INTO THE PICTURE

Husserl's Picture Theories – and Two Types of Pictures

'Things, however, are difficult, and it is easy to run wild . . .'

Husserl (Hua XXIII, 342)

We have investigated the possibilities of diagram manipulation in picture viewing and analysis. A further attempt at surpassing naïve picture understanding is provided by the sections of Husserl's phenomenology in which he outlines a taxonomy of acts and thus describes the picture as an act type and spends extensive discussions on placing it in relation to other act types.

After having put forward the idea of different types of intentional acts in *Logische Untersuchungen* which we touched upon in Chap. 6, Husserl often in the following years returned to the attempt of devising a more fine-grained typology than the one outlined there. The distinction between perception, imagination, and signitive acts of various types had to be refined, especially as regards the imaginative types of acts. In the years from LU and to 1912, but even well into the 20s, Husserl struggled with the elaboration of this branch of phenomenology, and the papers containing these strivings are collected in *Husserliana* (*Hua*) Vol. XXIII with the title *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung*, a title suitable for the project because Husserl's investigation concentrates upon establishing a series of subspecies to the imaginative acts of LU where the three types mentioned hold prominent positions.

Most of the papers have a preliminary, discussing character, and even the more thoroughly argued texts often have the character of the investigation of an issue where the conclusion still remains to be made – but in the long run of the repeated investigations, gradually the central problems in the descriptions become clear. A large work dating from the 1904–05 lectures about phenomenology and epistemology deals with the distinction between fantasy and pictorial consciousness in an explicitly experimental way – Husserl investigates a claim he earlier shared but which is now abandoned during the text: the idea that fantasy is a sort of pictorial consciousness (as in Beilage 1 from 1898). A long series of smaller papers, notes and addenda from these years and thereafter are concerned with fantasy versus picture, fantasy vs. memory, contradiction ('Widerstreit') as the basis of pictorial consciousness, empty presentations, etc., and various taxonomies of act types are proposed. The next larger work to follow is 'Modi der Reproduktion und Phantasie. Bildbewusstsein' from 1912 where the discussion about the status of fantasy is attempted solved – now on the base of emerging transcendental phenomenology – by

the determination of fantasy as a reproductive modification, based on a distinction between impression and reproduction. This text is also accompanied by a series of *Beilagen*, inter alia about fictional consciousness, 'iconic phantasies', the relation between fantasy and actuality, the different aspects of pictorial consciousness, aesthetic consciousness, etc. Finally, a last group of smaller texts from the years 1918–24 are about the modi of intuition, the relation of fantasy to pure possibilities and to neutralization (taken as the suspension of the act's character of existence claim).

The notion of picture belongs to the most stable elements in this flux of new ideas and typologies making the many texts not only variants but outlines of original and untested ideas. Here we shall extract an outline of the resulting concept of picture – followed by a concrete proposal for a new phenomenological distinction on that basis.

The distinction in the LU between perception and the bundle of less direct types of access to the object, the imaginative respective signitive acts rests on the idea that an indirect approach to the object may take place with or without accompanying pictures. Here, it is taken for granted that pictures, fantasy, dream, memory, expectation, etc. all share the character of being imaginative – and further investigation naturally must attempt a description of the distinctions between these imagination subspecies. When reading Husserl's vast works on these problems up to 1912, it is striking to see that the notion of picture holds, as mentioned, a rather stable definition throughout the period. The determination of the concept of picture by the triad of *picture, pictural object* and *sujet* is constant, just like the relation of similarity, tying them together, and the relation of contradiction which complementarily prevents them from being identical. This double tension of similarity and contradiction provides a constant description of the picture and the type of consciousness assumed to correspond to it. The decisive problem for Husserl during that period is rather the description of *fantasy* which seems to be a sort of in-between, difficult to determine, between the explicit relation of similarity between well-defined, separate objects in the picture on the one hand and the immediate and direct access to the object offered by perception on the other.

Fantasy seems to share the picture's relation to its object, defined by similarly, on the one hand; on the other, fantasy seems, just like perception, to take place directly (even if not referring to any object present) and without any intermediary, thus there is not in fantasy any contradiction or tension between several ways of accessing the same perceptual content as is the case in pictures. Husserl's never-ending reflection in that period has, for that reason, fantasy as its primary goal rather than pictures proper (fantasy along with memory, dream, expectation, etc. which share fantasy's picture-like qualities without any explicit similarity/contradiction relation like in pictures proper). Correspondingly, Husserl's picture concept is narrow, being tied to externally, physically existing picture objects endowed with certain visual or tactical moments. In the perspective of Peirce's broad concept of icons, iconicity naturally involves fantasy which in a Peircean view must be classified as being a type of hypoicon. A further reason for including both fantasy and pictures under the icon concept is the role of fantasy in the grasping of sophisticated types of icons – more about this later.

