Are Emotions "Recollected in Tranquility"? Phenomenological Reflections on Emotions, Memory, and the Temporal Dynamics of Experience

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In a famous passage from the *Preface* to his *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth describes poetry and poetic creativity as follows:

> I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. (Wordsworth 1800, XXXIII-XXXIV)

Besides its relevance for Wordsworth's theory of poetry, which I will not discuss in this paper, this passage also gives us some clues to phrase the question as to how we can be presently aware of past emotions. In this passage, Wordsworth considers three experiences as essential for poetic creativity. The first one is a powerful feeling-experience (the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"), which overwhelms the subject. The second one is the recollection of the emotion "in tranquility". This entails the recollection and the contemplation of the emotional experience, which seems to require some reflective distancing from the emotion itself. Such a recollection is accomplished in a tranquil mood and atmosphere, which allows the poet to find and poetically assemble the words in such a way as to render the original emotional experience. The third moment is the gradual disappearance of such tranquility, that is, a renewed emotional involvement in the affective event or experience. A new emotion, similar to the one that was previously contemplated, is awakened, through poetry, in the present situation.

The first moment we have singled out, that is, the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" seems to correspond to the moment of *pathos* in emotional experience. Feelings, in this sense, are something overwhelming. In Waldenfels's

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terminology, they are a form of *Widerfahrnis* (cf. Waldenfels 2002), which lies beyond subjective control. The two other moments, the tranquil "contemplation" of the affective event and the new emotion arising from such "contemplation" shall be considered as complementary. In this paper, I wish to investigate the interplay of these moments of affective-emotional experience from a phenomenological standpoint, and notably to discuss how emotional experience relates to memory, or the consciousness of the past. More precisely, I will focus on the three following questions: (1) Does the overwhelming character have an impact on the understanding of feelings and emotions in relation to self- and world-experience in its temporal unfolding? (2) Is the emotion that arises in recollection necessarily similar to the one we originally experienced? (3) Does the tranquility Wordsworth refers to imply affective neutrality, or is it rather itself affectively characterized?

In order to phenomenologically address these issues, an analysis of the intentional structure of affective and emotional experiences is required. The first part of this paper will develop such an analysis. Thereby, it will be shown how emotional experience in its different forms is constitutively both self- and world-related. In the second part, I shall argue that the double, self- and world-, relatedness of emotional experience fundamentally structures the different forms in which we are presently aware of past emotions. More precisely, I shall assess how such a double relatedness is implied in both the sedimentation of past emotional experience and in its recollection. In this context, the critical assessment of the so-called narrative understanding of emotional experience will allow us to answer the first question phrased above. As we will see, due to their overwhelming nature, emotions and feelings can have a deep impact on self- and world-experience. Moreover, considering emotional experiences against the background of the temporal structure of consciousness, we will be able to answer the second and the third of the aforementioned questions. Particularly, this will be done by emphasizing the abstract nature of purely objectifying acts, which prevents us from understanding tranquility as mere affective neutrality, and by investigating the extent and the limits of the "revivability" of past emotions in and through memory. On the basis of such an inquiry, I shall question the idea of the necessary convergence between the present emotion, which is awakened in and through recollection, and the emotion we experienced in the past. As I will argue, emotional memories are presently situated experiences, and their specific coloring cannot depend exclusively on what we may call a definite "phenomenal content". It also depends on what we have become after that original experience, and on how we presently relate to it. As I shall argue, the ultimate ground to understand the situated meaningfulness of all emotional responses is the irreversible nature of the temporal stream of consciousness. Finally, focusing on irreversibility as a constitutive feature of the temporal stream, and discussing how such a feature eminently comes to the fore in the experience of nostalgia, we shall develop our understanding of the tranquility Wordsworth is referring to. Such tranquility, indeed, seems to have a nostalgic note. The latter exemplarily conveys a specific form of emotional self-awareness, namely the awareness of one's own being in a constant process of irreversible temporal becoming.

1 The Self- and World-Relatedness of Affective and Emotional Experience

The outline of a phenomenological theory of emotions, presented by Sartre in the last chapter of his *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*, is focused on the intentionality of the emotions. Emotions are modes of apprehension of the world and, in emotional experience, the subject and the object are considered to be tied together by an indissoluble synthesis.[1] In the contemporary debate, the idea that emotions are a specific kind of our apprehension of the world has been taken over by several authors coming from different philosophical traditions. More specifically, it has been argued that, besides being directed toward something in the world, emotions also entail a specific form of self-awareness. This emerges, for instance, from Goldie's analyses of emotions as involving two kinds of feelings, i.e., "bodily feelings" and "feelings toward" (Goldie 2000, 2002). Through bodily feelings, the altered conditions of our body tell us both something about the sort of emotion we are experiencing (think, for instance, of shiver in case of fear), and something about ourselves as being in such an emotional state. However, bodily feelings, as Goldie further argues, also offer us "reasons to believe" that there is something in the world, or in the particular situation we are experiencing, having specific qualities that arouse our feeling, e.g. something that is itself fearful. More precisely, Goldie suggests that there is a three-stages epistemic route from bodily feelings to the object of emotion: (1) from a bodily feeling to the related perceptual belief about one's bodily condition; (2) from the perceptual belief about one's bodily condition to the belief that one is experiencing an emotion of a certain type; and (3) from a belief that one is experiencing an emotion of a certain type to the quantificational belief that there is something in the world that has some properties corresponding to an emotion of that type (Goldie 2002).[2] To describe those feelings that are more directly involved when an emotion is oriented toward an object in the world, Goldie adopts the concept of "feelings toward". These are modes of our pre-reflective engagement with the world beyond our own body. Accordingly, feelings toward shall not be properly considered as forms of self-consciousness, neither of one's bodily conditions, nor of oneself as experiencing an emotion. Rather, they are the consciousness of the object as being pleasurable or unpleasurable, irritating or delighting, etc. Holding that emotions are inextricably and constitutively bound to these two kinds of feelings, Goldie notably criticizes what he calls the "add-on theory" of emotions,

[1] « Le sujet ému et l'objet émouvant sont unis dans une synthèse indissoluble. L'émotion est une certaine manière d'appréhender le monde. » (Sartre 1995, 71).

