⁶ and does so via a “pure difference” that produces “sameness as the nonidentical,”⁵⁷ thereby constituting the living present, in its self-presence, as a trace (SP, 85). Since the trace is the relation of the living present with its ‘outside,’ the trace is always an “openness upon exteriority in general, upon the sphere of what is not ‘one’s own’” (SP, 86), and as such is not only

temporal but is “*from the outset, a ‘spacing’* ...space is ‘in’ time; it is time’s pure leaving-itself.”⁵⁸

Differance, then, stands in as the namesake of an originary supplementation,⁵⁹ necessitated by the nonidentity of the subject’s self-relationship, “which at one and the same time both fissures and retards presence, submitting it simultaneously to primordial division and delay.”⁶⁰ Such a fissured and retarded presence cannot be thought on the basis of consciousness (which is always consciousness as presence, as the living present) or non-consciousness. It must, rather, be described on the basis of a pre-subjective (but subject-constituting) “time” and “place,” an ultra-transcendental genetic movement that always holds in relation “an inside and an outside in general, an existent and a nonexistent in general, a constituting and a constituted in general.”⁶¹ Differance, in other words, is the very “originary dialectic” described in *The Problem of Genesis*, an (ultra-) transcendental counterpart of the notion of economy in “Violence and Metaphysics.”

ii. Hauntology and the Tension of difference

Like the notion of genesis itself, differance is essentially futural. The concept of primordial supplementation that is differance implies the non-plenitude of presence that Derrida calls, “in Husserl’s language, the nonfulfillment of intuition.”⁶² We recall that it is futurity that, for Husserl, is in its essence nonfulfilled intuition (even as it makes fulfillment possible). The temporal non-plenitude of presence is, in phenomenology, a futural temporality: it is deferral, a deferral which breaks up the very idea of the living present itself. It is the living present itself which, in genetic phenomenology, is deferred, and is so “*ad infinitum*.”⁶³

This deferral of the present by way of a futural temporality contains within itself an apparent duality that must be understood as the product of an originary economy. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida seeks to make sense of the notion of ‘life’ that is at the centre of phenomenology, and which was a starting point for his analysis of differance. For Derrida, life is always lived “in the upkeep, the conversation, the companionship” of ghosts, which is to say, within a “*politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations” that is characteristic of our finite existence,⁶⁴ because what affects the subject “is always a *revenant*,” which is to say that it “*begins by coming back*,”⁶⁵ and therefore phenomenology can be understood as hauntology, the “logic of haunting.”⁶⁶

Derrida invokes the notion of ghosts and haunting here for two opposed but intertwined reasons, reasons that result from the unique temporality of genesis, which “harbors within itself ... eschatology and teleology themselves.”⁶⁷ These two positions characterize an originary economy or dialectic at the heart of the temporality of genesis.

In one sense, then, phenomenology as hauntology supports the Husserlian position of constitution within horizons: the future is nothing more than the outgrowth of the past, and hence everything futural is, in essence, nothing more than a repetition of the past, “the past as absolute future,”⁶⁸ where “what seems to be out front, the future, comes back in advance: from the past, from the back.”⁶⁹

But Derrida is at pains to show another form of temporality as well,⁷⁰ one that does not unite past and future together in the present (the past-present and the future-

present), but rather one in which “time is out of joint.”⁷¹ In invoking “ghosts” as his trope of inheritance, Derrida is intending to call forth the personal element of inheritance, which makes inheritance a matter of justice, of responsibility.⁷² This seat of justice is located “within that which disjoins the living present,” that is, within the “*non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present.*”⁷³ This marks a shift in emphasis from Derrida’s earlier discussions of the non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present: in difference as discussed above, for example, that which divides the present from itself is a *what* (difference; also, *khora*, supplement, originary dialectic, etc.), whereas now this division is a *who*.⁷⁴ This turn to the “who” opens up the question of responsibility for Derrida, a responsibility that is also and always a response-ability, the ability to respond to the Other who has already called to us.⁷⁵ As response to the other, the question becomes that of arrival, and, as such, a question of the future, of “the regard to what will come in the future-to-come [*l’à-venir*].”⁷⁶ In the subtle change from *l’avenir* [future] to *l’à-venir* [future-to-come], Derrida highlights the infinitive form of the future,⁷⁷ but also its personal element of address to [à] another.⁷⁸ By opening up this infinitive and intersubjective element, Derrida reconceives of futural temporality itself along more Levinasian lines: “Turned toward the future, going toward it, it also comes from it, it proceeds *from* [*proviient de*] the future.”⁷⁹ In this, Derrida has made explicit the double-necessity, the originary dialectic, of difference: first, the future as absolute past, as growing out of the past: teleology; second, the future as relation to the address of the other, as coming from the future: eschatology.⁸⁰

iii. The Messianic

These two senses of the future are captured most succinctly in Derrida’s notion of the messianic, which is distinguished into two moments: messianicity⁸¹ and messianism. Via the general notion of the messianic, Derrida seeks to hold these two accounts together in tension, without resolving either into the other.⁸² It is Derrida’s express intention, in making this distinction, to distinguish a “structure of experience” from “a religion,”⁸³ in a way similar, I will argue, to the way in which economy refers to both a transcendental condition of being “dialectically of a piece,” as well as the productive exchange between those dialectical poles in historical and empirical conditions. In the messianic, the structure of experience is deemed messianicity, and it accords with the eschatological notion of futurity discussed above, while messianism is meant to refer to what is produced in particular historical and empirical conditions via the transcendental condition,⁸⁴ and refers to the teleological account discussed above.

