

Chapter 4

Art and Experience: Reflections on Husserl's and Heidegger's Phenomenological Approaches to Art-Works



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Abstract In this paper I compare and contrast Husserl's and Heidegger's thinking about art in relation to the overall phenomenological approach to aesthetic experience and art objects. I outline Husserl's emerging analyses of the *sui generis* nature of aesthetic intuition as a kind of 'presentification' and contrast his analyses of the aesthetic *attitude* with Heidegger's more explicitly *ontological* reflections on the essence of the art-object as such and the kind of 'work' that it performs. Husserl and Heidegger were both concerned to specify in phenomenological terms the relations of *foundation* (*Fundierung*) that exist between different kinds of apprehended objects, from perceptually-available things, to tools or equipment, to works of art. Both phenomenologists attend to the 'how' (*Wie*) of the 'mode of givenness' (*die Gegebenheitsweise*) or mode of presencing, of these objects. Husserl, however, generally follows the earlier European aesthetic tradition, deriving from Kant and Baumgarten, in being interested primarily in the *aesthetic* 'position-taking' (*Stellungnahme*), i.e. in the structure of the apprehension which yields up art objects *as* art objects, whereas Heidegger is more interested in the *ontological* question of how the art-work reveals, displays, and radiates 'truth'. I shall argue that their positions are complementary and not in conflict.

Keywords Husserl · Heidegger · Phenomenology · Art · Representation · Imagination

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K.-Y. Lau, T. Nenon (eds.), *Phenomenology and the Arts: Logos and Aisthesis*,
Contributions to Phenomenology 109,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30866-7_4

4.1 Introduction

In this contribution, I shall reflect on Edmund Husserl's and Martin Heidegger's phenomenological approaches to aesthetic experience and to the essential nature of the work of art. This paper is dedicated both to my *Doktorvater* Karsten Harries,¹ Professor of Philosophy at Yale University, who awoke my interest in Heidegger's writings on art, poetry, and architecture, and also to Professor Cheung Chan-Fai, Chinese University of Hong Kong, whose work on aesthetics and, especially, on the phenomenology of photography, has been most original and insightful for me.² In thinking about Martin Heidegger's reflections on art as found in his extraordinary 1935 essay 'The Origin of the Work of Art',³ I want to make some comparisons and contrasts with the scattered reflections of his mentor Edmund Husserl on art and on the aesthetic intuition. In this paper, then, I want to explore both Husserl's and Heidegger's reflections on the relations between art and experience.⁴ I shall argue that their views are complementary and not in conflict.

Both Husserl and Heidegger were essentialists: there is an essence to art and to artistic creation; but Husserl is seeking the essence of the aesthetic act of intuiting (as 'presentification', *Vergegenwärtigung*), whereas Heidegger is seeking to define the essential, dynamic nature of the art-work (*Kunstwerk*) as somehow revelatory of truth. Art-works involve 'the setting-itself-to-work of the truth of beings' (*das Sich-ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit des Seienden*) as he puts it in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (*Off the Beaten Track*, p. 16; GA 5 21).

¹ See Karsten Harries, *Art Matters. A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art"*, Contributions to Phenomenology 57 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

² Cheung, Chan-Fai, 'Phenomenology and Photography: On Seeing Photographs and Photographic Seeing', in Cheung Chan-Fai & Yu Chung-chi, eds, *Phenomenology 2005*, vol.1, *Selected Essays from Asia* (Zeta Books, 2007) and see also idem, *Kairos. Phenomenology and Photography* (Hong Kong: Edwin Cheng Foundation Asia Centre for Phenomenology, 2009), esp. pp. 2–9.

³ Martin Heidegger, 'Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes (1935/1936)', *Holzwege*, Gesamtausgabe 5 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), pp. 1–74, trans. as 'The Origin of the Work of Art (1935/1936)', in Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes, eds, *Off the Beaten Track* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Hereafter '*Off the Beaten Track*' followed by page number of the English translation; and Gesamtausgabe (= 'GA') volume and page number. In fact, Heidegger delivered a number of versions of this talk in lectures in Zurich and Frankfurt and also developed a lecture course. See also the essays by Daniel O. Dahlstrom, 'Heidegger's Artworld', and Otto Pöggeler, 'Heidegger on Art', both in Karsten Harries and Christoph Jamme, eds, *Martin Heidegger: Politics, Art, and Technology* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1995).

⁴ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference, *Logos and Aesthesis: Phenomenology and the Arts, International Conference celebrating the 10th anniversary of Edwin Cheng Foundation Asian Centre for Phenomenology*, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 30 July–1 August 2012.

4.2 The Critique of the Representational View of Art

In their discussions of art-objects, Husserl and Heidegger were both concerned to specify in phenomenological terms the relations of *foundation* (*Fundierung*) that exist between different kinds of apprehended objects, from perceptually-available things found in the everyday, lived environment to the experiencing of tools or pieces of equipment, to the apprehension and appreciation of works of art. Both phenomenologists attend to the 'how' (*Wie*) of the 'mode of givenness' (*die Gegebenheitsweise*) or mode of presencing, of these objects – apperceived as everyday furniture of the world, tools, art-works, religious icons, and so on. What is their specific 'phenomenality'? How do they manifest themselves in the human lived world? Husserl, however, generally follows the earlier European aesthetic tradition, deriving from Kant and Baumgarten, in being interested primarily in the *aesthetic attitude* or 'position-taking' (*Stellungnahme*), i.e. in the structure of the apprehension which yields up art objects *as* art objects, whereas Heidegger is more interested in the *ontological* question of how the art-work reveals, displays, and radiates 'truth' in some sense which Heidegger in particular seeks to determine in a way that makes this truth more basic than any form of 'correctness'.

Heidegger, on the other hand, is interested in the question of the 'origin' (*Ursprung*) of the art-work, understood as the source that gives it the kind of being it has. As Heidegger puts it, 'We wish to hit upon the immediate and complete reality of the artwork, for only then will we discover the real art within it' (*Wir möchten die unmittelbare und volle Wirklichkeit des Kunstwerkes treffen; denn nur so finden wir in ihm auch die wirkliche Kunst, Off the Beaten Path*, p. 3; Holzwege, GA 5, p. 4). He wants to know 'what' the art work is and 'how' it works as it does. He asks: 'But what and how is a work of art?' (*Aber was und wie ist ein Werk der Kunst? Off the Beaten Path*, p. 2; GA 5, p. 2).

Heidegger, like Husserl, rejects the view that physical objects are grasped primarily in perception as bundles of sensations. Things are apprehended in the context of their uses—the sound is the sound of a door shutting not an 'abstract' sound. He writes:

We never really first perceive a throng of sensations [*Andrang von Empfindungen*], e. g., tones and noises, in the appearance of things — as this thing-concept alleges; rather we hear the storm whistling in the chimney, we hear the three-motored plane, we hear the Mercedes in immediate distinction from the Volkswagen [*Adler-Wagen*]. Much closer to us than all sensations are the things themselves. We hear the door shut in the house and never hear acoustical sensations or even mere sounds. In order to hear a bare sound we have to listen away from things, divert our ear from them, i. e., listen abstractly [*abstrakt hören*]. (Heidegger, 'Origin of the Work of Art', *Off the Beaten Track*, p. 8; GA 5 10–11)

In this regard Husserl and Heidegger are saying exactly the same thing. Indeed, this is a standard phenomenological position, repeated later by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, for example, who himself is drawing both on Husserlian phenomenology and the Gestalt psychology that emphasised figure-ground. Perception, for phenomenology, is not a raw grasp of sensations but involves grasping objects *against the*

background of world. Thus, the phenomenological tradition already shifts the focus from the aesthetic feeling or sensation to the mode of givenness of the thing *from out of its world*. Husserl and Heidegger both appreciate the peculiarity of this concept of world and explore it in their own ways.

