

3 Husserl's motivation and method for phenomenological 4 reconstruction

5 Matt Bower

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8 **Abstract** In this paper I present an account of Husserl's approach to the phe-
9 nomenological reconstruction of consciousness's immemorial past, a problem, I
10 suggest, that is quite pertinent for defenders of Lockean psychological continuity
11 views of personal identity. To begin, I sketch the background of the problem facing
12 the very project of a genetic phenomenology, within which the reconstructive
13 analysis is situated. While the young Husserl took genetic matters to be irrelevant to
14 the main task of phenomenology, he would later come to see their importance and,
15 indeed, centrality as the precursor and subsoil for the rationality of consciousness. I
16 then argue that there is a close connection between reconstruction and genetic
17 phenomenology, such that reconstruction is a necessary component of the program
18 of genetic phenomenology, and I set out Husserl's argument that compels one to
19 enter into reconstructive territory. With that impetus, I schematically lay out the
20 main contours one finds in Husserl's practice of reconstructive techniques. We find
21 him taking two distinct approaches, that of the individual viewed egologically
22 (through the abstract lens of a single individual's consciousness) and as embedded
23 in interpersonal relations. Husserl occasionally calls these the approach "from
24 within" and "from without," respectively. Ultimately, the two approaches are not
25 only complementary, but require one another. In closing, I argue that these con-
26 siderations lead to a blurring of lines between the genetic and generative phe-
27 nomenological registers, which challenges the prevalent view that there is a sharp
28 demarcation of the two.

29
30 **Keywords** Edmund Husserl · Phenomenology · Genetic phenomenology ·
31 Reconstruction · Intentionality · Memory

A1 M. Bower (✉)

A2 Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Beloit College, Morse-Ingersoll 006/700 College

A3 Street, Beloit, WI 53511, USA

A4 e-mail: membower@gmail.com



33 **1 Introduction**

34 Memory typically degrades the further one approaches one's beginnings, and it
 35 stops well short of ever being able to transport one to that bottommost limit, the very
 36 onset of experience. Reconstruction, in the sense we are presently interested in,
 37 concerns theorizing about the immemorial past of conscious life.¹ The main task of
 38 this paper is to present Edmund Husserl's rationale and methodological guidelines
 39 for phenomenological reconstruction. The story I will tell is one emerging primarily
 40 from Husserl's later manuscripts.

41 It may seem curious that Husserl, who is most well-known in his later work for
 42 developing a phenomenology of the *Lebenswelt*, would touch on such an apparently
 43 obscure subject, but it will become clear in what follows why the problematic of
 44 reconstruction of the immemorial past of conscious life is unavoidable within the
 45 parameters of genetic phenomenology and, furthermore, what concrete methodological
 46 devices Husserl provides us to carry out the reconstructive project. The problem of
 47 reconstruction is, in fact, very important to Husserl's account of the *Lebenswelt*. Lacking
 48 an examination of the forms of consciousness from which developed, "normal"
 49 consciousness arises, not only is "the phenomenon 'world' not explicated in its full
 50 concreteness,"² but the full transcendental community has not been accounted for.³

51 While this paper will predominantly focus on the details of why reconstruction is
 52 important from Husserl's perspective, I should pause here at the start to highlight a
 53 noteworthy point of contact with another matter of philosophical concern, namely, that
 54 of personal identity. One of the most influential approaches to the problem of personal
 55 identity in the history of philosophy is the one inaugurated by John Locke. Locke may
 56 be credited as a primary instigator of the so-called "psychological continuity" view of
 57 personal identity, according to which the criteria for a person's being the same person
 58 over any stretch of time must refer to the relations that hold between that person's
 59 mental (and for Locke, conscious) states over that stretch of time. While Husserl was
 60 not especially fond of Locke's philosophy,⁴ I think it is fair to place Husserl roughly
 61 within the Lockean tradition of the psychological continuity view of personal
 62 identity.⁵ To put it quite generally, in Husserl's view, just as in Locke and his heirs',
 63 personal identity is a matter to be explained within the domain of consciousness.

64 One serious problem for Locke's view is its dependence on memory. Let's
 65 consider roughly how memory figures in Locke's account in order to set up the
 66 problem. For Locke, it is a subject's ability to reflectively think about oneself and

1FL01 ¹ Reconstruction is actually a broader subject. Here we will only consider one, albeit a fundamental, part
 1FL02 of the reconstructive program. Besides inquiring about one's own (individual) immemorial past, to give
 1FL03 just two examples, one could also probe reconstructively into the unconscious or the motivations for a
 1FL04 significant socio-historical event (e.g., the emergence of Galilean science, as Husserl treats it in the
 1FL05 *Crisis*). For a discussion of the former, see Bernet (2006) (although Bernet is not especially concerned
 1FL06 with the problem of method), and, for the latter, see Soffer (1996) and Dodd (2004).

2FL01 ² Husserl (2008, p. 485). My translation. All further translations from this text are my own.

3FL01 ³ Husserl (1973b, p. 612).

4FL01 ⁴ See, for instance, Husserl (1970, §§11, 22).

5FL01 ⁵ See Jacobs (2010, p. 334).

67 recall memories at will that establishes a relation of self-identity or sameness as a
68 person over time. In his words:

69 [S]ince consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that, that makes
70 everyone to be, what he calls *self*; and thereby distinguishes himself from all
71 other thinking things, in this alone consists *personal Identity*, i.e., the
72 sameness of a rational Being: And as far as this consciousness can be extended
73 backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the Identity of that
74 *Person* [...].⁶

75 His view captures a common intuition that, were one, for one fantastical reason or
76 another, to find oneself in another's body, one's identity as a person would transfer
77 to that body rather than staying with one's previous body. That intuition is plausibly
78 explained if it is the case that personal identity does not reside in the physical
79 materials one is composed of, or even the biological organism one is united with,
80 but rather in consciousness in the form of reflective self-awareness.

81 Now, the problem with this view and the burden it places on memory is that
82 memory, as we human beings typically enjoy it, is limited in scope when compared
83 with any given individual's actual biography. Memory is finite, and no one is
84 capable of establishing the kind of relation Locke takes to be constitutive of
85 personal identity such that it would extend to the beginning of one's personal
86 biography. In short, Locke's theory runs into trouble when another common
87 intuition is brought to the fore, namely, that an individual's existence as a person
88 outstrips what one can remember of one's past life.