The beginnings of this can be seen in the “predicates” that Derrida ascribes to messianicity: “annunciation of an unpredictable future, relation to the other, affirmation, promise, revolution, justice.”⁸⁵ These predicates are fleshed out in *Specters of Marx* in passages such as the following:

Ascesis strips the messianic hope [i.e., messianicity] of all biblical forms, and even all determinable figures of the wait or expectation; it thus denudes itself in view of responding to that which must be absolute hospitality, the ‘yes’ to the *arrivant(e)*, the ‘come’ to the future that cannot be anticipated . . . Open, waiting for the event *as* justice, this hospitality is absolute only if its [sic] keeps watch over its own universality.⁸⁶

Fortuitously, the quotation begins with a word that harkens back to the phenomenological heritage that Derrida has inherited, and which “haunts” his exploration of the messianic.⁸⁷ This ascesis is the rigorous self-discipline of the phenomenologist employing the reduction.⁸⁸ The lack of content in messianicity, then, is not, contrary to some commentators,⁸⁹ the result of a Kantian quest for formal universality,⁹⁰ but is the result of the *epokhē* which Derrida holds to be “essential” to messianicity and to “the messianic in general, as thinking of the other and of the event to come.”⁹¹ If messianicity is, then, to a certain extent structural or formal,⁹² this is only as it relates to a futurity (event to come) that is intersubjective (thinking of the other), that is, a futurity that puts it in relation with the other who calls me. This is what makes messianicity responsible/ response-able (“it thus denudes itself in view of *responding*”; emphasis added) to the Other who must come, who will come, and who must be treated with hospitality.⁹³ But this Other, of course, must come as an “event,” and not as the outgrowth of the past into a future (present). This aspect of messianicity is marked by the term “waiting” above. A non-teleological futurity that waits, open, for the arrival of the Other: what is this but eschatology?⁹⁴

But this, of course, is only one side of the messianic. On the other side, we have the concrete histories of the determinate messianisms. While Derrida says that one may see messianicity as “the condition of the religions of the Book,” one may also, and equally, consider the Abrahamic messianisms as “the only events on the basis of which we approach and first of all name the messianic in general.”⁹⁵ Messianisms, then, are the “other ghost which we cannot and ought not do without” (Ibid.). They would seem to be the historical “material” of our horizons, the very horizontality that makes experience possible. As such, they operate within the teleological conception of futurity, that conception which makes the past into an “absolute future.”

Messianisms, then, provide concretion,⁹⁶ and a certain urgency, to the open waiting of messianicity. While messianicity awaits the future to-come, messianisms keep us connected with the past (present), and hence give weight to the future (as future present): what comes in the future is urgently important, because, soon, imminently in fact, the future will be the present, that is, will be *my* living present, *our* experience. But, as the living present, it is always already interrupted by the very temporality of that living present itself, the difference-ial temporality of phenomenological genesis that Derrida has elsewhere shown to be characteristic of “life” in its phenomenological sense. This temporality interrupts the living present even as it establishes the living present as both “life” and the “present.” In trying to tie both of these movements (the transcendental and the empirical) together, the messianic in general is characterized as “urgency, imminence but, irreducible paradox, a waiting without horizon of expectation,”⁹⁷ which is to say that it is an “historical opening to the future.”⁹⁸ As historical (messianism), the messianic must be, not only rooted in the past, but also essentially empirical; but as opening to the future (messianicity), the messianic must be transcendental, essential, ideal, that is, philosophical. It is the task of the messianic (in general) to hold together these two poles, without collapsing either into the other. This is the paradoxical condition of the messianic. It is also the doubly-necessary condition of difference, and the originally dialectical character of phenomenological temporality.

III. A Genuinely Phenomenological Intentionality

Earlier, we noted the essential connection between a theory of time as futural and an account of intentionality. In this regard, the two distinct accounts of futurity at work in phenomenology (teleological and eschatological) accord with two distinct accounts of intentionality at work in phenomenology (idealist and naïve realist, or transcendental and empirical).⁹⁹ Derrida's conception of a futurity of double-necessity would suggest, then, that intentionality must maintain both the subjective constitution of the world and the ontological constitution of the subject by the world. As Derrida put it in *The Problem of Genesis*, it is a matter of realizing that our "primitive existence" in the world cannot be radically distinguished from the genesis of "originary sense,"¹⁰⁰ because of the collusion of constituted and constituting within the very life of the phenomenological subject.¹⁰¹

In this, Derrida's account of phenomenological intentionality echoes that of Fink, that great disciple of Husserl, who was compelled to write "The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism" because too many philosophers in his day were conflating phenomenology with neo-Kantianism (that is with the 'idealism' described above). For Fink, the key problem of phenomenology is the "question concerning the origin of the world."¹⁰² By investigating the "origin of the world," phenomenology is able to get beneath "dogmatic metaphysics" and its ontological and "naïve" conception of the world, and critical (neo-Kantian) philosophy's concern with "the *meaning* of beings."¹⁰³ Phenomenology, in its essence, seeks to unite elements of both critical philosophy (that is its transcendental character) and metaphysics (that is its concern for the origin of the world), without falling into the sharp divorce between the world and the non-world, or between this world and another world, that is the downfall of both.