Both Husserl and Heidegger were also concerned with a critique of art understood as mimesis, as straight-forward *representation*. Art is not primarily a representation or imitation of life. However, art is, for Husserl, a kind of pictorial or fantasy imaging. It is a form of *Bildbewusstsein*, to be distinguished from straight-forward thing-perception (*Ding-Wahrnehmung*).⁵ It has its own mode of fulfilment, fulfilment-in-fantasy.

In his lectures and reflections on various kinds of ‘image-consciousness’ (*Bildbewusstsein*), Husserl—like Walter Benjamin—refers specifically to the relatively new art of photography. Husserl offers a very interesting analysis of how a photograph is perceived as representing something ‘depicted’ in the photograph. Already in 1898, he discusses the photo of a child and he often returns to this example.⁶ He distinguishes a number of layers in the perception and in the perceived object. In terms of the perceived object, there is at one level the material, physical thing that bears the image—for example, the actual sheet of photographic paper with ink on it. There is, secondly, the ‘projected image’ or ‘appearance’ (*Erscheinung*), or ‘image-object’, namely, let us say, an image of someone – a boy. But, on top of that, there is the referent of the image – what Husserl calls the picture’s ‘subject’ (*Bildsujet*), in this case, let us suppose it is a photograph of Husserl’s son. The fascinating point is that the flat, two-dimensional, black-and-white image of child does not have any of the physical qualities in common with original human child, yet we normally immediately *recognise* the photograph as a photograph of the specific child in question. We ‘see-in’, see the child in the photo.

In another reflection,⁷ Husserl is interested in how it is that our perception of a physical object – a ‘thing’ (*ein Ding*) – undergoes a *modification* when it becomes the apperception of the object as a *photograph of a child*. Here he contrasts different apprehensions of spatiality – in a mirror image, in a photograph, and in the figurative

⁵Husserl’s assistant Eugen Fink also discussed art in this light, see E. Fink, ‘Vergegenwärtigung und Bild. Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Unwirklichkeit. (1930)’, in Fink, *Studien zur Phänomenologie 1930–1939*, *Phaenomenologica* XXI, 1–78 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1966). See also Mikel Dufrenne, *Phénoménologie de l’expérience Esthétique* (Paris, 1953) and Roman Ingarden, ‘Aesthetic Experience and Aesthetic Object’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* vol. 21 no. 3 (1961), pp. 289–313.

⁶See Edmund Husserl, *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung. Zur Phänomenologie der anschaulichen Vergegenwärtigungen. Texte aus dem Nachlaß (1898–1925)*, hrsg. Eduard Marbach, *Husserliana* XXIII (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1980), p. 109; trans. John Brough as *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory (1895–1925)*. Husserl Collected Works vol. XI (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), p. 117. Hereafter ‘*Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*’ and page number of English translation and *Husserliana* (= ‘Hua’) volume and page number.

⁷See E. Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, Text no 17 (1912), pp. 581ff; *Hua* XXIII 486ff.

bust of the head of a man (life-size – so there is an exact match with the kind of three-dimensional space and proportional relations of the original).

We have to distinguish the physical image thing, the image object, and the image subject. The latter need not appear; and if it does appear, we have a phantasy or memory. When we have a perceptual image (not an image presentation in phantasy), the appearance of the physical image thing is the appearance of a physical thing, a perceptual appearance. And it is a filled perception: The thing is there as something present “in person.”⁸

Husserl sees this apprehension of an object that involves more than a straightforward perception, as involving a special form of *Vergegenwärtigung*, ‘re-presentation’, or ‘presentification’, or ‘presentation’, depending on the translation. Indeed, Husserl sees all art as involving a special *Vergegenwärtigung*. It is a kind of higher-order apperceptive act build on an act of bare, ‘straightforward’ (*schlicht*) perceiving. Husserl, of course, regards this category of presentifications (*Vergegenwärtigungen*) as exceptionally broad – it includes all forms of remembering, imagining, dreaming, depicting, figuring, symbolizing, and even ‘empty intending’ (*Leermeinen*). He always contrasts *Vergegenwärtigungen* with the more bedrock acts of genuine perception (*Wahrnehmung*), which, for him, involves direct contact with the perceived object as given ‘there-in-the-flesh’ (*leibhaftig da*). As Husserl writes in his Thing and Space lectures:

... the object stands in perception as there in the flesh, it stands, to speak still more precisely, as actually present, as self-given there in the current now. (*Ding und Raum* § 4, p. 12; Hua XVI 14)⁹

Husserl's deeper analyses of external thing-perception reveal that it is always infected by inadequacy. Only one side of the material, spatial object is ever given with full presence, the other hidden sides or aspects are co-intended but not given in the flesh. They are meant in some kind of empty way, in a kind of *Vergegenwärtigung*. Thus he writes in the lectures of Passive Synthesis:

No matter how completely we may perceive a thing, it is never given in perception with the characteristics that qualify it and make it up as a sensible thing from all sides at once. ... Every aspect, every continuity of single adumbrations, regardless how far this continuity may extend, offers us only sides. And to our mind this is not just a mere statement of fact: It is inconceivable that external perception would exhaust the sensible-material content of its perceived object; it is inconceivable that a perceptual object could be given in the entirety of its sensibly intuited features, literally, from all sides at once in a self-contained perception. (*Analyses Concerning Active and Passive Syntheses*, pp. 39–40; Hua XI 3)¹⁰

⁸E. Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, p. 584; Hua XXIII 489.

⁹E. Husserl, *Ding und Raum. Vorlesungen 1907*, hrsg. U. Claesges, Hua XVI (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973); Trans. R. Rojcewicz, *Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907*. Husserl Collected Works VII (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997).

¹⁰Edmund Husserl, *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs- und Forschungsmanuskripten (1918–1926)*, hrsg. M. Fleischer, Husserliana XI (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988); Trans. Anthony J. Steinbock, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis. Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, Husserl Collected Works Volume IX (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001).

As Husserl's thought progressed to become more and more fascinated by how these empty intentions operate, how they always accompany genuine perceptions. The perception of images and art-works moves in the realm of this presentification. Objects are somehow removed from the sphere of actuality and are apprehended in contexts other than the straightforward perceptual sense.