89 At this point I think the Husserlian account of phenomenological reconstruction
90 can enter into the discussion and offer support to the (broadly) Lockean position on
91 the nature personal identity. Husserl is quite emphatic about the finitude of memory,
92 but believes nevertheless that one's immemorial past is accessible in some sense.
93 One will of course never be able to recall particular episodes of one's past life back
94 to its very beginning, and reconstructing such events is not at all what Husserl ever
95 aimed to do. But one can still, if the story I am about to relate about Husserl's
96 approach to phenomenological reconstruction is true, find traces of one's past
97 (besides what is available in episodic memory) that live on into the present, as the
98 past's "sediment," a lingering element continuing to shape one's conscious
99 experience. These traces take the form of one's stable conscious abilities, beliefs,
100 desires, character, natural inclinations, pathologies, and the like.

101 Although I will not dwell any longer on the problem of personal identity, and
102 what follows should not be construed as a theory of personal identity, these
103 considerations should suffice to show the broader philosophical import of a theory
104 of phenomenological reconstruction of the immemorial past of an individual's
105 conscious life. Developing such a theory is potential aid to psychological continuity
106 views of personal identity that falter in the light of deeply entrenched intuitions
107 about the actual extent of personal identity into individuals' past existence. This
108 potential may thus give a certain urgency to what would otherwise appear a
109 somewhat abstruse or merely academic train of reflection.

6FL01 ⁶ Locke (1975 [1689], p. 335).

110 In the remainder of this paper, I will present an account of Husserl's approach to the
 111 phenomenological reconstruction of consciousness' immemorial past. In Sect. 2, I
 112 sketch the background of the problem facing the very project of a genetic
 113 phenomenology, within which the reconstructive analysis is situated. While the young
 114 Husserl took genetic matters to be irrelevant to the main task of phenomenology, he
 115 would later come to see their importance and, indeed, centrality as the precursor and
 116 subsoil for the rationality of consciousness. I then argue in Sect. 3 that there is a close
 117 connection between reconstruction and genetic phenomenology, such that reconstruc-
 118 tion is a necessary component of the program of genetic phenomenology, and I set out
 119 Husserl's argument compels one to enter into reconstructive territory. With that
 120 impetus, in Sect. 4 I schematically lay out the main contours one finds in Husserl's
 121 practice of reconstructive techniques. We find him taking two distinct approaches, that
 122 of the individual viewed egologically (through the abstract lens of a single individual's
 123 consciousness) and as embedded in interpersonal relations. Husserl occasionally calls
 124 these the approach "from within" and "from without," respectively. Ultimately, the
 125 two approaches are not only complementary, but require one another. Section 5 wraps
 126 up the paper, and there I argue that these considerations lead to a blurring of lines
 127 between the genetic and generative phenomenological registers, challenging the
 128 prevalent view that there is a sharp demarcation of the two.

129 2 The problem of genetic phenomenology

130 Before directly tackling Husserl's motivation and method of phenomenological
 131 reconstruction, let's first recall the motivation for genetic phenomenology, the
 132 broader analytic framework in which reconstruction is situated. It is, I believe, the
 133 genetic turn that ultimately paves the way for phenomenological reconstruction and
 134 even necessitates it.

135 Very early on Husserl shows an interest in the problem of reconstruction. In a
 136 manuscript from around 1898, Husserl broaches the issue of our cognitive
 137 beginnings,⁷ and, although he ventures a speculative guess, he quickly dismisses the
 138 problem as belonging to the subject matter of "genetic psychology" and not the
 139 descriptive psychology he understood phenomenology to be at that point. Shortly
 140 thereafter, in letter from 1906, Husserl goes on to categorically separate genetic
 141 psychology from phenomenology.⁸

142 Clearly, the issue of phenomenological reconstruction stands or falls with the
 143 more general issue of genesis in phenomenology.

144 **AQ1** Husserl marginalizes or outright excludes genetic problems as being fundamen-
 145 tally irrelevant to the essence or validity of any phenomenon.⁹ We can grasp that,

7FL01 ⁷ Husserl (2004a, p. 204).

8FL01 ⁸ Husserl (2008b, pp. 440–441/452).

9FL01 ⁹ Husserl (2008b, pp. 204–209/200–204). Besides being irrelevant, any appeal to the physical,
 9FL02 physiological, or psychophysical origins of a phenomenon would be tantamount to a *petitio principii*.
 9FL03 Given the epistemological constraints of the phenomenologist, whatever causal antecedents *in the world*
 9FL04 one might take recourse to are "just as much in question as any perception," that is, as the primary
 9FL05 *explanandum* (Husserl 2008b, p. 208/203). The same has to be said of personality and association, to the

146 Husserl claims, without reference to physical, physiological, or psychophysical
 147 causation. The same is true even of genetic matters falling wholly *within* the
 148 immanent plane of conscious experience. One might in this sense appeal to
 149 association, for instance, as more than a postulated tendency, but as a *felt* connection
 150 with its own intentionality, entirely amenable to phenomenological description, e.g.,
 151 when something presently seen recalls something similar in memory or engenders
 152 an anticipation.

153 Husserl names this felt connection “indication” (*Anzeige*), and it is for him not
 154 an ancillary feature of conscious life—it is pervasive.¹⁰ Despite that, phenomenol-
 155 ogy is not concerned with indication—and hence association and whatever other
 156 phenomena indication underwrites—in its own right, since it is merely a
 157 “psychological pattern of connection”¹¹ that does not track the kinds of connections
 158 made in logical judgments, and hence suffers from a “lack of insight.”¹²

159 The inauguration of genetic phenomenology coincides with Husserl's change of
 160 mind on this point. It is around 1917/1918,¹³ when he comes to speak in terms of
 161 passive and active syntheses, that Husserl develops a suitable conceptual apparatus for
 162 the classification of conscious life that lets the sub-rational appear in a positive light.
 163 Indeed, the division of conscious life in terms of passive and active spheres (which, of
 164 course, is a distinction rather than a division or separation)¹⁴ really presents a unitary
 165 framework embracing the logical (“logical” in a somewhat extended sense, including
 166 any rational “position-taking,” whether logical in the strict sense, axiological, or
 167 practical) and pre-logical sides of consciousness alike, accounting, on the one hand,
 168 for the peculiarity of passive and active constitution and, on the other hand, for their
 169 collaboration, reciprocal influence, and mutual support.