For Fink, the reduction constitutes a "movement" of knowledge that enables both the transcending and the retention of the world within the absolute of transcendental subjectivity.¹⁰⁴ By this movement, phenomenology seeks to show that the world is not "founded" on a distinct "foundational" sphere (for example the God or Being of speculative metaphysics), but rather that there is a necessary correlation between founded and foundational, between constituted and constituting. In phenomenological intentionality, the world is both transcended and yet still present; that is, the world is simultaneously constituted and constituting, by reference to its inclusion in the absolute that constitutes it, an inclusion that is pre-phenomenological, that is, before the reduction.¹⁰⁵

The reduction, therefore, reveals the proper theme of phenomenological philosophy: the transcendental constitution of the origin of the world within transcendent *life*.¹⁰⁶ Via the "habitualities and potentialities of transcendental life," we see that transcendental life is "communalized in the process of constitution," and therefore that transcendental subjectivity is essentially intersubjective.¹⁰⁷

In its essence, therefore, phenomenology seeks to challenge the sharp divide between the world and the non-world, in part by showing that the world is both transcendental and immanent to the absolute that constitutes it, and therefore that the world is both constituted and constituting. This is the central meaning of intentionality, itself the great breakthrough of Husserlian phenomenology. By way of the reduction, which is the method and way of knowing that is "the most essential feature of phenomenology's unique character,"¹⁰⁸ phenomenology exposes itself as a movement

that both transcends the world and simultaneously acknowledges the givenness of the world, and hence waits for the sensuousness of that givenness. By so doing, the reduction reveals a transcendental subjectivity that is simultaneously monadic and intersubjective or communal. And all of these apparent contradictions take place within the sphere of “life.”

But “life,” in its phenomenological sense as a “strange unity” of “two parallels” that are simultaneously different but yet united, and which is, therefore, united while being “its own division and its own opposition to its other,”¹⁰⁹ is nothing but another name for differance.¹¹⁰ In other words, the very double-necessities that characterized Derrida’s understanding of phenomenological temporality—the simultaneous necessity of immanence to experience and transcendence of experience, of striving forward in activity while also awaiting in passivity, the necessary intersubjectivity of the subject—also characterize phenomenology itself in its most basic methodologies: intentionality and the reduction. Derrida’s account of differance and the messianic, then, provide not only an account of phenomenological temporality, but of phenomenological intentionality, indeed, of phenomenology itself.

IV. The Future of Phenomenology

But, in providing an account of phenomenology, Derrida does much more than merely critique Husserl’s understanding of his own project. In bringing to the fore the double-movement (or double-necessity) of phenomenological genesis and its centrality to phenomenology, Derrida not only elucidates the phenomenological project more clearly, but he also poses some problems that must be answered before phenomenology can move forward on solid ground. In this last section, I will try to elucidate some of these problems, not in the hope of solving them (a task that is far too vast for a paper of this type), but so as to try to clearly lay out the questions that future research in phenomenology must answer.

To begin with, by showing that the temporality of the living present of the phenomenological subject entails that the subject’s self-relationship is not that of pure identity but is rather an identity-in-difference, Derrida brings to the fore the question of mediation and its centrality to the heart of the phenomenological method itself. For anything to appear to this subject, then, it must find a way of present-ing itself in spite of, and by way of, the unique temporality of genesis that both makes possible and interrupts the living present. The temporality characteristic of phenomenology’s futural orientation is able to function only by way of an originary supplementation, differance, which is “the ‘in the place of’ (*für etwas*) structure which belongs to every sign in general.”¹¹¹ At the root of the absolute consciousness of the phenomenological subject is the necessity of the structure of the sign, that is, of mediation, and therefore every appearing-to-the-subject, every “phenomenon supposes originary contamination by the sign.”¹¹² But the sign only works within an arbitrary system of value and originary supplementation,¹¹³ in which signs are infinitely repeatable (or iterable, in Derrida’s terminology).¹¹⁴

This explanation of the deferral of the living present “*ad infinitum*”¹¹⁵ echoes the formal infinity of Husserl’s account of ideality as omnitemporality,¹¹⁶ and so raises the question of the epistemology that underlies phenomenology. If the genetic temporality at the heart of phenomenology delays presence *ad infinitum*, and so necessitates the

structure of supplementation, the sign, and mediation more generally, then how can phenomenology continue to take as its core epistemological principle the “principle of principles”: that “*every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak, in its ‘personal’ authority) offered to us in ‘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?*”¹¹⁷ The necessity of supplementation at the heart of lived experience problematizes the notion of intuition,¹¹⁸ and the relatively simplistic association it seems to make between intuition and self-givenness. If our intuition is structured by the “in-the-place-of” structure of supplementation, then must not semiotics (or language, broadly construed) play an essential role in phenomenological epistemologies, and even, perhaps, in the notion of givenness itself?¹¹⁹ Is a phenomenological epistemology not then forced to make sense of the importance given to the sign, not just by Derrida, but also by Husserl (for example in “Origin of Geometry”), and of the deferral of ideality, not just via the sign, but also via the invocation of the Idea in the Kantian sense (that is in the Vienna lecture and the *Crisis*)?¹²⁰