Heidegger's reflections on aesthetics begin from a different consideration. His phenomenological approach focuses not, like Husserl, on the aesthetic attitude or position-taking, but rather on the *being* of the art work itself. Heidegger is here deeply influenced by Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of art. Heidegger regards an over-emphasis on aesthetic *experience* (found in traditional aesthetics since Kant) as deeply misleading. Thus, in the 'Afterword' (*Nachwort*) to his 'The Origin of the Work of Art' he writes:

Almost as soon as specialized thinking about art and the artist began, such reflections were referred to as "aesthetic". Aesthetics treated the artwork as an object, as indeed an object of *aisthesis*, of sensuous apprehension in a broad sense. These days such an apprehension is called an "experience". The way in which man experiences art is supposed to inform us about its essential nature. Experience is the standard-giving source not only for the appreciation and enjoyment of art but also for its creation. Everything is experience. But perhaps experience is the element in which art dies. This dying proceeds so slowly that it takes several centuries.¹¹

He is led to a reflection on the meaning of a thing, the nature of the 'serviceability' (*Dienlichkeit*) of use-objects and then the peculiar mode of being of the art work which somehow 'works' on us. Heidegger defines this serviceability as follows:

Serviceability is the basic trait from out of which these kinds of beings look at us – that is, flash at us and thereby presence and so be the beings they are. (*Dienlichkeit ist jener Grundzug, aus dem her dieses Seiende uns anblickt, d. h. anblitzt und damit anwest und so dieses Seiende ist, Off the Beaten Track*, p. 10; GA 5 13)

The thingly character of the art-work – in the case of a stone sculpture, the block of marble or granite itself – is of course a kind of unsurpassable materiality that makes the work be. But the work also works – it has a kind of service it performs in the human world by having its own kind of presence (*Anwesen*) and 'presencing'.

But let us explore the phenomenological approach to art by reflecting a little further on Husserl's conception of the constitution of aesthetic experiencing before returning to Heidegger's concerns.

4.3 Husserl's Reflections on Art and the Aesthetic Imagination

It is fair to say, that as a mathematician, Husserl is not primarily concerned in his early period from the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* to the *Logical Investigations* with the nature of aesthetic experience or art works, although he is very interested in how

¹¹ Heidegger, Afterword, 'Origin of the Work of Art', *Off the Beaten Track*, p. 50; GA 5 67.

symbols function, how one thing can somehow *stand for* something else. He does make reference, in the Fifth Logical Investigation, to the distinction between seeing a painting *as* aesthetically pleasing and actually being aesthetically moved by the painting. We can see something as aesthetically *valuable* and yet not personally *value* it ourselves. In this regard, Husserl sees aesthetic intention (*die ästhetische Intention*) as a peculiar *sui generis* mode of intention in general (see Fifth Logical Investigation § 10, LU II, p. 96; Hua XIX/1368).¹² It is not just a matter of perceiving an object (a 'mere presentation', *bloße Vorstellung*) and then taking some kind of intellectual attitude or judgement (*Urteil*) towards it, as the Brentanian tradition had maintained. Aesthetic apprehension is a complex act, with a complex but unified higher-level apprehension founded on lower levels. Going further, Husserl sees the aesthetic act as a kind of *non-positing* 'modification of an act in the Fifth Logical Investigation in contrast to acts that posit or affirm the existence (*setzende Akte*) of their intended object.

Often enough we understand narrations without decision as to their truth or falsity. Even when we read novels, this is normally the case: we know we are dealing with aesthetic fictions (*um eine ästhetische Fiktion*), but this knowledge remains inoperative in the purely aesthetic effect.... Judgements are passed in a certain manner, but they lack the character of genuine judgements: we neither believe, deny or doubt what is told us – mere 'imaginings' replace genuine judgements. Such talk must not be taken to mean that *imagined judgements here take the place of actual ones*. We rather enact, instead of a judgement affirming a state or affairs, the *qualitative* modification, the neutral putting in suspense of the same state of affairs [*die qualitative Modifikation, das neutral Dahingestellthaben desselben Sachverhalts*], which cannot be identified with any picturing [*mit einem Phantasieren*] of it. (Fifth Logical Investigation § 40, LU II p. 165; Hua XIX/1490)

Husserl's discussion of imaginative acts in the broadest sense as 'non-positing' and not 'taking-for-true' (*fürwahrhaltend*) is somewhat parallel to Alexius Meinong's discussion of assumptions in his *Über Annahme (On Assumptions, 1902)*,¹³ and reflects Husserl's formation in and continued engagement with the thinking of the Brentanian school. The idea is that a certain kind of 'suspension of disbelief' or suspension of ontological commitment takes place when we enter the world of the work of fiction and imagination (*Einbildung*). We are not directly participating in explicitlythetic or positing acts, rather we inhabit a world of *imagined* judgements, decisions and stance-takings. For example, as another Brentanian,

¹²Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen. Erster Band: Prolegomena zur reinen Logik. Text der 1. und der 2. Auflage*, hrsg. Elmar Holenstein, Husserliana XVIII (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), and *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Band: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis, in zwei Bänden*, hrsg. Ursula Panzer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1984); translated *Logical Investigations*, 2 Vols, trans. J.N. Findlay. Ed. with a New Introduction by Dermot Moran and New Preface by Michael Dummett (London & New York: Routledge, 2001). Hereafter 'LU' followed by the volume number of the English edition (in bold), page number of English translation and the Husserliana volume and page number.

¹³Alexius Meinong, *Ueber Annahmen, Ergänzungs-Band II, Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane* (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1902; 2nd ed., Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1910); trans. with an Introduction by James Heanue, *On Assumptions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

Stephan Witasek, will discuss, our sympathy with the murderer in the detective novel is not any kind of enacting or express carrying out of an actual *intention to murder*. We savour the intentional act without, as it were, endorsing it or giving in to it. We remain with the world of a *modification* of the act, a fantasy modification.¹⁴ This is Husserl's position.

An important contribution to this understanding of fictional experience, within the followers of Brentano, came from Stephan Witasek (1870–1915), a member of the Graz school and a student of Alexius Meinong, who wrote on the nature of aesthetic experience in his '*Zur psychologischen Analyse der ästhetischen Einfühlung*'.¹⁵ Witasek regarded empathy (*Einfühlung*) as a 'representation of the psychic' (*Vorstellung von Psychischem*)¹⁶ of 'psychic facts' (*psychische Thatsachen*) especially emotional ones. Tragedy evokes in us fear and sympathy for the hero. What is presented on stage is understood through 'reproduced representations' (*reproduzierte Vorstellungen*).¹⁷ I don't feel precisely his pain (his fate is different from mine) but I feel 'sympathy' (*Mitleid*). Witasek speaks here of '*hineinversetzung*', a placing oneself into the subjective experiences of the other. Witasek distinguishes between intuitive presentations (e.g. perceptions) and 'unintuitive' acts (e.g. imaginings). A blind person can have an unintuitive concept of colour but not an intuitive representation. Imaginative presentations are pretend presentations; fantasy feelings are modified feelings. Empathy-feelings are experiences of others experienced in a modified way. The aim of the feeling is another person. We grasp the feeling-content but divorced from the consequences. We have experiences of sympathy and involvement (*Anteilsgefühle*). Empathy feelings are feelings in fantasy or specially modified feelings. When we connect with the anti-hero we feel *their* suffering and also feel *for* them, but even what we feel is modified from what they feel – as it does not have the same context and consequence for us. As Witasek writes, I hear music that makes me sad. But I am not sad *about the music* itself. My sadness has to have an object and a ground (*Gegenstand und Grund*).¹⁸ The music produces fantasy-presentations in me. Husserl was familiar with Witasek's work and discussed it in his reflections on *Einfühlung*.