[2] For instance, the belief that there is something dangerous around when we experience fear is purely quantificational, since it identifies the properties that belong a thing or situation only insofar as they are or become objects of a specific emotion (being fearful or dangerous as proper to the object of fear). He further explains this in terms of determinable properties: fearfulness or dangerousness are "determinable properties" and the purely quantificational belief is that there is something in the environment having certain (maybe unknown) "determinate properties", which fall under the general and not yet determined "determinable properties". See Goldie 2002.

according to which feelings are mere supplementary aspects of the emotional experience.

The idea that emotions are both world- and self-related, and that they are indissolubly connected with feelings, is also endorsed by Slaby and Stephan (2008). Expanding on such a view, they call the specific intentionality of emotions "affective intentionality". Through affective intentionality, emotional experiences are directed toward objects and situations as being valuable or not. Understood as evaluative *Gestalt*-perceptions, feelings and emotions thus express the subjective apprehension of the value of an object or a situation. Consistently, despite not being thematic, the subjective and existential experience of such an evaluative apprehension is also considered to be part of the emotion. Accordingly, these authors argue that feeling an emotion properly "amounts to feeling oneself in a certain relation to something (usually an event, object or situation) – an evaluative awareness of which goes hand in hand with a registering of one's existential situation" (Slaby and Stephan 2008, 506).

Husserl also considers emotional experiences as evaluative apprehensions of objects, events, or situations. As we can read in manuscript A VI 12, for instance:

> Das Gefallen ist auf das Objekt bezogen, es hat darin seine „Intentionalität". Es ist nicht ein beliebiges, neu auftretendes Bewusstseinsmoment, sondern es ist auf das doch transiente Objekt bezogen, das als gefallend dasteht […]. Von dem Erfahrungsobjekt und auch den betreffenden Erfahrungsbestimmungen, die für die Schätzung grundlegend sind, ist nur Weniges gegeben und nicht adäquat gegeben, aber alles ist empirisch apperzipiert und darauf gründen sich die Gefühlsmomente und Gefühlsintentionen, die in ihrem Zusammenhang, in ihrer harmonischen Einheit das Gefallen fundieren. (A VI 12 II/30)

Yet, in his writings, Husserl tries to analyze more specifically the intentionality of such emotional experiences. Thereby, he also considers feelings to be constitutive moments of emotional experiences, which ground the self- and world-relatedness of the experience itself. As Drummond (2004) points out, we could even draw a parallel between Goldie's distinction of bodily feelings and feelings toward, and Husserl's distinction between feeling-sensations and feeling-acts. Like Goldie's bodily feelings, feeling-sensations are bodily located, pre-reflective forms of self-awareness. They are not per se intentional in the strict sense, although they can be reflected upon and become the correlate of an intentional act apprehending our body as the object of reflection. Feelings-acts, instead, are intentional and object-related, they constitute the object in its affective and emotional value, for instance as being pleasurable or not (Hua XIX/1, 406–410). Consistently with his analyses of inner time consciousness, and notably with the observation that consciousness is "consciousness through and through" (e.g. Hua XXIII, 265), in one manuscript from 1909/10, Husserl further points out that sensations, and notably feeling-sensations, are themselves moments of consciousness, even though they cannot be considered as intentional in the strict sense:

> Man darf vielleicht wagen zu sagen, dass schon die primitivsten Gefühle wirkliche Gefühlsakte sind, also in der Weise von sonstigen Gefühlsakten fundiert, nämlich fundiert in den Empfindungen, was freilich wieder voraussetzt, dass Empfindungen auch schon „Akte" sind, schon Bewusstsein-von. Freilich, die „Intentionalität im vollen Sinn" vollendet

> sich erst durch das spezifische Meinen, das in gewisser Art eigentliche Objektivieren. (A VI 12 II/22a)

Accordingly, although distinguished, feeling-sensations and feeling-acts are considered to be intertwined and co-belonging within the unity of an emotion. Paraphrasing Sartre, we can say that feeling-sensations and feeling-acts are also united in an indissoluble synthesis. And such an intertwining is what grounds the self- and world-relatedness of emotional experience.

In the further development of his theory of emotions, Husserl proposes a more articulated distinction of the different emotional experiences and their moments, and he more thoroughly discusses why such experiences shall be considered as intentional (cf. Melle 2012). Besides feelings, he notably focuses on the apperception of values, on emotional responses, and on enduring moods. As we can read in manuscript A VI 12 II:

> Also jedenfalls <sind> zu scheiden: die Gefühlsakte, die einzelnen Gefühlsreaktionen und die Einheit der Stimmung als die Einheit der Gefühlsfärbung, die der gesamte Bewusstseinsbestand, die gesamte Sphäre des Erscheinenden als solchen, durch Übertragung erhält, der allgemeine Strom des Gefühls, in dem wir schwimmen. (A VI 12 II/73a)

Through the apperception of sensible feelings, the value of a thing or a situation is constituted; the latter awakens a situated subjective emotional response, which may become habitualized as an enduring mood. All these are considered to be intentional experiences and to bring to the fore the double, world- and self-, relatedness of emotional experience. The act of feeling [*Gefühlsakt*] intends an object as valuable on the basis of particular sensible feelings. The emotional response, that is, the experience of "being pleased/sad about something" or "appreciating something" [*Gefallen*], is also directed toward the object or the situation that are experienced as positive or negative. However, in both cases, such directedness toward the object is correlated to the experiencing of oneself as emotionally touched, as being happy or sad about something:

> Danach haben wir bei den Erlebnissen der Freude und Trauer im spezifischen Sinn wohl deutlich unterschieden – und sich wirklich abhebend – eine auf das "Objekt" zielende, gegen das "Objekt" hingehende Wertung (mit all dem, was sie voraussetzt) und die gegen das Subjekt hingehende Gefühlserregung. Nämlich die Freude und Trauer selbst, die einerseits das Objekt als erfreulich bzw. traurig charakterisiert, aber zugleich beim Subjekt angreift als: Ich bin traurig, ich bin erfreut. (A VI 12 II/66b)

To be true, the emotional response might be either related to the qualitative features of the object in question, independently of whether the object is actually perceived or only imagined or recollected, or rather to the "being" of the object, that is to say, to its existence (or non-existence) and givenness here and now. In the second case, the emotional response is not only awakened by the evaluative appreciation of the object, or of some of its qualitative features, but also by its being or not being effectively present, namely posited as existent here and now. In this sense, a specific emotional response depends on the intersection of the (positive or negative) evaluative apprehension of the object and its being or not being

experienced as existent here and now.[3] However, indulging in the imagination of objects and situations may also generate an emotional response. For instance such an experience may elicit the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, or a bittersweet nostalgic feeling, related to both the quasi-object of fantasy and the activity of fantasizing itself.[4] These qualifications, as we shall see in the next section, play an important role also with respect to memory and to the emotions that specific memories can awaken.

Finally, feelings may temporally sediment; they can somehow become habitual and thus give shape to the unity of a mood. Moods are also considered to be intentional. Yet, in this case, the correlate is not a specific object or situation, but rather the whole undetermined horizon of appearance. When I am in a good mood, everything around me seems to have a positive affective connotation. As Husserl writes, everything obtains a "rosy gleam" [*ein rosiges Schimmer*] (A VI 8/74b), which precisely derives from my being in a positive mood.[5] On the contrary, if I am in a melancholic mood, I am mostly unable to rejoice about what might be positive events, objects, or situations:

> Diese [die Stimmung] ist ja eine Gefühlseinheit, die allem Erscheinenden eine Farbe verleiht, aber eine einheitliche, einen einheitlichen Schimmer der Freude, eine einheitliche dunkle Färbung der Trauer. (A VI 12 II/72a)

Accordingly, moods are diffused modes of our subjective being in the world, which reverberate on how we experience ourselves in a given situation, and on how we apperceive such a situation.[6] Despite being distinguishable, the aforementioned dimensions of emotional experience are not separated from one another; they are

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[3] „Gegenstände erregen Freude". Aber das ist ungenau, wird man sagen. Das Sein von Gegenständen, dass der Gegenstand ist oder nicht ist, kann Freude und Trauer erregen. […] Im Fall der Existenz von Gegenständen ist zwar das Gefühl in gewisser Weise doch auf den Gegenstand bezogen, der da als seiend gesetzt ist, aber „eigentlich" ist es Gefühl der Freude über das Sein." (A VI 8 I/71a.) What is true for subjectively experienced feelings is not true, however, for the objective evaluation: „Die ästhetische Freude ist größer in der Wahrnehmung als in der Reproduktion, sie sättigt sich. Aber das ästhetische Werten nicht" (A VI 30/180a)

[4] „Lustvolle Phantasien bzw. Freuden in der Phantasie, etwa aufgrund von Phantasielust, sind „eingebildet". Es ist aber „süß", solchen Phantasiefreuden hingegeben zu sein. Erlebnisse sind die Phantasien, darunter die Gefühlsphantasien: die Phantasien selbst, nicht das Phantasierte […]. Ich schwelge phantasierend. Wende ich mit dem Phantasieren als solchen und dem Lustgefühl zu, so mag ich daran wieder mein „Vergnügen" haben, es kann mir gefallen. Es kann mir auch missfallen […]." (A VI 8 I/75b-76a)

[5] „Jederlei Sache hat ihren rosigen Schimmer, wenn ich in froher Stimmung bin, aber nicht als Eigenschimmer." (A VI 8 I 74/b).

[6] „Bin ich nun guter Stimmung, so pflanzt sie sich also leicht fort (solange sie nicht durchbrochen wird durch die Gegentendenz, durch entgegengesetzte Affekte). Bin ich nun in guter Stimmung, so kann das heißen: Ich merke, dass ich nicht nur mich an dem oder jenem Bestimmten freue, sondern dass ich in einem Rhythmus der Freude lebe: Freude schließt sich an Freude. (Dazu kommt, dass Freude sich überträgt auf alles im Zusammenhang Stehende.) Dabei behält aber die Stimmung immer eine „Intentionalität"."(A VI 12 II/72a); „Alles nimmt Farbe und Wärme von der Stimmung an, alle Lust wird gesteigert, erhält einen Zufluss von Wärme, der eben nicht aus ihrem Wertobjekt stammt, und Gleichgültiges wird fast zu einem „Schönen"[…]." (A VI 12 II/71a).

rather constitutively related to each other. In this respect, to borrow an expression from the contemporary debate on emotions in the philosophy of mind (Slaby and Stephan 2008), Husserl seems to eventually defend an "anti-component theory" of emotional experience: the latter does not result from the assembling of separated (feeling-related, temporal, evaluative-rational) components; it is, instead, a complex whole of intertwined moments.

Up to now, we have seen how feelings and emotions are subjective evaluative responses to experienced situations. Accordingly, they appear to be very much tied to our present, bodily situated experience. Even moods, as enduring dispositions, refer to the extended present of a state [*Zustand*]. Yet, experience and self-experience notably unfold in time, so that the present, situated emotional response shall be considered within the dynamic unfolding of the subject's life-history. Particularly, present emotions can be differently related to our past experiences. Thus, after having considered the essential features of the intentionality of emotional experiences, we can turn now to the questions phrased in the introduction, concerning the relationship between memory and the emotions.

2 Memory, Emotions, and the Self

The question of how emotional experience, in its being both self- and world-related, is connected to our consciousness of the past, entails at least two possible sub-questions: (1) How do our present emotional responses relate to our past sedimented experience and to the consciousness thereof? (2) How do we remember past emotional experiences in the present situation? Let us consider both questions more closely.