170 Husserl clarifies the connection between the logical and the pre-logical in his
 171 analyses depicting the latter in its proto- or quasi-rational character. Phenomena of
 172 indication, of the natural feeling of transition from moment to moment in
 173 experience, are not rational per se, but “mimic” reason, anticipate it, prepare the
 174 way for it, and sustain it once it has been achieved. In the *Crisis* Husserl claims that
 175 reason, e.g., in the form of geometry and the natural sciences, could not have

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Footnote 9 continued

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extent that these are meant to *causally* explain the phenomenon in question, since phenomenology cannot presuppose anything about causation, and because, in principle, no causally governed fact has any bearing on the properly normative characteristics that make up a phenomenon's essence and validity, if Husserl's polemic against psychologism in the *Logical Investigations* and call for a phenomenological grounding of scientific concepts in “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science” (Husserl 1965) are correct. Further, Husserl excludes any dispositional tendencies within conscious life from the realm of genuine phenomenological evidence (Husserl 2004a, §24, 1989b, p. 209/204). When we merely postulate association, for instance, as a principle based on regularly occurring mental events as the effects of a tendency, the postulated principle itself has no strictly phenomenological evidence.

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¹⁰ Husserl (2001a, p. 187).

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¹¹ Husserl (2001a, p. 114).

12FL01

¹² Husserl (2001a, p. 184).

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¹³ As Steinbock (1998, p. 128) reports, it may have been shortly after his 1906 declaration, perhaps between 1908 and 1910, that Husserl began to seriously reconsider genetic matters, according to a letter from 1918.

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¹⁴ Husserl (1969, pp. 275–283/313–323).



176 emerged from a self-consciously rational impulse.¹⁵ Rather, there is a “hidden”
 177 instinctive reason that drives the cultivation of reason from the start, revealing this
 178 latent goal relatively late in the (historical) process.¹⁶

179 Husserl generalizes this idea in his theory of passive, associative synthesis.
 180 Before one deliberately formulates any theory connecting experiences together,
 181 classifying them, forming judgments about them, and the like, there are already
 182 tendencies toward rational order in the form of associative connections, themselves
 183 rooted in the phenomenon of affection.¹⁷ Even the simplest form of association—
 184 e.g., in the form of connecting B' to A' on the basis of a past experienced connection
 185 of A to B—has a quasi-rational character insofar as it functions as a *motive* for
 186 conscious events.¹⁸ The association explains the connection. It serves as its ground
 187 and “reason,” albeit in a loose sense.¹⁹

188 Thus, the logical and the pre-logical fit together in a single *motivational* nexus.²⁰
 189 The proto-rational realm of passive synthesis, where indication holds sway, is now
 190 of fundamental importance to Husserl’s phenomenology, legitimating his genetic
 191 turn and, ultimately, pointing him in the direction of a theory of genetic
 192 reconstruction.

193 3 Motivation for reconstruction

194 It remains far from obvious how one goes from securing the field of genetic analysis
 195 as such to the narrower problematic of reconstruction. Why would the genetic
 196 account need to go any further than memory can take us in tracking the dynamics of
 197 conscious life? In response, I believe reconstruction is actually intimately bound up
 198 with the project of genetic phenomenology, and, moreover, that Husserl supplies
 199 further motivation by appealing to the nature of intentionality itself. Now, one
 200 should note that the two are certainly not the same project. Reconstruction is only
 201 one part of the greater project of genetic phenomenology. Besides the various
 202 reconstructive analyses, one can also look into the realm of active constitution that
 203 one has consciously undergone and directed or participated in oneself, such as, to
 204 give only two examples, making a certain kind of logical judgment for the first
 205 time,²¹ or undergoing an ethical self-transformation.²²

15FL01 ¹⁵ Husserl (1970, p. 52 (§9(h)); p. 74 (§16)).

16FL01 ¹⁶ However, it is a curious fact that in the *ethical* sphere [at least in the early and mid 1920s, e.g., in
 16FL02 Husserl (1989a, 2004b)], Husserl retains his earlier negative attitude toward the sub-rational. See Biceaga
 16FL03 (2010, pp. 73–74).

17FL01 ¹⁷ Husserl (2001c, pp. 163–165).

18FL01 ¹⁸ If this only seems to support the emergence of logical judgment (in the strict sense) from proto-rational
 18FL02 experience, that is not so. See Husserl (2000, pp. 5–9), where Husserl suggests a similar basis for the
 18FL03 development of the intentionality of feeling and willing.

19FL01 ¹⁹ Husserl (1989b, pp. 223/234).

20FL01 ²⁰ Husserl (1999, §§38–39, Husserl 1989b, §56).

21FL01 ²¹ See Husserl (2000, e.g., §65 and Husserl 1973c, Part II).

22FL01 ²² See Husserl (1989a, 29–35 and Husserl 2004b, pp. 244–255).

206 Consider how the general project of a genetic phenomenology requires forays
 207 into reconstructive territory. The chief problem of genetic phenomenology is to
 208 provide a macro-dynamic account of the *primal institution (Urstiftung)*²³ of the
 209 basic structures of consciousness. We are told in one very early manuscript on
 210 genetic phenomenology that genetic analysis has the aim of elaborating a “‘history’
 211 of consciousness” in order “to clarify *every* given structure according to its
 212 origin.”²⁴ Since a good deal of our cognitive endowment and, in general, the
 213 experiential sediment framing our conscious life, arose in transactions with the
 214 world of which we have and can have no memory, the impetus to leave no stone
 215 unturned expressed in the preceding quotation entails the project of plumbing the
 216 depths of consciousness’ immemorial past. When Husserl more or less repeats that
 217 claim in the *Cartesian Meditations*, he further emphasizes the reconstructive
 218 direction such a history must eventually take.²⁵ There he claims that genetic
 219 phenomenology will, among other things, develop an alternative to the psycholog-
 220 ical account of the origin of the “object” concept, which, if anything is, is certainly
 221 a major event lying in the immemorial past of conscious life.²⁶

222 In Husserl’s later manuscripts we find a variety of texts that sharpen Husserl’s
 223 aims and rationale for phenomenological reconstruction. As to its aims, phenom-
 224 enological reconstruction is not required dig up every primal institution in
 225 consciousness’ past. Uncovering the nature of the emergence of the most basic and
 226 pervasive structures of consciousness pays the greatest analytic reward. This is
 227 evident in Husserl’s analyses of the world-horizon itself as an “acquisition,” which
 228 Text Group VII of *Husserliana* Volume 39 lays out. The world-horizon refers,
 229 minimally, to that form of intentionality necessary for putting us in contact with
 230 transcendent reality. It not only makes possible our exchanges with this or that
 231 particular object, but just as much enables us to inhabit an environment, a
 232 traversable space and surrounding world beyond what is immediately given in
 233 sensory experience. It comprises the sense of presence we have of the things and
 234 environment that confront us.