But there is a second notion of infinity also at work in the ‘infinite’ deferral of phenomenological temporality highlighted by Derrida. The formal infinity discussed above bears a certain relationship to death (as opposed to the “life” of the living present, the life that is another name for differance)¹²¹ in that ideal objects must be able to function in the absence of the ego thinking those objects, of any ego thinking those objects. It is surviving the death of the subject that language makes possible, and hence opens the possibility of ideality.¹²² But given this possibility, sense—which cannot be separated from ideality—must also bear some relation to the death of the subject; any sense bestowed on the world must function apart from the ego that so bestows that sense. It must function, at least in part, ideally. As such, sense goes beyond merely the relationship between the ego and the object—it goes also, simultaneously, to the other (person), the other “absolute origin and zero point of the world,”¹²³ the other who shares in the project of transcendental constitution by sharing in ideality.

This second sense of infinity, then, highlights the differential aspect of differance: differance opens the distance between self and Other. But differance also, via language (and the formal infinity), entails the possibility of crossing that distance. And the relation to the Other is not only a differentiating relationship, it is also a deferring relationship: the relationship to the Other is, for Levinas, the relationship to the future (the impossibility of fulfillment, the ceaseless striving, etc.). Differance, therefore, not only opens the double-necessity that the Other must appear in intuitive presence while simultaneously exceeding that intuitive presence, but it also entails the necessarily intersubjective, and hence historical and political, influences on the formation of sense. That is, if the genetic temporality at the heart of phenomenology has a necessarily intersubjective component, then searching for the genesis of sense only within the subject itself will necessarily prove inadequate. There are essential intersubjective—and therefore ethical and political—concerns that shape the very constitution of sense itself, and phenomenology cannot therefore so easily “bracket” these seemingly “empirical” or historical concerns as matters of the natural attitude that must be reduced in order to yield truly transcendental insights. Rather, as both Derrida and the later Husserl have shown, the truly transcendental insights must be only quasi-transcendental, maintaining within themselves complex economic relationships to empirical concerns.¹²⁴ But how can one take such concerns seriously and still employ the phenomenological reduction? If

completing the reduction is indeed impossible,¹²⁵ how can we conceive of even a partial reduction that will help us yield truly (quasi-) transcendental insights? If political and historical factors must remain within the scope of phenomenological investigation, what must properly be bracketed out from those investigations? How, exactly, is phenomenology to deal with historical and political concerns? And is there some room for hermeneutics and presuppositions within transcendental phenomenology?

Conclusion

Derrida seems to suggest that phenomenology can be truly transcendental only by refusing to cease being empirical.¹²⁶ While this seems to accord with a genuinely Husserlian understanding of intentionality (such as that put forward by Fink), it nevertheless raises several problems that must be explored before phenomenology can be considered to be on a firm foundation: first, a genuinely phenomenological understanding of language must be developed that takes account of the temporality of genesis that establishes the living present, but only at the expense of placing supplementation at the heart of the subject; secondly, the “principle of principles” can remain the foundation of a phenomenological epistemology only if the issue of givenness is revisited in light of the necessity of supplementation in subjective intuition; third, given that the living present is not only deferred temporally but is differed intersubjectively, phenomenology must be able to understand political and ethical concerns as central to any understanding of the self-givenness and self-constitution of the subject; and fourth, while the reduction remains essential for a transcendental understanding of phenomenology, it must be reconceived so as to take adequate account of the fact that empirical concerns are central to the subject. Understanding Derrida’s work from within a phenomenological framework provides (at least) these four broad problematics as future phenomenological concerns, if phenomenology hopes to have a future as a serious philosophical discipline.

It may be objected, of course, that one need not employ Derrida to get such a critique. Surely ‘existential’ phenomenology makes a similar critique of Husserl: Merleau-Ponty, for example, clearly critiques Husserl’s account of the reduction (our 4th point, above), and Heidegger seems to make political and ethical concerns central to any understanding of the self-givenness and self-constitution of the subject (as recommended by our 3rd point above). Therefore, the critique we are applying to Derrida seems to apply, not to the future of phenomenological research, but rather to its past.

However, there remains a distinct difference between what Derrida’s work suggests is necessary if phenomenology is to continue, and what is offered by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty.¹²⁷ This difference is encapsulated by the necessity of placing supplementation at the heart of the phenomenological subject:¹²⁸ that is, it is not clear that Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty sufficiently challenge the self-presence of the phenomenological subject from an epistemological perspective. While both seem to challenge the ontological status of the subject,¹²⁹ and move phenomenology in new directions on that ground, neither, it seems to Derrida, use this breakthrough to challenge the epistemological foundations of the phenomenological method.¹³⁰ The question that remains to be answered is whether “existential” phenomenology—as practiced variously by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others—has done enough in its “ontological” critique to accommodate such an epistemological move (suggesting that they were unaware of the far-reaching nature of their own critique) or whether their “ontological” critique was

insufficiently critical, and hence could not lead to the epistemological critique that Derrida deems necessary (suggesting, perhaps, that their critique of Husserl was not as radical as they may have hoped).¹³¹