(1) *How do our present emotional responses relate to our past sedimented experience and to the consciousness thereof?*

The relationship between present emotional episodes and past experiences can be addressed in connection to the so-called narrative account of emotions in the current philosophical debate. Goldie (2000; 2002), for instance, holds that narration is responsible of synthesizing the intentionality of feelings (feelings toward) and their bodily relatedness (bodily feelings) within the unity of an emotion. Hence emotions are temporal unities grounded upon both kinds of feelings, and they are further organized within the larger narrative unity of a personal life-history. Moreover, feelings and emotions are situationally meaningful, and such situatedness can, in principle, be subsequently explicated in a narrative form. As Slaby (2008) points out, the narrative explication of feelings in what we can call a temporal and motivational narrative nexus is accomplished from the first-person-perspective. Accordingly, feeling-narrations can be understood as portrayals of the evaluative profile of situations from the point of view of the participating subject. Such a situated point of view is rooted in the subject's life-history. Yet, the claim is not that each and every emotion is *de facto* explicated in a narrative form, but rather that

such an explication must be possible in principle. Such a difference between possible and real narration is expressed by the conceptual distinction of *Narration* and *Narrativ*. The former concept refers to the result of an intentional speech- or writing-act of telling. The latter, instead, refers to the possibility in principle of such a narration. The narrativity of feelings and emotions shall be primarily understood in relation to the *Narrativ*, namely to the morphological structure that potentially constitutes the meaningful unity of a situation or life-episode and makes the effective narration possible. Such a morphological structure embraces the different partial aspects of affective states and synthesizes them in a coherent unity. The concept of *Narrativ*, therefore, designates the specific "meaningful and coherent constitution of a dynamic structure, according to which the latter can be made into the object of a narration [*Narration*]." (Slaby 2008, 284, my translation). Thus understood, the narrativity of feelings and emotions refers to both the unity of singular episodes and the embedding of such episodes in the larger unity of subjective life.

In relation to the singular emotional episodes, narrativity is entailed in the very definition of emotions as evaluative *Gestalt*-perceptions. The situation is immediately affectively apprehended as a complex whole, for instance, as being frightening or rather pleasant. Such an apprehension entails what Slaby calls an affective synthesis. The latter is one form of passive synthesis in the Husserlian sense, namely a pre-reflective associative synthesis that makes the apprehension of *Gestalt*-like unities possible. *Narrativ* is precisely what makes such an immediate unitary grasping of an emotional episode possible. This implies that the unity of emotions as evaluative *Gestalt*-perceptions is presupposed by, or is more original than, the decomposition of the situation into its partial moments. Besides referring to the unity of singular episodes, the narrativity argument also aims to account for the embedding of emotional episodes in larger experiential unities, such as patterns of interaction, one's own character, or the larger periods of a personal life-history. The meaning of emotional episodes can be fully disclosed only in relation to such larger narrative contexts.

The narrative account of emotions is, among others, intended to do justice to the fact that singular emotional experiences do not emerge in complete isolation. They are, rather, meaningful constellations, connected to other affectively laden episodes, and eventually to the unity of a life-history. This implies that our situated emotional responses are motivated by our past, sedimented experience, and by more or less explicit future expectations.

Considered in relation to the phenomenology of inner time consciousness, however, the narrativity-argument needs some further qualification. First, it is questionable whether the temporality of narration corresponds to the most original temporal form of feelings and emotions. Narrative explication always and constitutively comes after the experience itself; it is necessarily *nachträglich*, although it may be entailed as a potentiality in the emotional experience itself. Self-narratives, indeed, are unities of reflection, in which certain aspects and moments of one's own life are selected and brought together into a possibly coherent context of meaning.

However, as I have mentioned, emotions and feelings are primarily experienced in a pre-reflexive way. As Sartre writes:

> La conscience émotionnelle est d'abord irréfléchie et, sur ce plan, elle ne peut être conscience d'elle même que sur le mode non-positionnel. La conscience émotionnelle est d'abord conscience du monde. (Sartre 1995, 70).

Moreover, feelings and emotions are often something that surprises us as a response to something affecting us as a *Widerfahrnis* (cf. Waldenfels 2002). Consistently, narrations as reflective unities may certainly be developed in order to make sense of emotional experiences within the unity of one's own life. However, this necessarily occurs *ex post facto* and presupposes a kind of self-distancing. Only through such a reflexive self-distancing can the subject give a unitary shape to the narratives of his/her emotional experiences. All this, however, presupposes a pre-reflexive structure of experience, in which specific emotions and feelings passively emerge and unfold (cf. Drummond 2004).

The experience of an affective *Widerfahrnis* may also be related to an episode of our own past, which pops into our mind through what Husserl calls occurring memories [*einfallende Erinnerungen*]. Similar to Aristotle's *mneme*, and different from the voluntary "search" of *anamnesis* (Aristotle 1930), this kind of memory is a form of *pathos*, it surprises us affectively in the present situation, and can awaken an emotional response. Such an emotional response, again, may be itself something "surprising" and does not need to be experienced at first as coherently meaningful within a narrative unity. Despite contributing to the shaping of our self-experience, thus, neither affectively colored memories nor emotional responses necessarily fit an already coherently formed narrative self-image. Rather, they may entail something that withdraws from explicit and reflexive consciousness and that surprises the bodily subject in this specific situation (one quite radical example thereof are traumatic memories).

Consistently, saying that an emotional experience is self-personal certainly means that it is embedded in the subject's life-history and that it relates to the particular subject with his/her instincts, dispositions, interests, etc. Yet, the temporality of the subject's life, which defines the condition for both the emergence and the sedimentation of emotional experience, and makes up the basic structure of emotional experience itself, is not originally that of a narrative, for the latter is a unity of reflection. It is rather the temporality of the stream of consciousness grounded upon the interplay of presentation, retention, and protention. An essential feature of the subjective stream of consciousness, of great importance also to understand the relationship between emotions and memory, is irreversibility. We shall now consider this feature by addressing the second of the aforementioned questions.