In his lectures on *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory (1898–1925)*, repeated and elaborated over many years, Husserl came to reflect seriously on the aesthetic attitude and on the nature of perception, memory, and imagination, in relation to cultural products generally and art-works in particular. There is much to be

¹⁴For a discussion of the definition of the art work in twentieth-century thought, see Tiziana Andina, *The Philosophy of Art: The Question of Definition: From Hegel to Post-Dantian Theories* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). Meinong did not develop a theory of art objects but his student Stephan Witasek did. See also Robin D. Rollinger, 'Husserl and Brentano on Imagination', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 75 (1993), pp. 195–210.

¹⁵Stephan Witasek, 'Zur psychologischen Analyse der ästhetischen Einfühlung', *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane*, 25 (1901), pp. 1–49.

¹⁶Witasek, 'Zur psychologischen Analyse der ästhetischen Einfühlung', p. 3.

¹⁷Witasek, 'Zur psychologischen Analyse der ästhetischen Einfühlung', p. 15.

¹⁸Witasek, 'Zur psychologischen Analyse der ästhetischen Einfühlung', p. 19.

learned from these lectures, especially concerning the nature of the act of imagining and the work of John Brough in particular has been most illuminating in this regard.¹⁹ It is important to recognize that Husserl's position changes substantially over the course of these reflections and lectures, but I cannot enter into these changes and developments here. Husserl generally continues to maintain that the aesthetic attitude operates through a 'modification' – a kind of 'neutrality modification', as he will later call it in *Ideas I* (1913), especially §§ 109–114.²⁰ Phantasy is a specific form of 'neutrality modification' (*Neutralitätsmodifikation*, *Ideas I*, p. 215; Hua III/1, 225).

Clearly, for Husserl, the depicting function of the physical object requires a correlated act by the subject – it is a kind of perceiving but more like 'seeing in', to use Richard Wollheim's term.²¹ Indeed, Husserl himself uses the terms '*hineinsehen*' (*Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, p. 134; Hua XXIII 122), '*hineinschauen*' (*Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, p. 37; Hua XXIII 34) and '*hineinblicken*' (*Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, p. 164; Hua XXIII, 143).²² The presence of the perceiving subject is necessary for the presenting to take place. Husserl asks: 'If I put a picture in a drawer, does the drawer represent something?' (*Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, p. 23; Hua XXIII 21).

Phantasy is a kind of pictorialisation (*Verbildlichung*), (*Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, p. 27; Hua XXIII 26). Husserl wants to make clear that the sensory contents which provide the material for the animating apprehension in perception are all used up in that act – so the act of seeing-in in pictorial apprehension is not based on new sensory material but rather on a shift in the apprehension itself. He writes:

The image object and the physical image surely do not have separate and different apprehension contents; on the contrary, their contents are identically the same. The same visual sensations are interpreted as points and lines on paper and as appearing plastic form. The same sensations are interpreted as a physical thing made from plaster and as a white human form. And in spite of the identity of their sensory foundation, the two apprehensions certainly cannot exist at once: they cannot make two appearances stand out simultaneously. By turns, indeed, and therefore separately, but certainly not at once. (*Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, pp. 48–49; Hua XXIII, 44–45)

¹⁹ See John Brough, 'Depiction and Plastic Perception. A Critique of Husserl's Theory of Picture Consciousness', *Continental Philosophy Review* vol. 40 no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 171–85.

²⁰ E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Erstes Buch: *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* 1, hrsg. K. Schuhmann, Husserliana III/1 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014). Hereafter "*Ideas I*" followed by the page number of the English translation and the Husserliana (abbreviated to "Hua") volume and page number.

²¹ See Richard Wollheim, 'In Defense of Seeing-in', in Heiko Hecht, Robert Schwartz & Margaret Atherton, eds, *Looking into Pictures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 3–16.

²² See the excellent discussion in Regina-Nino Kurg, *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Image Consciousness, Aesthetic Consciousness, and Art*, Thèse de Doctorat présentée devant la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Fribourg en Suisse, 2014.

In seeing a photograph as the photograph of a child, we are not basing this new seeing on new contents, rather we pass by the ‘thingly’ character of the object to focus only on the ‘image-subject’. We can shift focus back – I can realise the photograph is printed on matt rather than glossy paper, that its size is 4 inches by 6 inches, and so on. But that shift in perspective disrupts the original seeing-in. The object seen in the picture, moreover, is not grasped as actual or extant or existent in the same sense as the physical object or bearer of the image exists. The neutrality consciousness means that we don’t assign an existence-value to the seen ‘picture-subject’ – although of course, in the case of the photograph of a living person, we know the person exists – but not ‘in’ the photo.

Husserl remained fascinated by the switch or sudden change of perspective that takes place when I see a waxworks figure in a museum first as a living person and then as a lifeless wax figure. He returns again and again to an experience that he had in the Berlin Panoptikum Museum (actually there were two such waxworks museums – one the Passage-Panoptikum, in the Linden Passage and the other the Castans Panoptikum, both on Friedrichstrasse in Berlin).²³ The experience was deeply moving for Husserl and he returns to it again and again. In the Fifth Logical Investigation § 27, he speaks of seeing a woman and then we see a waxwork figure. Husserl sees this situation as different from that of seeing a statue *representing* a human figure. He writes:

Such talk of ‘representing’ does not or course mean that the waxwork figure is modelled on a lady as in the same waxworks there are figure-models of Napoleon, of Bismarck etc. The percept of the waxwork figure as a thing does not therefore underlie our awareness of the same figure as representing the lady. The lady, rather, makes her appearance together with the wax-figure and in union with it. Two perceptual interpretations [*zwei perzeptive Auffassungen*], or two appearances of a thing [*zwei Dingerscheinungen*], interpenetrate, coinciding as it were in part in their perceptual content. And they interpenetrate in conflicting fashion [*sie durchdringen sich in der Weise des Widerstreites*], so that our observation wanders from one to another or the apparent objects each barring the other from existence. (Fifth Logical Investigation § 27 LU II, pp. 137–38; Hua XIX/1443)

Again the same sensuous contents found two distinct perceptual experiences – first seeing the woman and secondly seeing the waxwork figure and then an experience of conflict continues. Conflict, for Husserl, is a kind of synthesis. Two sets of intentions come into conflict because the underlying sensuous basis remains the same.

In later writings, Husserl continued to refine his conception of image-consciousness, adding new complexities. He discusses actor’s performing of a role as a kind of ‘display’ or ‘representation’ (*Darstellung*) of a character – as a kind of non-intuitive presentation of that character.²⁴

²³ See Katharina Gerstenberger, *Writing the New Berlin. The German Capital in Post-Wall Literature* (NY: Camden House, 2008), p. 56.

²⁴ See, inter alia, Javier Enrique Carreño Cobos, ‘The Many Senses of Imagination and the Manifestation of Fiction: A View from Husserl’s Phenomenology of Phantasy’. *Husserl Studies* vol. 29 no. 2 (2013), pp. 143–62; Christian Ferencz-Flatz, ‘The Neutrality of Images and Husserlian Aesthetics’, *Studia Phaenomenologica* 9 (20098), pp. 477–493; and Christian Lotz, ‘Depiction and Plastic Perception. A Critique of Husserl’s Theory of Picture Consciousness’, *Continental Philosophy Review* 40 (July 2007), pp. 171–85.