Derrida's work suggests, then, that not only must phenomenology deal with the four broad problematics outlined above, but it must deal with all of them in an interconnected manner. This is to say that future phenomenological research must begin by accounting for the necessary supplementation at the heart of the phenomenological subject before it can advance a sufficiently phenomenological account of givenness, transcendence, or the reduction. While such a project seems possible—is at least plausible—to what extent it will still be recognized as phenomenology remains an open question. The work of Jean-Luc Marion, for example, seems to be such an attempt to account for that necessary supplementation (via the notion of the “interlocuted subject”) in a way that also grounds a new account of givenness, transcendence and the reduction. However, his work is criticized by Janicaud as emblematic of a “swerve” away from phenomenology toward something else (in Janicaud's estimation, theology).¹³² If what I am arguing for in this paper is true and Janicaud is also correct, it seems that phenomenology is a self-defeating enterprise: the rigorous pursuit of its goals according to its own methods would lead to a move away from those very goals and methods toward some other discipline. To re-phrase the problem in more standard Derridean language: the end of phenomenology would be phenomenology's end.¹³³ In order to avoid this problem, future phenomenological research must refine its self-understanding so as to prove either Derrida or Janicaud wrong. If it cannot do so, the future of phenomenology may prove to be shorter than it had imagined.

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Abbreviations of Works by Derrida

- NM with Richard Beardsworth. “Nietzsche and the Machine,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 7 (1994): 7-66.
- OG *Of Grammatology*. Translated by G. Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- PG *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*. Translated by Marian Hobson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003
- SP *Speech and Phenomena*. Translated by David B. Alison. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
- SM *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. New York and London: Routledge, 1994.

VM “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas.” In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978; 79-153.

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1. Contrast with Edmund Husserl, *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis*. Aus Vorlesungs- und Forschungsmanuskripten 1918-1926, Husserliana Volume XI. ed. M. Fleischer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 126. Hereafter cited in text as Hua XI. Direct quotations from this text are taken from Anthony J. Steinbock’s translation, *Analyses concerning Active and Passive Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic* (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic, 2001). unless otherwise noted.
 2. For more on the distinction between the three levels of constituting consciousness, and especially that between internal time-consciousness and passive synthesis, contrast with Neal DeRoo, “Revisiting the Zahavi – Brough/Sokolowski Debate,” *Husserl Studies* [forthcoming].
 3. Contrast with Hua XI, pp. 79-80.
 4. Ibid, pp. 79-80. Without this distinction, fulfillment would seem to require a ‘third’ aspect in the act of fulfillment (in addition to the consciousness that must be fulfilled and the consciousness that fulfills), namely a synthesizing consciousness that ties together the other two consciousnesses. Though this 3-part view is the one put forward by Husserl in the *Logical Investigations*, he eventually realizes that it leads to a problem of infinite regress, and hence abandons it in the *Bernau Manuscripts*, in large part because of his discovery of a positive account of protention; contrast with Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte über das Zeitbewusstsein (1917/1918)*. Husserliana Volume XXXIII. ed. R. Bernet and D. Lohmar (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic, 2001).
 5. Contrast with Hua X, pp. 378-379.
 6. Contrast with Ms. L I 15, 24a-b; as translated in Lanei Rodemeyer, “Developments in the Theory of Time-Consciousness: An Analysis of Protention” in *The New Husserl: A Critical Reader* edited by Donn Welton (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 125-154; 131.
 7. Hua XI, pp. 86.
 8. This is Fink’s (slight) modification of Husserl-Archiv L I 15, 35a, taken from Eugen-Fink-Archiv B- II 307, as translated in Ronald Bruzina, “The Revision of the Bernau Time-Consciousness Manuscripts: Status Questionis—Freiburg, 1928-30.” *Alter* 1 [1993], 357-383; 369 and 382n.51.
 9. Hua XI, pp. 119.
 10. This is reminiscent of Husserl’s attempts to distinguish indication from expression in the early stages of the *Logical Investigations*.
 11. Here, I must direct the reader to Fink’s seminal essay, “The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism,” in Elveton (ed.), *The Phenomenology of Husserl* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 73-147, as well as to the relation between that essay and Derrida’s reception of Husserl that is laid out in Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002). We will return to this issue later in this paper.
 12. Hua XI, p. 125.