(2) *How do we remember past emotional experiences in the present situation?*

Past emotional experience, as we have seen, has an implicit impact on our present. Even without being explicitly recollected and being embraced within the meaningful unity of a narrative, emotional experiences can sediment and give shape to a habitual mood, or they can implicitly and pre-reflectively pop-up and motivate our

present emotional responses. Yet, some questions remain concerning the relationship between emotions and recollection. How do we recollect past emotions? Can such a recollection happen "in tranquility", and what does such tranquility imply? How is such a recollection structured?

As it is well known, in the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl argues that emotions are founded upon presentational acts [*Vorstellungen*]. The latter entail not only presentations, such as perceptions, but also presentifications, such as recollections or fantasies. Differently from Brentano, Husserl stresses the ambiguity of the concept of presentation, *Vorstellung*, which refers to both the complete experiences of objectifying acts (perceiving, remembering, imagining, etc.) (Hua XIX/1, 496 ff.), and more narrowly to just the matter of such acts (Hua XIX/1, 474 ff., 514 ff.). In so doing, he points out that emotions are actually not founded on another act, but rather on a matter of the sort that belongs to an objectifying act, i.e., to the perceived, remembered, imagined as such (Hua III/1, 297 ff.). Husserl is also quite clear in arguing that the distinction of layers in the apprehension of an object is an abstracting one, and that indeed, a purely objectifying act is itself an abstraction. We always apprehend things and situations coalescing with "vague fringes" and with "emotional colorings" within the interrelated unity of experience:

> Wenn sich durch Vorstellungen Gegenstände bewusstseinsmäßig konstituieren, so ist die pure Vorstellung eigentlich eine Abstraktion, insofern als bewusstseinsmäßig in der Regel nicht der bloß wahrnehmende Gegenstand da ist, sondern der Gegenstand vielerlei „Färbungen" an sich tragen wird, also die Vorstellung noch verschmolzen sein wird mit mancherlei vagen „Fransen", die auf Bewusstseinszusammenhänge zurückweisen, die nicht für solche Gegenstände konstitutiv sind: Der Gegenstand erinnert an dies oder jenes, das seinerseits in den oder jenen Zusammenhängen mit Angenehmem oder Unangenehmem verflochten war, oder er hat sonst Beziehungen zu wertbaren, und zwar praktischen Zusammenhängen. (A VI 30/184a)

When discussing the relationship between recollection and emotions, thus, we shall take the ambiguity of the concept of presentation [*Vorstellung*] into consideration. Accordingly, assuming recollections as one specific kind of *Vorstellungen*, such a relationship may be referred to either the matter of an act of recollection, or to the recollection of a complete past experience.

Consistently with the position held in the *Logical Investigations*, when describing the relationship between emotions and memory, Husserl generally presupposes the former meaning of *Vorstellung* and emphasizes that a present emotional response can be related to the matter of an act of recollection. We presentify a past event, object or situation, and, in the present situation, we emotionally respond to such a recollection. The emotional response, in this case, is related to the matter of such a presentification. The latter does not need to be, and in many cases is actually not, a voluntary one. Rather, the past often "pops into our minds" and surprises us in the form of an associative, involuntary, *einfallende Erinnerung*. Assuming that the idea of an emotionally neutral presentification (like of any pure objectifying act) is an abstract one, the emotional response awakened by memory would correspond to the evaluative apprehension of something experienced in the past. Such an emotional response, however, is not exclusively bound to the value attributed to the object. Consistently with what we have discussed above, it may also depend upon

the "existence" or "non-existence" of the recollected object here and now, that is to say, it may depend on its still being there or rather on its being inevitably lost. Moreover, the nature of such an emotional response will also be implicitly motivated by our personal emotional dispositions toward that object in the present situation. The emotional response to the recollected past event, object, or situation, in other words, is very much dependent on my present mood and disposition, and needs not being congruent with the emotion I originally experienced in the past, when I was presently confronted with such an event, object, or situation.

The claim that it is only the matter of a *Vorstellung*, in our case of a recollection, that necessarily grounds a non-objectifying act does not exclude the possibility that a present emotional response may de facto relate also to the recollection of a complete past experience, and even of a past emotional experience. Yet how shall we describe such a phenomenon? In the *Principles of Psychology*, James challenges the idea of a recollection of emotions as such. In so doing, he distinguishes what he calls "ideal revivability" of emotions in memory, from their "actual revivability":

> The revivability in memory of the emotions, like that of all the feelings of the lower senses, is very small. We can remember that we underwent grief or rapture, but not just how the grief or rapture felt. This difficult ideal revivability is, however, more than compensated in the case of the emotions by a very easy actual revivability. That is, we can produce, not remembrances of the old grief or rapture, but new griefs and raptures, by summoning up a lively thought of their exciting cause. The cause is now only an idea, but this idea produces the same organic irradiations, or almost the same, which were produced by its original, so that emotion is again a reality. We have 'recaptured' it. (James 2007, 474)

According to James, thus, the detached contemplation of past emotions, that is, the "ideal revivability" or presentification of our past happiness, grief, or rapture as they were "felt" in the past is something "difficult" to realize. However, he believes that, while remembering the episode, the situation, or the object that generated our emotional response, we can experience, in the present situation, a new emotion that is akin to the one we once experienced in the presence of the objet (actual revivability).

What we have previously said concerning the intentionality of emotions and their situatedness allows us to better qualify the distinction made by James. First, "ideal revivability" should certainly not be understood as to signify that the recollection of an emotion is independent of its object and its spatio-temporal situatedness, since this seems to be a priori excluded from the very intentional and situated nature of emotional experience we have described above. We cannot recollect past joy, grief, or sorrow without recollecting the event or the situation that generated such emotional responses. In other words, if something like the recollection of an emotion is possible, then such a recollection must entail the awareness of how the world appeared to us in the past emotional experience (i.e., it must also entail the reference to the matter of the act).