4.4 Husserl and Hugo Von Hofmannsthal on Poetry and Phenomenology

An important encounter for Husserl in terms of his thinking about art was his meeting with the renowned German literary figure Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929). On 6th December 1906, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who was on a tour through Europe, reading his paper ‘The Poet and this Time’,²⁵ paid a visit to Husserl in Göttingen.²⁶ In fact Hofmannsthal was a distant relative of Husserl's wife, Malvine Steinschneider. Some weeks after this meeting, on January 12, 1907, Husserl wrote a letter to Hofmannsthal thanking him for his gift, presumably a copy of Hofmannsthal's book *Kleine Dramen (Short Plays)*. In this famous letter,²⁷ Husserl compares the aesthetic experience and the adoption of the phenomenological attitude. Husserl wrote to the poet:

For me, the “inner states” [*inneren Zuständlichkeiten*] that are portrayed in your art as purely aesthetic, or not exactly portrayed, but elevated into the ideal sphere [*die ideale Sphäre*] of pure aesthetic beauty, these states hold, in this aesthetic objectification [*dieser ästhetische Objectivierung*], a particular interest—i.e. not only for the art lover [*Kunstfreund*] in me, but also for the philosopher and “phenomenologist.” (Husserl, Letter to Hugo von Hoffmansthal, *Briefwechsel* vol. VII, p. 133)²⁸

This is one of the rare instances when Husserl reflects explicitly on his own nature as an aesthetic subject. His discussion at this time is focused on trying to find the correct attitude to adopt in relation to experiencing art – or indeed doing philosophy. Husserl is here articulating his view that aesthetic intuition involves a certain stance-taking towards the object which imaginatively lifts it out of the real world and contemplates it in a different context (here he speaks of a kind of ideality attaching to the art work).

²⁵Hugo von Hofmannsthal, ‘Der Dichter und diese Zeit,’ reprinted in Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke: Prosa II* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1907), pp. 222–258; trans. ‘The Poet and Our Time’, in *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and the Austrian Idea: Selected Essays and Addresses 1906–1927*, trans. David S. Luft (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2011).

²⁶See Rudolf Hirsch, “Edmund Husserl und Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Eine Begegnung und ein Brief,” in *Sprache und Politik. Festgabe für Dolf Sternberger zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*. Ed. Carl-Joachim Friedrich and Benno Reifenberg (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1968), pp. 108–115.

²⁷See Edmund Husserl, *Briefwechsel*. Band VII: *Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz*, ed. Karl Schuhmann, *Husserliana Dokumente III* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), vol. VII, pp. 133–136. And Edmund Husserl, « Une lettre de Husserl à Hofmannsthal », traduite par E. Escoubas, *La Part de l'oeil*, Dossier: Art et phénoménologie, n°7, 1991, pp. 12–15. An English translation by Sven-Olov Wallenstein is E. Husserl, ‘Letter to Hofmannsthal (1907)’, *SITE* (2009), pp. 26–27. Husserl's letter was originally published in Rudolf Hirsch, « Edmund Husserl und Hugo von Hofmannsthal — Eine Begegnung und ein Brief », in *Sprache und Politik. Festgabe für Dolf Sternberger zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, hrsg. Carl-Joachim Friedrich and Benno Reifenberg, Heidelberg, Lambert Schneider, 1968, pp. 111–114.

²⁸See Husserl, Letter, *Husserliana Dokumente, Briefwechsel*, vol. VII, *Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), pp. 133–36. I am using a modified version of the translation of Sven-Olov Wallenstein, E. Husserl, ‘Letter to Hofmannsthal (1907)’, *SITE* (2009), pp. 26–27.

Husserl's discovery of the phenomenological *epoché*, the peculiar suspension of belief in the world that opens the entrance gate to phenomenological reflection on the essence of experience, more or less coincides with his discovery of the 'natural attitude' (*die natürliche Einstellung*). Indeed, both the natural attitude and its suspension through the *epoché* are first introduced in *Ideas I* (1913) §§ 27–31. Philosophy has to take a new attitude and phenomenology in particular involves a rigorous adopting of a transcendental, non-naturalistic approach that breaks with natural belief in the world and enters the realm of pure eidetic seeing. As Husserl writes in his letter to von Hoffmannsthal:

It [phenomenology] demands a position taking [*Stellungnahme*] towards all forms of objectivity that fundamentally departs from its "natural" counterpart, and which is closely related to the attitude and stance [*Stellung und Haltung*] in which your art, as something purely aesthetic, places us with respect to the presented objects and the whole of the surrounding world [*Umwelt*]. The intuition [*Anschauung*] of a purely aesthetic work of art is enacted under a strict suspension of all existential attitudes [*existenziale Stellungnahme*] of the intellect and of all attitudes relating to emotions and the will which presuppose such an existential attitude. (Husserl, Letter to Hofmannsthal, in Schuhmann, ed., *Briefwechsel*, vol. VII, p. 133)

In this regard, Husserl is following the fairly standard 'disinterested' view of art – commonplace at the end of the nineteenth century. We have the 'art for art's sake' movement and the abandonment of the idea that art is a representation of life. Art is its own higher experience, it operates on its own level, it takes experiences, and, in a sense, disconnects them from everyday life, and presents them in a kind of ideal light. Moreover, this aesthetic attitude involves something like a suspension of belief in the extant world and indeed an uncoupling of our emotions and will in relation to real action and what he calls here 'the existential attitude'. Similar views of art can be found in Oscar Wilde, for example. In this letter to Hoffmansthal, Husserl's precision on the meaning of this aesthetic attitude is interesting;

Or more precisely: the work of art places us in (almost forces us into) a state of pure aesthetic intuition that excludes these position-takings. The more of the existential world [*von der Existenzialen Welt*] that resounds or is brought to attention, and the more the work of art demands an existential attitude of us out of itself (for instance a naturalistic sensuous appearance [*Sinnenschein*]: the natural truth of photography), the less aesthetically pure the work is. (To this also belong all kinds of "tendency" [*Tendenz*].) The natural stance of the mind, the stance of actual life, is "existential" through and through [*Die natürliche Geisteshaltung, die des aktuellen Lebens, ist durchaus "existenzial"*]. Things that stand before us in a sensuous way, the things of which actual scientific discourse speaks, are posited by us as realities [*als Wirklichkeiten*] ... (Husserl, Letter to Hofmannsthal, *Briefwechsel*, vol. VII, p. 134)

Husserl is alluding to is the manner the aesthetic attitude takes hold of us and wrests us from our everyday attitude of immersion in the everyday world (for which Husserl's favourite verbs are *Dahinleben* and *Hineinleben*), and literally transports us *elsewhere*. The natural stance of life is disrupted and everyday position-takings are 'excluded', and we are in a new realm – but Husserl does not want to talk about this realm as a simulacrum or as something which is simply to be contrasted with existential, factual reality. It is not a pale imitation of the real world (which is the

Platonic critique of art) but a *unique world of its own* – with its own modified experiences, modified apprehensions, modified emotions, modified convictions and so on. Husserl continues:

The *artist*, who “observes” [*beobachtet*] the world in order to gain “knowledge” of nature and man [*Natur- un Menschen-kennntnis*] for his own purposes, relates to it in a similar way as the phenomenologist. Thus: not as an observing natural scientist and psychologist, not as a practical observer of man [*Menschenbeobachter*], as if it were an issue of knowledge of man and nature. When he observes the world, it becomes a phenomenon for him, its existence is indifferent, just as it is to the philosopher (in the critique of reason). The difference is that the artist, unlike the philosopher, does not attempt to found the “sense” [*Sinn*] of the world-phenomenon [*des Weltphänomens*] and grasp it in concepts, but appropriates it intuitively, in order to gather, out of its plenitude, materials for the creation of aesthetic forms. (Husserl, Letter to Hofmannsthal, *Briefwechsel*, vol. VII, p. 135)

The extant world becomes a matter of indifference, we live within the aesthetic attitude in a world of aesthetic experiences and objects, a world with its own character of intention and fulfilment. Toward the end of the letter, however, Husserl outlines some differences between the purely aesthetic attitude and the stance of the phenomenologist.

The phenomenological regard [*Das phänomenologische Schauen*] is, thus, closely related to the aesthetic look in “pure” art; but, of course, it is not a look in order to enjoy aesthetically, but to research, to discover, to constitute scientific affirmations of a new (philosophical) dimension. (Husserl, Letter to Hofmannsthal, *Briefwechsel*, vol. VII, p. 135)

For Husserl, philosophical reflection has a different focus, it aims not at art but at knowledge.

Overall, in these lectures and in his letter to Hofmannsthal Husserl emphasises the idea of a ‘stance-taking’ (*Stellungnahme*) and the way different stance-takings take hold of us and operate with their own sense of space, time, causality, objecthood, and so on. The aesthetic realm is *sui generis* although Husserl does not dwell on its ontological character, rather he is interested in how the natural stance is modified in the aesthetic attitude.

Husserl must have been aware of Hofmannsthal’s views on art. Hofmannsthal had a view of everyday life as chaotic and scattered and gradually losing its meaning and “slipping away”. Art, on the other hand, for him, gathers and unifies. Poetry, moreover, is not about *communicating* information or emotions, but about discovering truth – and in this regard poets and philosophers are on the same path. However, according to Hofmannsthal, art has an advantage: only poets can reach the end of the path of truth.²⁹ In an interesting discussion, Wolfgang Huemer has criticised Husserl’s letter for adopting an aestheticism that Hoffmannsthal had already abandoned as is evident from his 1902 *Letter to Lord Chandos*. Here Hoffmannsthal writes:

²⁹ See Wolfgang Huemer, ‘Phenomenological Redduction and Aesthetic Experience: Husserl meets Hofmannsthal’, in *Writing the Austrian Traditions: Relations between Philosophy and Literature*. Ed. Wolfgang Huemer and Marc-Oliver Schuster (Edmonton, Alberta: Wirth-Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, 2003), pp. 121–130.

Everything fell into fragments for me, the fragments into further fragments, until it seemed impossible to contain anything at all within a single concept.³⁰

Others have seen that Husserl is following the Kantian line on art as a *disinterested* kind of play.

Husserl's earlier view sees art as having a certain ideality. There is undoubtedly something in this approach which can be found also in Hegel. It is a kind of Platonic appreciation of art as an escape from the fleeting world of appearances. Thus Hegel writes in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*:

Art liberates the real import of appearances from this bad and fleeting world, and imparts to phenomenal semblances a higher reality, born of mind. The appearances of art therefore, far from being mere semblances, have the higher reality and the more genuine existence in comparison with the realities of common life. (Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics*)³¹

But Husserl's views continued to evolve as he came to contemplate more and more the nature of social life, culture and history.

4.5 The Later Husserl on Cultural Objects

Husserl returns to talking about cultural productions in his late essays, especially 'The Vienna Lecture' and 'The Origin of Geometry' both collected by Walter Biemel in the Husserliana edition of *The Crisis of European Sciences*.³² Husserl's focus is still on trying to specify the peculiar approach of *philosophy*. A crucial point of contact and difference between Husserl in this later period and Heidegger is the nature of the work of art and its role in expressing the nature of the culture or 'spirit' (*Geist*) of the age. Husserl has a critique of 'objectivism' in the Vienna lecture which sees spirit as originally tied to matter, always appearing layered onto physical being. Even in modernity the two Cartesian regions are connected by the one psychophysical causality. But this leaves out the pure ideality of cultural norms and values and the manner in which these motivate human beings, not to mention the avoidance of confronting the nature of subjectivity presupposed by this objectivity.

³⁰Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *The Lord Chandos Letter*, trans. Russell Stockman (Marlboro: The Marlboro Press, 1986), p. 21; cited in *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture* edited by David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), p. 221.

³¹G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). See Karsten Harries, 'Hegel on the Future of Art', *The Review of Metaphysics* vol. 27 (1974), pp. 677–96.

³²E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, Husserlian VI (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1976), translated by David Carr, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970). Hereafter 'Crisis' followed by English page number and then Husserliana volume number and pagination of German original.

In the *Vienna Lecture*, Husserl's theme is the graded kinds of ideality that can be experienced. He regards art works as culturally bound in a way in which scientific products are not. For him, scientific products present themselves with an ideality which guarantees identity in all repeated acts of accessing them, e.g., the Pythagorean Theorem is the same for all. In the *Prolegomena* to the *Investigations* Husserl defends a realist view that the laws of nature hold true and are valid even if they have never been discovered or thought by the human mind. Consider the following passage from the *Vienna Lecture*:

Let us illuminate first of all the remarkable, peculiar character of philosophy, unfolding in ever new special sciences. Let us contrast it with other cultural forms [*Kulturformen*] already present in prescientific mankind [*in der vowissenschaftlichen Menschheit*]: artefacts, agriculture, domestic arts, etc. All these signify classes of cultural products with their own methods for assuring successful production. Otherwise, they have a passing existence [*ein vorübergehendes Dasein*] in the surrounding world. Scientific acquisitions, on the other hand, after their method of assured successful production has been attained, have quite another manner of being [*eine ganz andere Seinsart*], quite another temporality. They are not used up; they are imperishable; repeated production creates not something similar, at best equally useful; it produces in any number of acts of production by one person or any number of persons something identically the same, identical in sense and validity [*identisch nach Sinn und Geltung*]. Persons bound together in direct mutual understanding cannot help experiencing what has been produced by their fellows in similar acts of production as being identically the same as what they themselves produce. In a word, what is acquired through scientific activity is not something real but something ideal. (*Vienna Lecture, Crisis*, p. 278; Hua VI 323)

Here Husserl is making an interesting contrast with cultural works – useful domestic objects (e.g. pottery, clothing), art objects (jewellery), and agricultural objects (e.g. tools) – that are produced by pre-scientific cultures, and the kind of *ideal objectivity* produced by the exact sciences. In contrast to the usual traditional claim that art is perennial, Husserl is suggesting that cultural objects in general are temporally and culturally bound, and do not transcend their environments. As Husserl puts it: “they have a passing existence in the surrounding world” (*Im übrigen haben sie ein vorübergehendes Dasein in der Umwelt*, Hua VI 323), whereas the ‘products’ (*Erzeugungen*) of scientific endeavour are not real but ideal (*was wissenschaftliches Tun erwirbt, ist nicht Reales sondern Ideales*). In that sense, for the late Husserl, science lifts us above the life world and brings us into contact with the ideal, the identical, the self-same. Art can at best bring us into a cycle of repeated production of similar products. Art works are culturally bound – raising the spectre of relativism—and also (as Heidegger will develop) the idea that art is tied to a particular time, place and world. When that world withdraws, the art work no longer functions as such. Husserl still ties the art-work to ideality but he contrasts it with the context-free ideality of scientific accomplishment.