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13. Contrast with: Emmanuel Levinas, "The Ruin of Representation" [1959] in *Discovering Existence with Husserl* trans. Richard A. Cohen and Michael B. Smith (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 111-121; and *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969); hereafter cited as RR and TI, respectively. For more on the idea of Levinas' reversal of *Sinngebung*, cf. John Drabinski, *Sensibility and Singularity: The Problem of Phenomenology in Levinas* (Albany: State University of New York, 2001).
14. Contrast with RR, 130. and Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 183. The latter text is hereafter cited in text as OB.
15. Levinas, "The Work of Edmund Husserl" (1940) in *Discovering Existence with Husserl*, trans. Richard A. Cohen and Michael B. Smith (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 47-87; 59 (translation modified).
16. Contrast with Husserl, *Ideen zu einer Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Drittes Buch. Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution* Husserliana Volume IV. ed. W. Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 336; hereafter cited as Hua IV. For Levinas' take on this, cf. Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1988), 32.
17. (TI, 28) This is a Levinasian formulation of intentionality. Derrida critiques Levinas in "Violence and Metaphysics" for not giving sufficient credit to the role that Husserlian phenomenology plays in his own work (contrast with VM, 123). For the matter at hand, one could put the problem this way: for Levinas, intentionality is *not* the subject's bestowing meaning on the world but is *rather* the subject's being in relation, while, for Derrida, intentionality is about *both* the subject's bestowing meaning and its being in relation. While Levinas will later adopt a more Derridean position on this, his focus still remains on the primordially of relation before sense bestowal.
18. Contrast with Levinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 90; hereafter cited in text as TO.
19. Levinas first begins to describe the relation with alterity with language of the "trace" in 1963's "A Trace of the Other," trans. Alphonso Lingis in Taylor (ed.), *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 345-359; hereafter cited as TA. Notably, this essay is often seen as the decisive turning point in Levinas' thought between the early *Totality and Infinity* and the later *Otherwise than Being*, a turn that some would like to attribute to the influence of Derrida (and especially "Violence and Metaphysics") on Levinas' work. For an account of why I think there is, in fact, no significant turn in Levinas, cf. my "Re-Constituting Phenomenology: Continuity in Levinas' Account of Time and Ethics," *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 49 [2010], 1-22.
20. Contrast with Lacoste, "Phenomenality of Anticipation," 15.
21. Hua XI, p. 126.
22. PG, p. xxi.
23. Ibid, p. xxi.
24. The notion of the subject being "enveloped on all sides" by that which is other than it is reminiscent of Levinas' exploration of enjoyment in *Totality and Infinity*.
25. PG, p. xxvi.
26. PG, p. xxv.

27. Contrast with *Ideen zu einer Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch. Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* Husserliana Volume III. ed. W. Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), section 24; translated by F. Kersten as *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Book I: *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983). Hereafter cited as Hua III.

28. For example, in section 81 of *Ideas I*, when Husserl acknowledges that the analyses of *Ideas I*, the absolute that is discovered there, “is, in truth, not what is ultimate,” and highlights the need for a later examination of internal time-consciousness to access “what is ultimately and truly absolute” (in a footnote [n.26 in Kersten’s English translation], Husserl claims that this is achieved and set out in lectures delivered in Göttingen in 1905, lectures that are part of the basis for Husserl, *Zur*

Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893-1917) Husserliana Volume X. ed. R. Boehm (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966); trans. John Barnett Brough as *On the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic, 1991). Hereafter cited as Hua X. Unfortunately for Husserl, Derrida will demonstrate in *The Problem of Genesis* that the sentence which follows the above quotes does not hold true. In that sentence, Husserl claims:

“Fortunately, we can leave out of account the enigma of consciousness of time in our preliminary analyses without endangering their rigor” Hua III. p. 163.

29. In *The Problem of Genesis*, Derrida shows this to be the case with Husserl’s entire discourse on the “infinite task” of philosophy, beginning already in *Ideas I*, and continuing through the *Cartesian Meditations* up to the Vienna Lecture, the *Crisis*, and the *Origin of Geometry*. In the introduction to his French translation of the latter, Derrida discusses this in more detail.

30. Indeed, this is why Fink was compelled to write “The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism,” so as to distinguish Husserlian phenomenology from new-Kantian critical philosophy, a distinction that many commentators of the time were not making sufficiently.

31. PG. p. 48.

32. Similarly, though the search for essences is confined to the sphere of the already constituted, and hence cannot accurately take account of genesis, Derrida still claims that the “absolute beginning of all philosophy must be essentialist.” PG, p. 138.

33. Michael R. Kelly deals with the relationship between phenomenology and ontology arising from phenomenological accounts of temporality, though as it pertains to the work of Merleau-Ponty, rather than to Derrida, in “The Subject as Time: Merleau-Ponty’s Transition from Husserlian Phenomenology to Ontology” (delivered September 2008 at Ryerson University, Toronto, ON), and in “*L’écart: Merleau-Ponty’s Separation from Husserl; or, Absolute Time Constituting Consciousness*,” in Semonovitch and DeRoo (eds.), *Merleau-Ponty at the Limits of Art, Religion, and Perception* (London: Continuum, 2010), 95-119.