Secondly, James also seems to claim that even this form of "ideal revivability" of an emotion, in which the awareness of the past emotional experience in its fullness is entailed, would still remain something quite "difficult" to realize. I believe Husserl would agree with James's suggestion. To better say, and consistently with

what we have said above concerning the abstract nature of purely objectivating acts, such an emotionally detached or neutral "ideal revivability" would also amount to a limit case or to an abstraction. The different emotional "colorings", which make up the concreteness of our representations, *a fortiori* characterize the recollection of past emotions, or of events that have particularly marked our own life-history in an emotional way. Accordingly, the recollection of a past emotion shall also awaken a present emotional response.

Thirdly, James's claim concerning the "actual revivability" of past emotions also needs some closer consideration. The structure of such "revivability", indeed, seems to be more complex than what we can draw from the quoted passage. James is right in arguing that, when recollecting a past emotional experience, the original feeling must be somehow concretely "present". And such a presence seems to entail more than the simple neutral thought-representation of what we once experienced. Although we can critically read James's claim that the same "organic irradiation" are produced anew, there seems to be something true in the idea that, when recollecting past joyful or sorrowful experience, that joy and that sorrow still affect our bodily present: there is a concrete, and even bodily, involvement when we recollect past joy or grief. Leaving aside James's empirical account of organic irradiations, and following Husserl's later theory of recollection, this could be expressed by saying that recollection is a "modification" of an original perceptual act.[7] In a certain sense, although I cannot in principle perceive two times the same temporal event, when I recollect an object or an event, it is "as if" I would perceive it again (quasi-perception).[8] In our case, when I recollect a past emotional experience, it is in a certain sense "as if" I would re-experience the same emotion. For this reason, as I mentioned, James is right in suggesting that the quality of the original feelings and emotions must be somehow "present" (and not merely thought of). In Husserl's terms, they must be quasi-experienced again. However, we shall be careful in properly understanding the meaning of that "as if" and that "quasi". As I shall argue, this can be done by referring to the double intentionality of recollection in relation to the irreversibility of the temporal stream.

What we cannot claim, in fact, is that the "presence" of the past emotional experience implies the actual and full re-living or re-experiencing of the same (and not even necessarily of a similar) emotion in the present. For the emotional experience I presently make while recollecting a past event, or the position I take with respect to such recollection, is very much dependent on my *present* situation and on what I have become since that original event. That is to say, to describe the emotion we experience while recollecting a past emotional intention does not depend only on that intention, but also on how I now relate to the past event und the correlated intention.

[7] I am grateful to Prof. Ullrich Melle for emphasizing this point, which allowed me to make my argument clearer by referring to this development in Husserl's theory of recollection.

[8] „Ein Zeitgegenstand, zu dem seine Zeit mitgehört, lässt sich nicht zweimal wahrnehmen, sondern er lässt sich nur wahrnehmen und in der Modifikation der Reproduktion, der Wiedererinnerung gleichsam wahrnehmen." (Hua XXXIII, 250).

This claim shall be better qualified with respect to the temporality of self-experience, and particularly to the irreversibility of the temporal stream. As Paci points out, irreversibility refers to the "orientedness" of each and every process and to the a priori impossibility of its reversal, which prevents us from establishing a full identity between all that which happens within a temporal process:

> […] all that which has happened cannot happen anew; it cannot repeat itself or present itself again in a situation that is fully identical with the previous one. […] this is a logical law, a dynamic one and not a static one. And, precisely, this is the logical structure of temporality, which is eventually nothing else than the logical structure of the world. (Paci 1954, 7)

Although Husserl does not explicitly thematize this concept, and does not adopt it to describe the temporal stream of consciousness, his analyses of the intertwining of original impression, retention, and protention, as well as those related to the self-constitution of the original stream, allow us to understand the temporal unfolding of consciousness as an irreversible process of this sort. Paci's understanding of the temporal stream of consciousness as an irreversible process implies a relational view of temporality and subjectivity and is the enabling condition for the experience of unique and unrepeatable events and situations.[9] Every now-point and every original impression, for Husserl, are unique, and they are and taken in the dynamics of the temporal stream as a constant retentional-protentional modification. The original now as *Quellpunkt* of individual emergence is itself a moment of the "infinite continuum" of the original stream (Hua XXXIII, 293). Such a retentional-protentional streaming continuum is irreversible in the just defined sense.[10] In this irreversible stream, each new emerging now is unique and as such it is individuated.

Yet, in our present context, irreversibility also explains why the recollection of a past emotion or of a past emotional event does not imply the re-experiencing of an emotion that is identical, and not even necessarily similar, to the originally experienced one. And this although the original emotional coloring may well be "present" to us, "quasi-experienced" anew. Accordingly, the recollection of the past, and notably of past emotional experiences, cannot be simply equalized with the "revivability" of the past, for such revivability seems to be excluded by the very irreversible nature of the temporal stream of consciousness. The way in which we experience our present, bodily, situatedness in relation to the past also plays a decisive role in determining the concrete configuration of our present emotional memories. The specific emotional response to our memories very much depends on what we have become in the time that has passed after the original experiencing.

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[9] In this respect, see Summa (2013).

[10] According to Marc Richir, Husserl has not been consistent enough in conceiving of the irreversibility of time. To reach such consistency, he would have had to go beyond the assumption of irreversibility as a *Faktum* and more radically think the co-belonging of present and death, or the "cadaverous" moment of the present. One can, of course, pursue this line of thought, and then one shall ask if death and this "cadaverous" moment of present that is implied by irreversibility are something we can appropriate or if they are rather inappropriable or alien moments of experience. A thorough discussion of this point certainly goes beyond the scope of this article. Yet this nexus between irreversibility and the alienness of death deserves at least to be mentioned. (Richir 2006, 134 ff.).