235 Accounting for this surely has to be one of the greatest *explananda* for genetic
 236 phenomenology. Nothing, except the basic temporal and perhaps intersubjective
 237 structures of conscious life, rivals the world-horizon in importance due to its sheer
 238 pervasiveness. The emergence of the world-horizon is, moreover, the line of

23FL01 ²³ On the notion of “primal institution” in Husserl, see Dodd (2004, pp. 61–78).

24FL01 ²⁴ Husserl (2001c, p. 339/627).

25FL01 ²⁵ Husserl (1999, §38).

26FL01 ²⁶ Expanding on this point, it is interesting to observe how in the brief, programmatic treatment of
 26FL02 genetic themes in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl puts front and center questions about the sequential
 26FL03 compatibility of the consciousness of early childhood and that of maturity (Husserl 1999, p. 108/74), the
 26FL04 problem of “ultimate genesis” as answering to the traditional problems of the “psychological origin of
 26FL05 the ‘idea of space,’ ... the ‘idea of a physical thing,’ and so forth” (p. 110/76), development in “early
 26FL06 infancy” (p. 112/79), the primal institution of the experience of “an environment of ‘objects’” (pp.
 26FL07 113/79–80), and the “realm of the ‘innate’ a priori, without which an ego as such is unthinkable” (p.
 26FL08 114/81). These very same problems are also taken as paradigmatic in the early manuscripts on static/
 26FL09 genetic phenomenology (Husserl 2001c, pp. 338/626, 345/634, 1973a, pp. 38–39/640–641). Reconstruc-
 26FL10 tion clearly forms a central area of concern within genetic phenomenology and transcendental
 26FL11 phenomenology more generally.

239 demarcation in consciousness's history between a *purely* passive life of bodily
 240 impulses aimed at sensory enjoyment, which Husserl in some manuscripts calls the
 241 "pre-world,"²⁷ and the life of the mind grounded in the conscious possession of a
 242 normative framework defining the success and failure of its various more or less
 243 elaborate undertakings.²⁸ Clarifying this juncture in consciousness's history
 244 genetically will be impossible without reconstructive techniques.

245 There are two lines of thought concerning the micro-dynamics of consciousness
 246 that, taken together, push us to ask about the genesis of the world-horizon, as
 247 Husserl explains in text 41 and supplement XXXVIII of the *Lebenswelt*
 248 manuscripts.²⁹

249 Husserl is committed, on the one hand, to the idea that every intentional act is
 250 elaborated in some extant horizon, whether by way of retentive or protentive
 251 "indicating [*anzeigende*] apperception."³⁰ Indeed, the horizon is the "schema of
 252 sense" for achieving what is to be accomplished in any intentional act (1). The
 253 horizon gives the intentional act its teleological, rational, or normative character,
 254 loosely determining what will count as success or failure in performing the act.
 255 Even in perceptual intentionality, experience is defined in terms of presenting the
 256 environment and its objects in terms of the norms latently present in a horizon
 257 pointing the way to optimal contact with one's surroundings.³¹

258 Husserl is also committed, on the other hand, to the thesis that every horizon is
 259 instituted in some intentional act. Every item in memory, of course, but likewise
 260 every practical ability or cognitive ability that is under one's conscious control, is
 261 acquired. There is first some fledgling acquaintance or attempted performance that
 262 is then followed by practice and eventually some degree of competence or
 263 familiarity. As early as the 1907 lectures on *Thing and Space*, he maintains that
 264 perceptual intentionality is dependent on the competent deployment of the lived-
 265 body, an "empirical" connection arising by means of associative ties.³² A little over
 266 a decade later, in *Ideas II*, Husserl puts the point more generally when he states that
 267 "[o]riginally, the 'I move,' 'I do,' precedes the 'I can do'".³³

268 Husserl expresses the problem these two lines of thought produce in a couple of
 269 different ways, but in each case it is clear that together they engender an infinite
 270 regress. One way is in terms of the conceptual pair (*Selbst-)Habe/Vorhabe*.
 271 Intentionality involves, on the one hand, the *Vorhabe*, the intentional schema, pre-
 272 possession or, more simply, plan, to engage with the thing itself, or the actual *Habe*,
 273 the possession or intentional contact with the thing itself. Alternatively, intention-
 274 ality has both an aspect of *implicit*, "mute" familiarity and of *explicit* grasping. The
 275 familiarity, the intentional schema has the character of a product of past encounters
 276 with transcendent reality while at the same time being the very condition for contact

27FL01 ²⁷ Husserl (2006, pp. 241, 350, 353, 2008, pp. 460, 227).

28FL01 ²⁸ On the concept of passivity, see Biceaga (2010, especially pp. xvi–xxi).

29FL01 ²⁹ Husserl (2008, pp. 438–449).

30FL01 ³⁰ Husserl (2008, pp. 413–415).

31FL01 ³¹ Husserl (1997, §36, 2008, pp. 204–205, 380–1, 661).

32FL01 ³² Husserl (1997, §49).

33FL01 ³³ Husserl (1989b, p. 261/273; cf. pp. 258/270–271, 329–330/341–342).