34. PG, p. 159.

35. PG, p. 134.

36. Ibid, p. 134.

37. PG, p. 106. One must note the Levinasian character of this move at this juncture; cf.

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- his analysis of the concrete on TI, 28, discussed above.
38. PG, p. 128.
39. PG, p. xl. This phrasing of the problem of genesis, and the claim that such passage occurs originarily, that is, that the originary situation of the phenomenological subject is one that already links (without uniting) primitive existence and originary sense, helps explain the otherwise enigmatic statement from the *Introduction to Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry'*: “The Absolute is passage.”
40. Here, as I will continue to do throughout, I change Hobson’s translation of “antéprédicative” from antepredicative to prepredicative, in order to maintain continuity with our earlier discussions of Husserl and prepredicative experience. I will no longer mark this modification of the translation throughout the text: it will have occurred every time one reads “prepredicative” in a direct quotation from *The Problem of Genesis*.
41. PG, p. xxvi.
42. PG, p. xv.
43. Ibid. p. xv.
44. PG, p. xl.
45. Contrast with Jacques Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret* eds. Giacomo Donis and David Webb, trans. Giacomo Donis (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 84: “The other is in me before me: . . . there is no ‘I’ that ethically makes room for the other, but rather an ‘I’ that is structured by the alterity within it.”
46. Contrast with Jean Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra,” in *Simulacra and Simulations* trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1-42.
47. Contrast with Husserl, “Origin of Geometry.”
48. Contrast with, in just one of many possible examples, VM, 151, where Derrida uses economic language of “circulation” to describe the relationship between Levinasian ethics, philosophical discourse, and the sameness of Being.
49. VM. p. 121-122.
50. VM. p. 128-129.
51. Contrast with VM. p. 152-153.
52. SP. p. 14.
53. SP. p. 14-15.
54. SP. p. 15.
55. SP, p. 82. Contrast with VM. p. 129.
56. SP. p. 82.
57. Ibid. p. 82.
58. Ibid. p. 82. Derrida’s emphasis. This connecting of space and time is the fundamental premise of differance itself. Differance, as a neologism, is meant to invoke simultaneously two senses of the French *différence*: “deferring as delay and differing as the active work of difference” SP. p. 88.
59. A point Derrida makes at great length in *Of Grammatology*; especially contrast with OG. p. 141- 164.
60. Derrida’s emphasis, SP. p. 88.
61. SP. p. 86.
62. SP. p. 88.
63. SP. p. 99.
64. SM, p. xviii-xix.

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65. SM, p. 11.
66. SM. p. 10.
67. Ibid. p. 10. These two figures of futurity—eschatology and teleology—invoke, for us, Levinas and Husserl, respectively; cf. the preface to *Totality and Infinity*, and the “Origin of Geometry” or the Vienna lecture, respectively.
68. SM. p. 17.
69. SM. p. 10.
70. SM. p. 90.
71. Hamlet I, v. ; Contrast also with SM. p. 1.
72. SM. p. xix.
73. Derrida’s emphasis Ibid. p. xix.
74. SM. p. 169. Contrast also with Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl*. p. 211-212.
75. This “always-already called to us” is why the ghost is a *revenant* (one who comes back; cf. translator’s note, SM, 177n.1) who “begins by coming back,” as cited above. One should note here already the connection between this and the diachronic and an-archic time of Levinas; cf., e.g., Levinas, “Diachrony and Representation,” in *Time and the Other [and additional essays]* trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 97-120.
76. SM, p. xix.
77. I follow Kamuf’s translation of *l’à-venir* as future-to-come; cf. translator’s note, SM 177n.5.
78. Contrast with Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).
79. Ibid.
80. For the Levinasian definition of eschatology, contrast with TA. p. 349. Briefly, the use of eschatology to denote the being-for-beyond-my-death is my justification for its use of this second sense of futurity in Derrida, that which must “carry beyond *present* life, beyond life as *my* life or *our* life. *In general*” (SM. p. xx.) Though Derrida himself will seem, at times, to equate eschatology with teleology, I would suggest that this equation stems from a lack of properly understanding the relationship between eschatology and phenomenological futurity. Whether this lack is Derrida’s or theology’s is a question that must be temporarily suspended.
81. It must be noted that, in *Specters of Marx*, Derrida does not always rigorously distinguish between the messianic and messianicity. It seems that, as time goes on (SM is the first book in which Derrida employs the term “messianic” in any kind of systematic way), Derrida begins more coherently to distinguish between messianicity and the messianic (cf. for example, “Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of ‘Religion’ within the Bounds of Reason Alone”), however, one can also not ignore certain exigencies of language: messianicity does not lend itself easily to an adjectival form other than messianic (for example “a messianic structure of experience” could be equivalent to “the structure of experience known as messianicity”). Hence, one must try to distinguish between the messianic (as umbrella term) and messianic (as the adjectival form of messianicity).
82. This, precisely, is a key problematic of the fifth chapter of *Specters of Marx*: “How to relate, but also how to dissociate the two messianic spaces we are talking about here under the same name?” SM. p. 167.
83. SM. p. 168.
84. Contrast with SM. p. 167.

85. NM. p. 33.

86. SM. p. 168.

87. This heritage is also named in the title of the fifth chapter of *Specters of Marx*: “Apparition of the Inapparent: The Phenomenological ‘Conjuring Trick.’”

88. This claim is bolstered by the Stoic origin of both asceticism and the *epokhē* that is a main aspect of the phenomenological reduction. I wish to thank an anonymous referee from *Derrida Today* for providing me with this further connection.

89. For example, Kevin Hart, “Without,” in Zlomislic and DeRoo (eds.), *The Cross and Khôra: Deconstruction and Christianity in the work of John D. Caputo* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 80–108; and James K.A. Smith, “Re-Kanting Postmodernism?: Derrida’s Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,” *Faith and Philosophy* 17:4 [October 2000], 558–571.

90. One ought not automatically equate Derrida’s use of the language of universality with that of Kant. Indeed, one would have to ask whether the universality of the “structure of experience,” in its relation to hospitality, is universal in the sense of Husserlian ideality, or whether it is not, in fact, the “determinate” messianisms that equate to the universality of ideality, whereas the universality of hospitality will relate, rather, to a new, Derridean notion of universality, the “universalizable culture of singularities” (FK, 56). This distinction in universality maps onto two distinct notions of infinity at work in the “infinite” deferral of differance, and therefore arises from Derrida’s attempt to relate—while dissociating—messianicity and messianisms under the “same name” of the messianic

91. SM. p. 59. Though it also seeks to revise our understanding of the reduction, as indicated in PG, xxxix and our discussion of it in Section II.B above. We will discuss this further in Section IV, below.