Notice how Husserl's language in these writings from the 1930s is rather close to the description of the spheres of labour and work in Hannah Arendt's *Human Condition*, written in 1950. However, where, for Arendt, it is action which lifts humans out of the cycle of nature whereby labourers are tied to their labour, and goes beyond the production of artefacts which take on an existence apart from the

maker, the sphere of action is liberating. For Husserl, it is not political action that is liberating but the life of scientific communal inquiry in the carrying out of infinite tasks.

Husserl has no particular view on the ‘material’ or ‘content’ of art. Traditionally, certain themes or topics were considered to be outside the scope of art, to belong to something else, *kitch* for example. Hegel had observed that modern art was freed from any restriction in regard to content – hence art could be made from anything or be found anywhere. Hegel writes:

Today the artist is no longer bound to a specific content and a manner of representation appropriate only to this subject matter — art has thereby become a free instrument, which, his own subjective skill permitting, the artist can use equally well on any content, whatever it may be.

Husserl has nothing much to say on the *content* of art; he remained fascinated by how art comes to be recognized as such, the kind of stance-taking that reveals art.

4.6 Martin Heidegger on Art and the Working of Art Works

In *Being and Time* (1927),³³ Heidegger already recognized the importance of the artwork in challenging the categories of *vorhanden* and *zuhanden*, as the primary and most basic categories through which human existence as Dasein relating to things in the world, but it was not until the 1930s that Heidegger, wounded by the Rectoral debacle of 1933, turned towards his phenomenology of the artwork in powerful lectures delivered in 1935, when Heidegger was at the height of his powers.

Heidegger focuses on the *being* of art works and their ‘reason for being’ – their ‘what-for’ (*Wozu*) character. Heidegger agrees with Husserl in beginning from the recognition that we do not experience art works in quite the same way as we experience physical things. Heidegger writes in his 1935 ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ (as published in *Holzwege*):

If we consider the works in their untouched actuality and do not deceive ourselves, the result is that the works are as naturally present as are things [*so natürlich vorhanden wie Dinge*]. The picture hangs on the wall like a rifle or a hat. A painting, e. g., the one by Van Gogh that represents a pair of peasant shoes, travels from one exhibition to another. Works of art are shipped like coal from the Ruhr and logs from the Black Forest. During the First World war Hölderlin’s hymns were packed in soldier’s knapsacks together with cleaning gear. Beethoven’s quartets lie in the storerooms of the publishing house like potatoes in a cellar. (Heidegger, ‘Origin of the Work of Art’, *Off the Beaten Track*, pp. 2–3; GA 5 3)

For Heidegger, art-works are, of course, physical ‘things’ (*Dinge*) – they have a *vorhanden* character of being merely present-at-hand in the world. However,

³³Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, hrsg. von Friedrich-Wilhelm v. Herrmann, Gesamtausgabe 2 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977); trans. John Macquarrie and E. Robinson *Being and Time* (New York/Oxford: Harper and Row/ Blackwell, 1962). Hereafter ‘BT’ followed by pagination of English translation of German edition.

although the work of art is a physical object like any other, it also has some other significant essential features that take it beyond the merely *vorhanden*. Furthermore, when apprehended as an art-work, it is not primarily seen as a physical thing at all:

The artwork, however, through its self-sufficient presence, resembles, rather, the mere thing which has taken shape by itself and is never forced into being. Nonetheless, we do not count such works as mere things. (Heidegger, 'Origin of the Work of Art', *Off the Beaten Track*, p. 10; GA 5 14)

Furthermore, the art-work occupies a singular ontological position between tools or equipment, and 'mere things'. The art work 'works' in a unique way and its 'working' is a form of phenomenality and disclosure that cannot be replaced by other kinds of entities.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger does have incidental remarks about the nature of society and about the nature of art and cultural works. He begins by thinking about human beings in their average everydayness. 'Being-in-the-world' has several structures that have particular importance for art. There are the overwhelming processes of familiarisation, overcoming of distance, averaging down, ignoring significance, levelling off, which make up the phenomenon of being-in-the-world and account for the fact that it has remained unnoticed. But there are also indications of aspects of life that stand against these inevitable processes. Authentic life is simply a structural modification of the 'they', of the 'one' (*Man-selbst*, BT 168; 130).

Famously, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger discusses the first encounters with things *a*, which he thinks the Greeks captured correctly as *pragmata*, as items of 'handiness' or 'manipulability' (*Handlichkeit*) within a context of concerns and projects. The Greeks, however, did not make the mode of being of things as tools transparent to themselves. Heidegger writes:

The Greeks had an appropriate term for 'Things': *pragmata* – that is to say, that which one has to do with in one's concerned dealings (*praxis*). But ontologically, the specifically 'pragmatic' character of the *pragma* is just what the Greeks left in obscurity; they thought of these 'proximally' as 'mere Things'. We shall call those entities which we encounter in concern "equipment" [*das Zeug*]. (BT § 15, pp. 96–97; 68)

Equipment always exists in the context of other equipment in relation to networks of tasks and assignments. As Heidegger puts it, 'The work bears with it that referential totality within which the equipment is encountered' (*Das Werk trägt die Verweisungsganzheit, innerhalb derer das Zeug begegnet*, BT § 15, p. 99; GA 2 69–70). It is only against this background of usability and serviceability that something like 'nature' or indeed 'art' becomes apparent. There are different ways of understanding things: 'the botanist's plants are not the flowers of the hedgerow' (BT § 15, p. 100; GA 2 70), the geographer's river source is not the poet's 'springhead in the dale'. Heidegger is already aware that things emerge against the background of the kind of world to which they belong. Initially we encounter things in the 'work-world' (*Werkwelt*, BT § 15, p. 101; GA 2 71) but we really only notice them when they stand out from that world in not being serviceable, not functioning normally. These yield to the modes of 'conspicuousness, obtrusiveness, and obstinacy' (BT, p. 104; GA 74). In these instances: 'the environment announces itself afresh'

(*Widerum meldet sich die Umwelt*, BT p. 105; GA 2 75). Heidegger's argument is that the world which is normally taken for granted only discloses itself in such ruptures. But that is not to say the world really consists of things for use, that they are the real 'things in themselves'. The kinds of disclosure and non-disclosure are what really belong to the nature of world. This is where Heidegger's analysis is quite novel. In his 1935 essay on art, Heidegger revisits his analysis of things and how they are 'bearers' of this context of usability and serviceability. Now, however, not just implements like work-boots are in focus but also art-works which 'portray' or 'represent' work-boots.