In this sense, such a response is certainly not dependent on the objective time lapse between the present recollection and the past experience. It rather seems to depend on whether such memories can be considered as "open" or "closed" within the irreversible dynamics of our experience. In cognitive psychology, open memories relate to events that have not been "shelved" yet, or integrated within the narrative unity of one's life. There is something unconcluded in such memories, which still deeply affects us in the present. Closed memories, instead, have been integrated in our life-history and elaborated. For instance, it is certainly possible that we remember the experience of a loss or mourning without presently experiencing something like grief. And we can even experience, for instance, a partial emotional detachment with respect to such an experience of loss, or rather a completely different emotion, such as anger (if we consider, for instance, that things could have gone otherwise). Certainly, this is a rather ideal-typical distinction, which might seem to oversimplify complex phenomena. It cannot be excluded that our relationship to our memories changes over time. For instance, we could realize that what was held as a "closed" memory still has some "open" aspects in it, i.e., not fully integrated moments that still have a strong affective and maybe even destabilizing force. However, even admitting that memories can be possibly integrated in the narrative of one's life, and that they can be addressed as "closed" with partial emotional detachment, I do not believe that the so-called closed memories are emotionally neutral. In this case, we have simply been able to make sense of such events, or to elaborate them, as moments of our life-history. These memories, thus, can be considered as "closed", although they can still awaken, for instance, nostalgic feelings. Certainly, consistent with what we have said above, the awareness of specific memories as open or rather closed is something we can reach only retrospectively through reflection and the narrative understanding of our life-history.[11]

All the moments we have previously considered as making up the unity of an emotional experience, as well as the motivational nexus of our past sedimented experience, are also involved when the experience is recollected. Such a recollection awakens particular bodily feelings and emotional responses, it entails the evaluation of the past situation, and it may give rise to an enduring mood. Thus, the nature of the emotional response awakened by the recollection of a past event is not only based on the reproduction of the past experience or its content. It can also be related to the experience of the actual absence of what is recollected, and to the impossibility, due to the irreversibility of time, to re-create the situation, the object, or the place we have once experienced in the flesh and we are now remembering. In other words, such an emotional response is itself situated within the irreversible stream of temporal becoming; it depends on what we are now and what we have become after that original experiencing. Accordingly, the overall emotional coloring of recollections seems to be quite complex. We can talk about the overlapping of two affective intentionalities in such recollections: the intentionality related to

[11] On the distinction between open and closed memories and their relevance for the empirical study of the relationship between memory and the self, see Beike et al. 2004.

felt "presence" of the past feeling and emotion, and the intentionality of our present emotional response. Due to the irreversibility of time, and to the impossibility to fully re-live the past emotion, the two can never fully coincide, and may even be in tension with one another. I may, for instance, be sad or melancholic while remembering a past joyful event, because I am at the same time aware that something of that event has been inevitably lost. And the more the past joy is present to me as quasi-experienced anew, the more I may also experience the sadness or grief related to the loss. As we have seen while commenting on James's passage, the past joy somehow still affects me. Yet, it is accompanied by another feeling that is grounded in my present experience. The idea of a double affective intentionality complements Husserl's analyses concerning the double intentionality of recollection. the intentionality directed toward the intentional object or situation experienced in the past, and the intentionality directed toward the "temporal position" of the past experience, which implies the awareness that such an object belongs to the past (Hua X, 53–54). What I have previously called the intentionality of the felt presence of the past feeling and emotion would be connected to the former intentional directedness in the Husserlian sense, whereas the intentionality of our present emotional response is connected to the latter, since it entails the consciousness that the recollected event or experience belongs the past and as such it is not retrivable in its fullness. The interplay between these intentionalities of emotional recollections is grounded on the irreversibility of the temporal process. Such interplay shows that recollecting is itself an experience situated within the irreversible stream of consciousness. It further implies the possibility of an entanglement or even of some tension between the presently felt and the presentified past emotion.

We can thus agree with Jankélévitch, when he argues that remembering is temporally situated in the present and as such it is itself a new experience taken within the process of irreversible becoming.[12] Certainly, as he further stresses, memory seems to play the stabilizing role of a balance-principle within such an irreversible process. And this is due to the fact that, as we have seen, memories, and notably emotional memories, can be subsequently synthesized within a narrative and meaningful unity. In this sense, as Jankélévitch further observes, remembering becomes a form of compensation for the impossibility of reliving what is inevitably lost and for the awareness of the irretrivability of the past in its fullness (Jankélévitch 1974, 310 ff.). However, precisely the persistence of such irretrivability in remembering eventually confirms the necessary irreversible nature of temporal becoming.

[12] "L'expérience du passé, qui est, après tout, une expérience présente, fait partie elle-même de la futurition; notre effort pour susciter "à nouveau" l'apparition d'une expérience ancienne aboutit en fait à une expérience nouvelle" (Jankélévitch 1974, 34).

3 Concluding Remarks: Irreversibility and Nostalgia

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more. […]
Wordsworth, *Intimations of immortality from recollections of early childhood*

The analysis of the structure of emotional memories in relation to the irreversibility of time allows us to return to the three questions phrased in the introduction.

(1) *Does the overwhelming character have an impact on the understanding of feelings and emotions in relation to self- and world-experience?*

Critically addressing the narrative account of emotions, we have seen that, as pre-reflexive experiences, emotions and feelings entail something that, at least initially, withdraws from all narrative explication. As unities of reflections, emotional narratives necessarily come after the emotional experience itself and can only retrospectively make sense of such an experience. The temporal structure of emotional self- and world-experience, thus, is not primarily that of a narrative. It is rather the temporal structure of the irreversible temporal process. The events we experience in such a temporal process and the emotional responses to such events are not under subjective control, and they can entail something overwhelming for the subject. Accordingly, emotional experiences do not primarily convey the awareness of oneself and of the experienced world as coherent and meaningful unities. They rather make us aware of the fact that there can be interruptions, or surprising events in the course of our life, and that the way we respond to such events may not be under our complete mastery.