92. Ibid, p. 59.

93Cf. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, and Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to Respond* trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

94Cf. Levinas’ description of futurity as “an awaiting without something being awaited”; Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, trans. Bettina Bergo; edited and annotated by Jacques Rolland (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, 115).

95. SM. p. 168. I am disagreeing here with James K.A. Smith, who would want to read the tension between the structure and history of experience in Derrida as a tension between Heideggerian and Levinasian influences, respectively. Rather, I read the tension as one between Levinasian and Husserlian influences, respectively, for reasons that will be explored further below. For Smith’s argument, cf. James K.A. Smith, *Jacques Derrida: Live Theory* (New York and London: Continuum, 2005).

96. In a sense that echoes—though is not, perhaps, identical with—Levinas’ invocation of the concrete, quoted above.

97. SM. p. 168.

98. SM. p. 167.

99On the first account, intentionality is a matter of subjectively constituting a world, and it runs the risk of reducing the reality of the world merely to subjective concerns. On the second account, intentionality is a matter of ontological constitution, of the subject’s being-made a certain way by what is “really there,” and it runs the risk of reducing subjects to mere things in the world.

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100. Contrast with PG. p. xl and 128.
101. A point made by Derrida also in “The Ends of Man,” where he discusses the necessarily empirical influences on supposedly “universal” philosophy. Derrida brings this to light in that essay by way of the double-movement at work in the word “end,” which can mean both limit/finitude and *telos*. This fundamental duality is captured, for Derrida, in the intersubjective community, the “we,” which has both empirical and transcendental roots: “The *we* is the unity of absolute knowledge and anthropology, of God and man, of onto-theo-teleology and humanism”; cf. Derrida, “The Ends of Man,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 109-136; 121.
102. PCC. p. 96.
103. Ibid. p. 96.
104. PCC. p. 99.
105. PCC. p. 100.
106. PCC. p. 99.
107. Contrast with Fink and Husserl, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation: The Idea of a Transcendental Theory of Method* translated by Ronald Bruzina (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); 10.
108. PCC, p. 99.
109. SP. p. 14-15.
110. Contrast with SP. p. 82.
111. SP. p. 88.
112. VM. p. 129.
113. Contrast with Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* trans. Roy Harris (Chicago: Open Court, 1983), and Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).
- 114Cf. Derrida, *Limited Inc*, ed. Gerald Graff, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988).
115. Contrast with SP. p. 99.
- 116Cf. Husserl, “Origin of Geometry,” in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 353-378.
117. Original emphasis Hua III. p. 43-4.
- 118In this regard, it is perhaps telling that Levinas’ dissertation was on the *Theory of Intuition in Husserl’s Phenomenology*.
- 119Jean-Luc Marion’s trilogy is but the most famous example of attempts to phenomenologically reconfigure phenomenological givenness; cf. Marion, *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger, and Phenomenology* trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998); *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness* trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); and *In Excess: Studies in Saturated Phenomena* trans. Robyn Horner and Vincent Berrand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002).
- 120One place such a phenomenological epistemology might begin, in order to try to make sense of these issues, might be Derrida’s enigmatic phrase: “[Sense] does not await truth as expecting it; it only precedes truth as its anticipation” (SP, 98). Such a phrase does not cohere easily with traditional epistemologies.
121. Contrast with SP. p. 14-15 and 82.

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122. Contrast with SP. p. 92-97.
123. VM. p. 124.
124. Contrast with Husserl's notion of the "crisis," in Hua VI and in the Vienna Lecture (delivered May 10, 1935), translated by Quentin Lauer as "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man," and published in Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), 149-192.
125. Contrast with Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), xiv; and *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 178.
126. Again, a point that is central to Husserl's notion of "crisis."
127. Whether or not the distinction that I suggest between Derrida and Merleau-Ponty on this score is accurate would seem, to me, to be one potentially fruitful avenue of further phenomenological research, especially given the more 'empirical' nature of some of Merleau-Ponty's work (e.g., the *Phenomenology of Perception*).
128. For that matter, this would also seem to be the main point distinguishing Derrida from Levinas: while both talk of the necessity of understanding the Other as primordial to the self, Derrida does more to discuss how the subject is able to 'cross' the space (e.g., via linguistic mediation) that is necessarily within itself by the invocation by the Other, while Levinas, perhaps, is more in favour of "pure" difference. While I'm not entirely convinced that the distinction is as sharp as I make it here, this would be another potential avenue of future phenomenological research.
129. And on this I can only refer again to the work of Michael R. Kelly that suggests Merleau-Ponty moves from transcendental phenomenology toward ontology; cf. Kelly, "L'écart".
130. I have in mind here Derrida's critique of phenomenological "intuitionism" in *On Touching—Jean Luc Nancy* trans. Christine Irizarry (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). A sustained attempt to support this critique of Derrida as it applies to Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger would require more room than is available here.
131. This would be the position of Levinas, at least in regards to Heidegger. Whether it would extend also to Merleau-Ponty remains to be seen.
132. Contrast with Dominique Janicaud, "The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology," trans. Bernard G. Prusak, in Janicaud, et. al., *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn"* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 16-103.
133. Contrast with Derrida, "Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 109-136.