277 with transcendent reality. Every implicit intentional schema is the result of some
 278 explicit possession, and likewise every explicit possession is the activation of some
 279 implicit intentional schema.³⁴

280 We discover here a chicken-and-egg-style infinite regress, an absurdity that
 281 Husserl deems “senseless.”³⁵ Every episode of making contact with reality, as an
 282 explicit having (*Habe*) of the intentional object, presupposes some prior familiarity
 283 or schematic *Vorhabe*, while that implicitly familiar schematic *Vorhabe* itself is the
 284 product of some previous contact with reality, some *Habe*, which, again, rests on its
 285 own *Vorhabe* that is precipitated by yet another *Habe*, and so on *ad infinitum*,
 286 stretching back indefinitely into the past of conscious life. We can only avoid the
 287 regress by clarifying the primal institution of these forms of intentionality, and this
 288 means nothing short of providing a genetic account of the world-horizon,
 289 reconstructing the primal institution of the broader domain of intentionality in
 290 which the dynamic of *Habe/Vorhabe* unfolds. Clarifying the primal institution of the
 291 world-horizon (a task we will not follow through with presently) is manifestly only
 292 possible with the aid of reconstructive techniques. One does not and cannot recall
 293 this occurrence as a factual event. It must be pieced together without the kind of
 294 evidence that memory affords. And, since the primal institution of the life-world is a
 295 major event in the immemorial past of any individual conscious life, the need to
 296 clarify this event is simultaneously a call to phenomenological reconstruction.

297 4 Method for reconstruction

298 Now that we have a sense of the urgency of the reconstructive project, we can
 299 consider Husserl's methodological prescriptions for carrying that project out. What
 300 Husserl proposes in his later manuscripts is a two-pronged approach, treating the
 301 issue both “from within,” by exploring one's present and remembered conscious
 302 life and projecting certain features back onto its immemorial past, and “from
 303 without,” by being confronted with the fact of our immemorial past by others and
 304 by subsequently making careful observations of other conscious beings like
 305 ourselves—human infants and young children—in order to establish an indirect link
 306 with our past.³⁶

307 This picture is consistent with Nam-In Lee's groundbreaking interpretive work,³⁷
 308 which emphasizes the role of empathy, although it also significantly enriches our
 309 understanding of Husserl's reconstructive method. Lee, in particular, does not
 310 address the egological perspective, on the supposition that without any determinate
 311 memory of one's immemorial past, the solitary subject is completely cut off from
 312 that realm. We will see momentarily that, while the egological perspective is quite

34FL01 ³⁴ See also Lohmar (2003, pp. 115–116) and Bejarano (2006, p. 157), who have both hit upon roughly
 34FL02 this same conundrum, but without reference to the *Lebenswelt* manuscripts and the problem of the genesis
 34FL03 of the world-horizon per se.

35FL01 ³⁵ Husserl (2008, p. 444; cf p. 448).

36FL01 ³⁶ Husserl (2006, text 46, 2008, text 43).

37FL01 ³⁷ See especially Lee (1993, pp. 155–160).

313 limited, it does produce some positive results useful for reconstruction. By
 314 implication, Lee misses the mutual support that, I will show, the approach “from
 315 within” and “from without” lend one another. And, although Lee captures the heart
 316 of the approach “from without,” he misses one crucial feature we will introduce
 317 below, namely, that the very question of our immemorial past is first posed to us and
 318 opened up as a horizon for possible phenomenological research by others, in the
 319 intersubjective sphere.

320 As the motivation “from within,” I observe, for instance, that I have various
 321 cultivated abilities, but I have no recollection of how they arose.³⁸ For example, my
 322 ability to speak, to use my body to get around, etc., are all abilities whose formation
 323 lies in my inaccessible past despite having the character of products.

324 Lacking direct access to the experiences that produced them, I “analogizingly”
 325 interpret these abilities along the lines of other habits or patterns of behavior that I
 326 do remember.³⁹ Ultimately, there is good reason to think that all or most of these
 327 habits and abilities have their roots in instincts, in “innate” abilities.⁴⁰ I even have
 328 access to some such instincts “from within.” The sudden appearance of tendencies
 329 toward sexual behaviors that I did not bring about in myself, during puberty is a
 330 good example.⁴¹ But habitual behaviors generally, including cases of addictive
 331 behavior,⁴² work just as well to exhibit what an acquired behavior is like and how it
 332 typically emerges and functions.

333 A return to the topic of the primal institution of the world-horizon is helpful at
 334 this point. An investigation of this topic is not only relevant because it forces us onto
 335 reconstructive terrain, as we just saw, but also because it highlights one of the most
 336 significant events in conscious life, namely, the passage from the domain of pure
 337 passivity, of instinctive behavior aimed at various biologically and socially
 338 constrained forms of satisfaction, to the domain of active intentionality, where one
 339 has insight into one’s legitimate aims (cognitive, axiological, and practical) and can
 340 more or less rationally deliberate about the means suitable to achieve them. Arriving
 341 at this juncture, this pivotal moment, puts one in a position to trace out further lines
 342 of inquiry into the realm of pure passivity or the pre-world, along with those more
 343 basic forms of activity (e.g., acquiring language) within the newly instituted world-
 344 horizon that also lie beyond what can possibly be remembered.

345 It is the radicalizing of the technique of variation that takes us to the genetic line
 346 of demarcation between world and pre-world and, hence, opens up the whole field
 347 of the immemorial past of individual conscious life.⁴³ This technique does not
 348 immediately produce a reconstruction of the primal institution of the world-horizon,
 349 but it clears the ground for that analysis to take place. Eidetic method is usually
 350 performed under the assumption that it will reveal the essence of an experience of

38FL01 ³⁸ Husserl (2008, p. 476).

39FL01 ³⁹ Husserl (2008, p. 500).

40FL01 ⁴⁰ Husserl (2008, pp. 474–477; p. 17). On Husserl’s phenomenology of the instincts, see Lee (1993) and
 40FL02 Mensch (2010).

41FL01 ⁴¹ Husserl (2008, p. 583).

42FL01 ⁴² Husserl (1989b, p. 257/270).

43FL01 ⁴³ Husserl (2006, p. 241).