Heidegger in his 'The Origin of the Work of Art' essay rejects the Kantian-Husserlian starting point – which is the assumption that the key element is aesthetic experience understood as 'pure' or 'disinterested'. He begins rather from the Hegelian position that art is a vehicle for truth, it is an agent of disclosure, a site of manifestation. The art-work *works*, it is actually a dynamic *process*, an actualization. It works by performing a kind of *poesis*, a making. Thus we get Heidegger's dense proclamation:

It is due to art's poetic nature that, in the midst of what is, art breaks open an open place [*eine offene Stelle*], in whose openness everything is other than usual. In virtue of the projected sketch set into the work of the unconcealedness [*Unverborgenheit*] of what is, which casts itself towards us, everything ordinary and hitherto existing becomes an unbeing [*zum Unseienden*]. This unbeing has lost the capacity to give and keep being as measure [*als Mass*]. The curious fact here is that the work in no way affects hitherto existing entities by causal connections. The working [*Wirkung*] of the work does not consist in the taking effect of a cause. It lies in a change, happening from out of the work, of the unconcealedness of what is, and this means of Being. (Heidegger 'Origin of Work of Art', *Off the Beaten Track*, pp. 44–45; GA 5 59–60)

As Heidegger puts it, art opens a clearing. What art does is to *open a space* – working in exactly the opposite way to the kind of loss of distance (*Ent-fernung*, SZ § 23 – using Heidegger's peculiar interpretation of *Entfernung* as a de-distantiation—interpreting 'ent' as a privative instead of an intensive) experienced in mass society. Art is a de-stabilising power which allows the truth of being to manifest itself: 'The essential nature of art would then be this: the setting-itself-to-work of the truth of beings', ('The Origin of the Work of Art', *Off the Beaten Path*, p. 16; GA 5 21). Clearly this is a complex and provocative claim that needs to be further developed, especially when Heidegger also quotes Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* to the effect that art is now a thing of the past. The age of the art-work as effective is essentially over, for Heidegger:

In all these connections art is, and remains, with regard to its highest vocation, a thing of the past. (*In allen diesen Beziehungen ist und bleibt die Kunst nach der Seite ihrer höchsten Bestimmung für uns ein Vergangenes*, 'Origin of the Work of Art', *Off the Beaten Track*, p. 51; GA 5 68)

What Heidegger is returning to here – is interestingly exactly the issue which Husserl is contemporaneously in 1935 discussing in his 'Vienna Lecture', namely the kind of culture-bound ideality that belongs to cultural products (as opposed—at least in Husserl's case—to scientific discoveries). Heidegger, on the other hand, is

proclaiming the death of 'art for art's sake', prefiguring the movements that would precisely champion this art-negating approach in the twentieth century. Heidegger does leave open however that some kind of *poiesis* can be the 'other thinking' which will replace the outworn forms of metaphysical thinking that have dominated the West for two millennia.

In his 1935 essay, Heidegger explores how genuine art (and how art is genuine is another vexed matter) functions to open up a world and establish a tension or 'strife' (*Streit*) between world and earth. Heidegger writes that the art work sets up a fundamental tension between world and earth: 'The setting-itself-to-work of the truth of beings are two essential traits belonging to the work-being of the work'. According to Heidegger, furthermore, art not just functions to *set up* a world but also to *preserve* that world. Art 'set up' a world and preserves it as world. We grasp the Greek world through its art-works. Heidegger writes:

Standing there, the temple first gives to things their look [*Gesicht*], and to men their outlook [*Aussicht*] on themselves. This view remains open as long as the work is a work, as long as the god has not fled from it. ... The work is not a portrait intended to make it easier to recognize what the god looks like. It is, rather, a work which allows the god himself to presence [*das den Gott selbst anwesen lässt*] and is, therefore, the god himself. (*Off the Beaten Track*, p. 21; GA 5 29)

Heidegger is ambiguous about whether the *poiesis* of art is itself the power that brings the gods into being.

But this essential grasping of world can also fade away and disappear. The world of the Greeks can become inaccessible. As Heidegger puts it, 'world-withdrawal and world-decay' (*Weltentzug und Weltzerfall*, GA 5 26) cannot be undone. There is an evitable wearing down of the world of a work until that world is no longer available and art no longer functions as art. What Hegel actually said in his *Lectures on Aesthetics* was:

... it certainly is the case that art is no longer affords that satisfaction of spiritual wants, which earlier epochs and peoples have sought therein only; a satisfaction which, at all events on the religious side, was most intimately and profoundly connected with art. The beautiful days of Greek art, and the golden time of the later middle ages, are gone by. The reflective culture of our life of today, makes it a necessity for us, in respect to our will no less than of our judgment, to adhere to general points of view, and to regulate particular matters according to them, so that general forms, laws, duties, rights, maxims are what have validity as grounds of determination and are the chief regulative force.

Hegel concludes, as quoted by Heidegger: 'In all these relationships, art is and remains for us, on the side of its highest vocation something past' (*In allen diesen Beziehungen ist und bleibt die Kunst nach der Seite ihrer höchsten Bestimmung für uns ein Vergangenes*, GA 5 66). The reflective mood of modern life has made the immediate experience of art impossible and, since art, for Hegel, operates in the zone of sensuous immediacy, then art today is impossible as art. The Greeks lived, for Hegel, in the 'religion of art'. Of course, a new kind of reflective appreciation could arise – and has arisen – but the kind of 'art' produced no longer bathes in sensuous immediacy. Art is now working at an intellectual, reflective level. Husserl does not consider this issue in his characterization of the peculiar kind of ideality

that belongs to aesthetic intuition. It is of course possible that a kind of ideating, reflective regard could be aesthetic in a sense removed from the realm of sensuous immediacy but Husserl does not dwell explicitly on whether the aesthetic regard has an inbuilt historicity.

4.7 Conclusion: The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Intuition and the Being of the Art-Work

The relation between art, experience, and the working of art objects, then, in both Husserl and Heidegger, is very complex. Art is not primarily about generating a new kind of experience, certainly not something like aesthetic pleasure or sensuous satisfaction. Art has an ontological function, for Heidegger, in that it functions to set up and preserve 'world' and reveal the truth of that world. It also functions to maintain some kind of tension between earth and sky, immanence and transcendence, materiality as such as well as *logos*. Husserl also sees the deep connection between art-works and world. For both Husserl and Heidegger, art-works are primarily disclosive of world. Unlike use-objects or tools, where the tasks to be done are the primary focus of interest, in the art-work, the thing is released from its context of everydayness precisely so it can become disclosive of its world. Art reveals world. In *Being and Time*, theoretical inspection, mere viewing, curiosity, all strip the object from its *Weltlichkeit*. In art works on the other hand, world is foregrounded. Husserl's careful analyses of the way in which the aesthetic intuition places its intentional object in a special zone, bracketed from the world of everyday concern and in a sense 'idealised', actually complements Heidegger's account. Husserl wants to carefully separate out the objects of ordinary perception from the objects of aesthetic imagining. Both Husserl and Heidegger reject accounts of the aesthetic that make it purely a matter of sensory experiencing. But, in the end, Heidegger gives a dynamic account of art as an interplay of revelation and concealment, in the disclosure of truth, which goes beyond Husserl's concerns with the life of aesthetic fantasy and fiction.