Let us present the picture theory of 'Phantasie und Bildbewusstsein' where the triad mentioned is outlined:

> When we here distinguish between object and picture, it soon becomes apparent that the concept of picture is here double. The object depicted is opposed to a double entity: 1) the picture as a physical thing, as this painted and framed piece of canvas, as this printed piece of paper, etc.
> 2) The picture as the pictural object which appears through this particular bundle of colors and forms. This is not the object depicted, the pictural sujet, but the concise analogon of the fantasy picture, namely the appearing object which is the representative of the pictural *sujet*.[365](Hua XXIII, 19)

In contrast to many naïve definition of pictures by means of similiarity, this definition – just like Peirce's – avoids the identification of meaning and reference. Against the picture taken as a merely physical object stand not one diffuse meaning, but two distinct phenomena: the object, be it real or not, to which the picture refers, and the pictorality, the 'pictorial object' (Bildobjekt) in Husserl's terminology, which is what makes it possible for the picture to refer to its sujet, to its object of reference. As Husserl sums up, (ibid.):

> Three objects are what we have. 1) The physical picture, the thing made out of canvas, of marble, etc. 2) The representing or picturing object, and 3) the represented or depicted object.[366]

This distinction involves Husserl's decisive criterion for pictorality, namely whether a 'Bewusstsein von Differenz', a difference-conscoiusness distinguishing between 2) and 3) is present (20). If 2) did not differ from a perception of the object itself, there would be no picture. If we compare this to Peirce's concept of the icon we find a related idea: a transformation of invariant structure must hold between the two sides of the icon (corresponding here to 2) and 3), respectively), and the case of identity will correspond to a null-transformation where we would not talk about iconicity. A decisive difference between the two, on the other hand, lies in the question of the picture's dependency upon consciousness (maintained by Husserl, not so by Peirce). This implies, of course, that the difference between object and meaning – Husserl's 'Widerstreit' – to him is not only a structural fact in the picture sign as such, but requires a more or less explicitly articulated consciousness of contradiction.

This pictorial consciousness consists in the fact that the picture is constituted by the contemporaneous presence of two different presentations of the object: first, the presentation of the picture as a physical object appearing – second, the derivative act, founded on the former, which takes (aspects of) this presentation as picture of another object which is not, in itself, intuitively given, and which appears only through this presentation. The relation between pictorial object and reference object (what Husserl calls sujet) repeats, on the one hand, the tension inherent in perception between intuitively given profiles and their synthesis into an object, on the other hand a pictorial consciousness must precede it and select certain moments in the physical picture, making them interpretable *as* such profiles. These moments in the appearance of the physical object thus provide the basis of two contrasting acts, one direct and one pictorial. Pictorial consciousness thus involves two sides: the conscious directedness towards an object (31) through a picture – and

the consciousness of contradiction which distinguishes between the two contrasting interpretations.

This analysis of pictorial consciousness has a series of consequences:

– It becomes possible to distinguish between those moments in the pictorial object which are similar to the object and allows it to appear, on the one hand, and those moments which do not resemble it or are decidedly in contradiction to it, on the other: 'What functions representationally in the content of the pictorial object is indicated in a special manner: *It produces, it represents,* depicts, *makes intuitive*. It is as if the sujet gazes towards us through *these* features. These features appear first in simple perception and only stand out in it against the other features of the pictorial object, against moments, parts, properties which either decidedly possess the opposite character, that of contradiction to properties in the sujet referred to, or which do not have neither one nor the other character. Such characterless features depict nothing, but it remains undecided how the real object is represented in them.'[367]

– On the basis of this idea, a further distinction between different pictures of the same object can be made – and, more generally, a distinction between different types of pictures using different classes of moments in this similarity relation.

– It becomes possible to distinguish between two different types of use of the picture: one which uses the picture mainly as sort of indexical 'trigger' to refer to the object (what Husserl calls a 'symbolical' use of the picture, cf. his idea of the trigger role of illustrations in geometry) versus a more proper use of the picture which momentarily lets pictorial object and reference object fuse together so that we directly grasp the latter through the former (analogous, in fact, to Peirce's idea of an 'imaginary moment' in icon processing where it is as if the object is perceived directly).