351 the form *ego-cogito-cogitatum*, i.e., of an experience that belongs to an ego, consists
 352 of certain adumbrating moments, and presents a transcendent entity. But, Husserl
 353 asks rhetorically, “Can I not proceed differently, so that this commitment indeed
 354 forms the beginning, but is later overturned?”⁴⁴ Indeed, he thinks we can thus
 355 discover phenomena deeper and more primordial than the Cartesian “I think.”⁴⁵

356 In a radical eidetic variation we can strip away the specifically worldly character
 357 of experience and discover its experiential subsoil, namely, possible forms of
 358 affective lived-experience, which Husserl more specifically describes as *instinct*.
 359 Such possibilities are not empty ones, they are not pure fictions. They are rather
 360 possibilities “that must be drawn from *transcendental factuality* [*Tatsächlichkeit*]
 361 and its possibilities,” which means that they “refer to actual facts of the same
 362 apperceptive type,” even if we have no determinate recollection of the actual
 363 facts.⁴⁶ These insights are, in fact, the results of Husserl’s method of the
 364 destructuring (*Abbau*) analysis of experience consistently carried out.⁴⁷

365 Performing this variation thus puts us on reconstructive terrain, on that part of it
 366 Husserl calls the pre-world, which also allows one access to the rest. It is the fault
 367 line revealing clearly for the first time what is on the far side of the world-horizon,
 368 the various elements of the pre-world. From there, one must embark on the
 369 reconstructive task of formulating the general laws of sequential compossibility,
 370 which just are the laws of genesis, the forms of genetic constitution that bridge the
 371 gap exposed in the radical variation between world and pre-world, and then further
 372 into the world-horizon, insofar as it pertains to the immemorial past of individual
 373 conscious life.⁴⁸ One must inquire here about the relations between successive
 374 conscious experiences, and especially the dynamics at work in the emergence of
 375 *types* of experience, of whole structures of conscious life.⁴⁹

376 The relations or laws that govern such occurrences are motivational laws. We can
 377 analyze the sequential compossibility of these different states by discerning the
 378 possible relations of motivation between them, “the relation of conditionality
 379 obtaining between the motivating and the motivated.”⁵⁰ The strata of experience
 380 that emerge in one’s immemorial past are largely, if not entirely, *passively*
 381 motivated. One does not choose to acquire a new dimension of conscious life, such
 382 as language, even if its acquisition demands one’s active participation. The passive
 383 motivation, Husserl insists, is affection. One is passively pulled in a new direction, a
 384 new kind of response is elicited for the first time thanks to an affection that sends
 385 one in that direction and engenders that response. As Husserl puts it, “A new kind of

44FL01 ⁴⁴ Husserl (2006, p. 353). My translation. All further translations of this text are my own.

45FL01 ⁴⁵ Husserl (2008, p. 470).

46FL01 ⁴⁶ Husserl (2008, pp. 492–493).

47FL01 ⁴⁷ Cf. Walton (2010, pp. 135–136).

48FL01 ⁴⁸ Husserl (1999, p. 109/175).

49FL01 ⁴⁹ Husserl (2001c, pp. 338–339/627). Husserl (1973a, p. 41), in the English translation of Husserl (2001c,
 49FL02 p. 644): “But attending to constitution [i.e., cognitive engagement with the world] is not attending to
 49FL03 genesis, which is precisely the genesis of constitution.”

50FL01 ⁵⁰ Husserl (1973a, p. 41/644). My translation. All further translations are my own.



387 affection corresponds to every new region.”⁵¹ And so for each additional stratum of
 388 experience elaborated in the reconstruction there will be some new peculiar
 389 affection that attunes one to that stratum in the first place.

390 Let’s now turn to the intersubjective perspective, problem of reconstruction
 391 considered “from without.” It is in this perspective that the reconstructive problem
 392 first emerges. We learn early on in life about our immemorial past *from others*, who
 393 are thus responsible for opening up that horizon for us.⁵² The implication of others
 394 in one’s own self-understanding is an indication of Husserl’s claim that the
 395 individual’s life is an abstract segment of the intersubjective sphere.⁵³ It is through a
 396 joint communicative effort that we come to learn about ourselves in the memories of
 397 other people, thus acquiring “quasi-memories” of ourselves.⁵⁴

398 In acquiring these quasi-memories, the past of an individual conscious life is altered
 399 in a unique way. The modification has two moments. First, “new content” is added to
 400 my past. I now include in my past the events that others tell me took place, regarding
 401 things I did or ways I behaved.⁵⁵ I also include whatever I come to learn about the *typical*
 402 behavior of fetuses and young children, inhabitants of the pre-world. This is a process in
 403 which, Husserl says, “I *remember myself in others*,” in which I “*quasi-remember*
 404 myself ‘in’ their memories, and in a mode of ontic validity that permits demonstration
 405 precisely as a mode of presentifying experience.”⁵⁶ In other words, this information I
 406 gather about myself from others has all the validity of any statement another expresses to
 407 me in good faith, having its certainty mediated by another’s credibility. But because I
 408 “presentify” what I hear *as my own* experience, it is not like just any piece of
 409 information. It is supposed to stand in the unity of my life (which, importantly, imposes
 410 certain broad constraints on such information)⁵⁷ as involving behavior ascribed
 411 specifically to me. Husserl refers to this unique experience as memory “as if.”⁵⁸

412 Second, this addition of new content has the consequence of modifying the sense
 413 of the experience of the past that I can clearly recall. Everything I can clearly
 414 remember now has the sense of an experience that follows and is consistent with the
 415 newly acquired stock of past experience.⁵⁹ Husserl’s example of the apperception of

51FL01 ⁵¹ Husserl (2006, p. 336).

52FL01 ⁵² Husserl (2008, pp. 501–502, 508).

53FL01 ⁵³ Husserl (2008, p. 467).

54FL01 ⁵⁴ Husserl (2008, pp. 503–504).

55FL01 ⁵⁵ Husserl (2006, pp. 439–441).

56FL01 ⁵⁶ Husserl (2008, p. 501).

57FL01 ⁵⁷ This seems to be the upshot of Husserl (2008, p. 479). There Husserl argues that whatever I discover in
 57FL02 a construction will still be within the constraints of what I can conceivably be like, i.e., within the limits
 57FL03 of an eidetic variation of myself as “the transcendental ego of a world that is my envioning world.”
 57FL04 Incidentally, this passage is also important because it suggests that phenomenological constructions are
 57FL05 also in line with transcendental phenomenology in being eidetic disciplines.

58FL01 ⁵⁸ Husserl (2006, p. 167, 2008, p. 501).

59FL01 ⁵⁹ This seems to be the meaning of the following remarks about the accessibility of a past that cannot be
 59FL02 remembered from Husserl (2006, pp. 440–441): “But even if I appresentatively take over the past of
 59FL03 another and of everything that I gain through it in worldly terms [*weltlich*], [I] gain, I possess [*habe*] in a
 59FL04 normal manner the unity of harmoniousness [*Einstimmigkeit*] and [I possess] what [is included] in the
 59FL05 ability to have a conviction again, the ability to verify or even to correct.”