(2) *Is the emotion that arises in recollection necessarily similar to the one we originally experienced?*

Discussing James's distinction between the ideal and the actual revivability of emotions in memory, and particularly focusing on the latter, we have been able to bring to the fore the double intentionality of emotional memories. On the one hand, such memories entail the implicit awareness of the past feeling and emotion directed to the object or situation. Such an awareness still affects in the present, so that we can talk about a felt presence of the past emotion. On the other hand, such memories entail the intentionality of our present emotional response. The latter, as Jankélévitch points out, is itself a unique experience within the irreversible process of our life. As such it cannot be identical, and it must not even necessarily similar, to the emotion we once experience. Our present emotional responses does not only depend on the content of the memory, for instance, a positive or a negative event. It may also

depend on how we relate to the absence of what we are recollecting. More generally, the emotional coloring of the present recollection very much depends on what we have become after that experience, on our present moods and dispositions, and on how we experience the present situation in relation to the past. This, as I have argued, is fundamentally grounded on the irreversible nature of temporality and of ourselves as temporal beings.

(3) *Does the tranquility Wordsworth refers to amount to a sort of affective neutrality or is it rather itself affectively characterized?*

I would like to spend few more words on this latter question and try to qualify the "tranquility" Wordsworth mentions in his *Preface* in relation to the two previous conclusions. Such tranquility is not to be understood as the affective neutrality of a non-participating spectator. Although it entails a partial detachment from the overwhelming character of emotions and feelings, which makes their "contemplation" possible, the "tranquility" Wordsworth is referring to is itself an emotional tonality. Such a tranquil contemplation also entails the awareness of the time passing and of its irreversibility. In other words, it entails the awareness of the fact that there will be no re-experiencing of what we once experienced. Thus, the "tranquility" with which we can turn to our emotional memories, I would suggest, has in itself a nostalgic note. Indeed, the awareness of the impossibility of fully regaining, through memory, our past (and notably the experience of past emotions and or of emotionally laden events) grounds the specific emotional experience of nostalgia. To quote Jankélévitch again:

> Ce qui fait la différence jamais comblée, la "diaphora" irréductible entre un passé impuissant et un présent réel, et empêche le souvenir de renverser l'irréversible, c'est cette nostalgie de plénitude développée par le devenir dans la maison du souvenir; la nostalgie mesure la marge toujours renaissante entre l'image-souvenir et la défunte réalité: sans discontinuer le devenir transforme l'être en avoir-été, l'esse en fuisse; sans discontinuer et en quelque sorte à l'infini le passé, autrement dit ce qui fut présent, aspire à se compléter et à redevenir le présent lui-même. (Jankélévitch 1974, 312–313)

Nostalgia, in this sense, is not simply an emotion that is manifestly related to memory. I would rather suggest that it can also be considered as an existential feeling (Ratcliffe 2008), since it exemplarily expresses the existential awareness of oneself and of the world as totalities in temporal becoming. Although nostalgia may be related to concrete episodes, what it brings to the fore is a more encompassing way of emotionally being in the world. The bittersweet experience of nostalgia is precisely related to the impossibility of regaining what Casey calls a "past we cannot rejoin" or the impossibility to "re-experience it in propria persona, even if it has left tantalizing marks in the present." (Casey 1987, 365). Such a nostalgic note is very much present in Wordsworth poetry, as it is present, remarkably, in Proust's prose. Wordsworth's poetry, for instance in the Ode *Intimation of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* from which I have quoted the opening verses at the beginning of this section, also brings to the fore the interconnection between memory and the imagination in the experience of nostalgia. As De Man (1987) points out, in Wordsworth, the imagination has a proleptic structure, it anticipates

events that are yet to come, and eventually brings us face to face with our own finitude. Such a proleptic structure of the imagination, I would argue, is the complementary counterpart of the awareness of the irreversibility of our temporal being. To be true, the imaginative "power to anticipate is so closely connected with the power to remember that it is almost impossible to distinguish them from each other" (De Man 1987, 10). This interplay of memory and the imagination corresponds to the "paradoxical interplay" of the definite and the indefinite in the spatio-temporality of the nostalgic experience (Casey 1987). The proleptic structure of longing for something is intertwined with the retrospective structure of the memory for the past we cannot rejoin.

The "suffering" that is implied in the very etymology of the concept of "nostalgia" shall be understood in relation to such an ambiguous, both proleptic and retrospective, temporal structure. It is bound to both desire and the awareness of an impossible return to what we are longing for. Such a return is impossible not because the "place" of nostalgia is not factually there any longer, but rather because, due to the irreversibility of the time of the world and of our own life-history, we will never find such a place as we left it, or as we remember and imagine having left it. There is a world correlated to such a nostalgic place. And, due to the irreversibility of time, such a world is constitutively unretrievable. Thus, the irreversibility of time designates nothing else than the impossibility to fully regain or re-experience the past. Understood as an inhibited dynamis, as Bernet points out, such impossibility implies that nostalgia is bounded to the unrealizable desire to suspend or reverse the evanescence of time:

> Man sehnt sich schmerzlich nach der verflogenen Zeit sowie nach den unwiederbringlich vergangenen Erfahrungen, und erst diese Sehnsucht verleiht den einmaligen Erlebnissen der Vergangenheit ihren unschätzbaren Wert. (Bernet 2006, 97)

Nostalgia nevertheless entails the longing for such an inevitably lost past world, the wish to "re-enter, per impossible, the past of a world that has effectively vanished from our lives and of which we are painfully reminded by its extant traces" (Casey 1987, 365). The self- and world-experience of nostalgia is not exclusively bound to one temporal dimension (past, present, or future), nor to the coherent and narratively explicable unfolding of a life-history. It is instead bound to the imaginative and recollective relationship among all these dimensions and, primarily, to the fundamental experience of oneself and of the world as totalities in irreversible temporal becoming, to the transience of each experience and situation, and to the inevitable emotional losses that are implied by such irreversibility.

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