416 a deer track is perhaps helpful for illustrating this modification of sense.⁶⁰ The
 417 difference between my past without its immemorial depths and my past with those
 418 depths is like the difference between my experience of a deer track when I am
 419 totally ignorant of the existence of deer and how animals leave tracks and, on the
 420 other hand, my experience of a deer track with that knowledge, as something
 421 burdened with a unique history consisting of certain events accounting for just why
 422 it is the way it is. The distant past informs our understanding of the more recent past
 423 and the present, and the latter have a very different meaning without the former.

424 The horizon of the immemorial past thus opened up in the intersubjective context
 425 is indeterminate without being subjected to further reconstructive interpretation
 426 drawing still more from the intersubjective sphere. This enrichment will necessarily
 427 retain a degree of indeterminacy,⁶¹ but it will add certain important details about the
 428 main contours of one's immemorial past that could not be gained without observing
 429 and learning from others people.

430 The first task in this regard is to come to grips with the cultivation of the lived-
 431 body as an instrument for perception, satisfaction of bodily needs, and self-
 432 preservation in general.⁶² If we are to learn anything at all about this, it will be
 433 through observation of others, of infants and young children.⁶³ A careful, reflective
 434 empathetic engagement is required, since the mental life of infants and young
 435 children is anything but transparent. We can describe the native intelligence they
 436 possess in terms of instinct and drive, understanding its elaboration by appealing to
 437 the interplay of affection and association in memory.⁶⁴ Such behaviors are invested
 438 with a meaning more felt than understood.

439 From there, one can graft the essential features of the developmental process,
 440 emphasizing the basic types of intentional experience and their typical style of
 441 transformation, back into one's own life history. The two paths—the one “from
 442 within” and the one “from without”—must function together for an adequate
 443 account of the pre-world.⁶⁵ It may be an intersubjective affair that one first gains a
 444 sense of one's immemorial past life, but all of that must ultimately be ratified from
 445 within.⁶⁶ It would make no sense if I was told my mind was once constituted in a
 446 way that I can have no insight into at present, or if I were to draw inferences about
 447 my past life on the basis of the radically unintelligible behavior of others. At any
 448 rate, those would be phenomenological dead ends.

449 The question first appears in the intersubjective context, and that is where most of
 450 the details emerge as well. But in every instance, those details are only valid if there
 451 is some degree of “coincidence,” a point of contact, between my own possible

60FL01 ⁶⁰ Husserl (2008, p. 411).

61FL01 ⁶¹ Husserl (1973b, pp. 608–609, 2006, p. 108).

62FL01 ⁶² Husserl (2008, pp. 467, 505).

63FL01 ⁶³ Husserl (2008, pp. 476–477; cf. pp. 479–480); see also Lee (1993, p. 156).

64FL01 ⁶⁴ Husserl (1973b, pp. 329–330, 599–602, 2006, pp. 225–226, 252–254, 283–284, 326–329, 2008,
 64FL02 p. 316).

65FL01 ⁶⁵ See, for instance, Husserl (2006, pp. 169–170), where Husserl also approaches this problematic
 65FL02 conjointly “from without” and “from within.”

66FL01 ⁶⁶ Husserl (1973a, pp. 335–336).

452 forms of consciousness and what I discern in another. The goal is not identity, but
 453 analogy. The analysis “from within” yields its most powerful results in detecting
 454 such points of contact. One observes an expression, a behavior, an utterance, and
 455 performs a variation of one’s own experience to track down an area of common
 456 ground.⁶⁷ We, too, have our infantile or child-like moments, our affective urges and
 457 impulses, both biological and habitually acquired. And what is unclear here can be
 458 refined in the radicalized eidetics mentioned above, disclosing the analogous
 459 coincidence and making it possible to transplant what we discover in others into our
 460 own past.

461 5 Genetic and generative phenomenology: a complication

462 The preceding analysis has an interesting implication—one not drawn by Husserl
 463 himself—concerning the larger issue of phenomenological method in its various
 464 forms. We have so far been concerned with a problem situated in the problematic of
 465 genetic phenomenology. That is, we have been considering the large-scale dynamics
 466 of conscious life, the necessity of investigating how various strata of conscious
 467 meaning arise. In particular, we wanted to know what phenomenology can say about
 468 the emergence of such strata lying in one’s immemorial past, beyond one’s ability to
 469 recollect more or less clearly datable events in episodic memory.

470 One aspect of genetic phenomenology not explicitly mentioned up to this point is
 471 its “egological” character. Genetic phenomenology focuses on the emergence and
 472 refinement of forms of intentionality within the nexus of an individual conscious
 473 life.⁶⁸ Generative phenomenology, on the other hand, has the task of identifying
 474 those *sui generis* structures and patterns of sense shared among individuals,
 475 structures constitutively characterized by differences, such as that between “home
 476 world” (*Heimat, Heimwelt*) and “alien world” (*fremde Welt*), or that between
 477 generations.⁶⁹ The domain of generative phenomena is distinguished by its
 478 irreducibility to the constitutive operations of individual subjects. Such things as
 479 national and generational identities simply do not boil down without remainder to
 480 the constitutive activities of individuals making up a nation or generation.

481 The analysis of the preceding section, however, complicates this distinction. In
 482 the preceding section I showed that Husserl’s approach to reconstruction “from
 483 without” entails that an individual’s immemorial past is first opened up constitu-
 484 tively by other subjects, and, above all, by those of the preceding generation. The
 485 latter are uniquely positioned to do so, inasmuch as only members of a generation
 486 preceding one’s own are capable of reporting on one’s introspectively inaccessible
 487 immemorial life. Of course, additional peculiarities of typical inter-generational
 488 relations are in play here. For instance, there are certain motivations caretakers have
 489 in caring for the young that they tell stories about them in their infancy. That is,

67FL01 ⁶⁷ Lee (1993, p. 158).

68FL01 ⁶⁸ Steinbock (1995, p. 171).

69FL01 ⁶⁹ See, e.g., Husserl (1973b, texts 14 and 35, and supplements XI-XII, XLVIII, 2008, text 48 and
 69FL02 supplements XL, XIL), Steinbock (1995), Donohoe (2004).

490 more is at work here than one individual indifferently passing on information to
 491 another individual. It is in the context of intergenerational care and (perhaps
 492 parental) bonding that one's immemorial past is opened up for one.

493 If it is the case that the original motivation for exploring one's immemorial past
 494 emerges in a genuinely trans-individual, generative context, then genetic phenom-
 495 enology cannot complete its proper task without drawing on the resources of
 496 generative phenomenology. Genetic phenomenology is, ideally, supposed to
 497 canvass every layer of sediment defining an individual life, down to its simplest,
 498 most primitive characteristics and abilities. Whatever takes place beyond an
 499 individual's ability to recall it and, despite that, continues to function in that
 500 individual's subjective life, is an explanatory desideratum for genetic phenome-
 501 nology. And yet, the attempt to excavate such sedimentation brings one face to face
 502 with generative phenomena. Genetic phenomenology's entryway to the individual's
 503 immemorial past is the generative context of typical caretaker-child interrelations.

504 This challenges one prominent interpretive understanding of the relation between
 505 genetic and generative phenomenology. It is often supposed that the major classes
 506 of phenomenological technique, namely, static, genetic, and generative methods,
 507 must be put to work in serial order. That is, one cannot rightly begin doing genetic
 508 or generative phenomenology without working out its static precursor. Likewise,
 509 genetic phenomenology is supposed to be a precursor to generative phenomenology.
 510 Anthony Steinbock puts the point clearly:

511 [J]ust as static and genetic phenomena stand in a relation of the simple to the
 512 complex, so too does Husserl intimate (initially) that genetic and generative
 513 phenomena exist in a relation of the simple to the complex: The individual
 514 genesis must be worked out prior to intersubjective becoming or generation,
 515 self-temporalization and monadic facticity prior to communal historicity, the
 516 constitution of the unity of a life prior to the constitution of the unity of a
 517 tradition.⁷⁰

518 As I have been at pains to make clear, however, this cannot be entirely true. It may
 519 be that in most cases a technique and general domain of phenomena must be
 520 elucidated prior to moving to a higher methodological register.

521 But an important subset of genetic phenomena—the immemorial past of an
 522 individual's conscious life insofar as it bears on the ongoing history of that
 523 individual—just can't be accounted for on genetic grounds alone. It is in that
 524 precarious period between birth and our first memories that we get our bearings in
 525 our lived-body, that we discover the things we like and dislike in the world, that we
 526 establish our first and most lasting personal bonds with others. So much of interest
 527 to genetic phenomenology lies beyond the limit of recollection (*Wiedererinnerung*).
 528 Accordingly, Husserl says in one manuscript:

529 The primal child [*Das Urkind*] and its relatedness to the world. It grows up
 530 [*wächst [...] auf*] precisely among grownups [*den Erwachsenen*], it starts out
 531 with primal needs or primal enjoyments, and as it grows it accrues the new

70FL01 ⁷⁰ Steinbock (2003, p. 303).

532 upon the old ever anew – in the sociality of *generative* renewal/preservation
 533 [*sich erneuernd-erhaltenden*]. A single system of drives, fulfillments of drive,
 534 formations of goals, formations of ends: World-constitution.⁷¹

535 What Husserl is saying here is, in a nutshell, that the individual subject's very
 536 intentional directedness to the world, which we saw above to be a matter falling
 537 within the problem area of *genetic* reconstruction, is also a *generative* matter. And
 538 that is not so just because of birth (one of the paradigmatic limit-phenomena
 539 discussed by Steinbock⁷² as a bridge from the genetic to the generative domain).
 540 Once past that ultimate threshold, once a life has been embarked upon, the basic
 541 intentional parameters of individual subjective life, i.e., instinct or drive, are in some
 542 way interrelated with those of generative "sociality."

543 Consider a more concrete instance of this same point, from another late
 544 manuscript of Husserl's:

545 The original instinctive relatedness of every ego to its "own" as an instinctive
 546 implication of the "welfare" [*des "Wohls"*] of these others in my own
 547 [welfare]. The others' [...] "welfare" however implies again instinctively the
 548 welfare of their others or, better, their "neighbors" in the original instinctive
 549 sense, who are not immediately my neighbors. What is primary is thus
 550 *generative* implication.⁷³

551 There is a beginning in every individual life of the establishment of personal
 552 connections with others, and this process is driven by individual subjective elements
 553 (i.e., instinctive feelings) and by generative elements (e.g., typical interaction with
 554 caretakers). So not only is the more cerebral phenomenon of basic world-
 555 directedness a hybrid genetic/generative affair, so also is basic other-directedness.
 556 On both these matters, and perhaps others still, it appears that patently genetic
 557 phenomena, and specifically phenomena only accessible by reconstructive tech-
 558 niques, require one to take into account the generative context in which they unfold
 559 and to determine precisely what relations obtain between them. Husserl forces us to
 560 recognize this ambiguity *in general* when he names the genetic domain of the
 561 individual's reconstructed immemorial past the *Urgenerative*.⁷⁴

562 The neat and tidy division according to which "[g]enetic method is concerned
 563 with self-temporalization or facticity, and generative method with socio-historical
 564 temporalization or historicity"⁷⁵ does not hold up in all cases. It is not entirely true
 565 that "limit" phenomena appear only once a methodological register has run its
 566 course and force the researcher to the next, higher register. Genetic phenomenology
 567 must take recourse to generative phenomenology before it has run its course. If that

71FL01 ⁷¹ Husserl (2013, p. 222); my translation, emphasis added.

72FL01 ⁷² See Steinbock (1995, 2003).

73FL01 ⁷³ Husserl (2013, p. 429); my translation, emphasis added. See also Husserl (1973b, pp. 406–407, 511,
 73FL02 601–602, 2008, p. 371, 2013, pp. 108, 470).

74FL01 ⁷⁴ Husserl (1973b, pp. 433, 182). There are numerous other passages that call into question the strict
 74FL02 demarcation of the genetic from the generative. See, for instance, the following: Husserl (2008, pp. 330,
 74FL03 390–391, 582, 585, 662).

75FL01 ⁷⁵ Steinbock (2003, p. 303; cf. p. 314).

568 is true, then greater caution and further reflection is necessary in order to more
 569 precisely locate the border(s) and point(s) of contact between genetic and generative
 570 phenomenology. The familiar interpretation of a clear-cut, serial ordering of
 571 methodological registers is no longer adequate in this regard.
 572

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