– Aesthetic contemplation of pictures may be distinguished as a special focussing on the pictorial object *as appearance* (where both the picture as physical support as well as object reference are bracketed). In the text in question, Husserl draws the consequence that the aesthetic picture must stand in a clear distance to its object (41), so that the differential character of pictorial consciousness is at its most clear and the bracketing of the object depicted is easiest. It is interesting to note that Husserl's deliberations here touches upon his recurrent wax doll example (where we erroneously take a life-size wax doll to be a human being) where the spectator is spontaneously fooled by the high degree of perceptual resemblance *despite* our clear, conceptual insight that it is not a living human being. The purely conceptual knowledge about the *Widerstreit* is thus not sufficient for the aesthetic feeling, about which we know that '. . . the picture must distinguish itself *clearly* from reality, that is, purely intuitively, without any help from indirect thoughts.'[368] Pure consciousness of *Widerstreit* must be spontaneous and intuitive, not a secondary product of reflection. Aesthetic contemplation of pictures thus appears as a threshold phenomenon in a continuum: on the one hand it must be distinguished from pictures with unclear, vague, or diminished consciousness of *Widerstreit* where the interest in the object has the upper hand and the attempt

to grasp the object directly is important (cf. 'the imaginary moment'); on the other hand it must be distinguished from merely symbolical uses of the picture where it it is *also* taken primarily as a type of access to the object, but this time with extra sharpened contrast consciousness and without any direct imagination of object qualities.

– Finally, the analysis of pictorial consciousness serves in a recurrent fashion as Husserl's background for his (vain?) attempts at a consistent description of fantasy as act type. The large text which we have here discussed, in this respect plays the role of an intermediary text where Husserl's earlier idea about the pictorial quality of fantasy (maintained in Beilage 1 (108) from 1898 and, even if less explicitly, in the *Logische Untersuchungen*) is finally given up.

The fact that the constant tension between similarity and contrast in the definition of pictures must, in fact, be at stake in two separate relations in the picture as a whole, is finally made explicit in a contemporary note, Beilage III (dated 'wohl um 1904/05') which, given the triadic definition of the picture, clearly poses two separate questions: 'Welches Verhältnis besteht zwischen Bild und Sache? Welches Verhältnis besteht zwischen Bildobjekt und Sache?' (138).[369] Here, the basic contrast between the picture and the picture object which the sensory appearance provides for intuition is outlined in addition to the already mentioned contrast (similarity, but no total identity) which must lie between the pictorial object and the sujet, the referential object.

The decisive relation of similarity, defining pictoriality,[370] is here analyzed in two steps. First, a relation between the picture taken as a physical object and the pictorial object it makes the observer see. Here, of course, a similarity must be at stake, while the latter is identical with a subset of the moments of the former – subjected, of course, to a different interpretation. At the same time a difference must be at stake because it is a subset only of the aspects of the physical object which participates in the pictorial object. We can add that it is possible to imagine extreme cases like pictures giving rise to entirely different pictorial objects, depending upon which moments are taken to give rise to a pictorial object and in which way (Wittgensteinian duck/rabbits, photographic double exposures, puzzle pictures, partial reflections in glass, etc.). Second, there is a relation between pictorial object and reference object, sujet, state-of-affairs or whatever we call the object referred to. Here holds a to some extent analogous distinction between which moments of the pictorial object are taken to refer to the object by means of similarity, and which not. Pictorial consciousness, to conclude, must consist of two sets of solidary relations of contrast and similarity.

Is it a given thing, now, that the very same moments in the picture's appearance which constitute the pictorial object are identical with those which, in turn, refer to the object? Husserl does not pose this question, maybe because of the fact that it seems immediately obvious that the pictorial relation prototypically involves one and the same subset of moments of the picture (even if, of course, taken in three different ways). Yet it must be emphasized that a vast set of modifications of this basic relation seems possible: different moments of the picture may contradict one

another with a lot of different rhetorical effects as the result. The fact that one picture depicts a face which is considerably more oblong than any existing face known must, immediately, be taken as the reference to such a deform or mutated bodily part. If, however, the object reference in some way (maybe by means of a symbolical indication determining the object referred to as a really existing person, maybe by means of pictorial aspects of the very pictorial presentation (the shape or context of the face in the picture makes it clear the figure in question is a certain American president), etc.) is indicated as being a real person, then the oblong character of the face changes from being a real property of the object depicted to being a rhetorical effect in the description of that object, and the picture changes status from depicting an abnormality to being a caricature. The two sets of similarities thus provide the theoretical basis for a vast range of different pictorial rhetorics, depending upon which elements and aspects in the double transformation relation between physical picture and object possess character of reference and which possess character of meaning, to put it crudely. It is on the basis of an idea like this that the Belgian semiotician gang Groupe μ has devised their investigation of different types of transformation between pictorial object and reference object.[371]

The notion of picture is grosso modo kept unchanged in the group of 1912 texts, e.g. in 'Zur Lehre vom Bildbewusstsein und Fiktumbewusstsein' where the same triad of Bildding, Bildobjekt, Bildsujet is presented (489). Yet, an important change has taken place: where pictures were earlier presented as a derivative structure founded on perception, the contradiction inherent in pictorial consciousness now has the character of 'Hier streiten zwei *Wahrnehmungen*, bzw. zwei Wahrnehmung-sobjekte' (487). This is *not* the case in *all* pictorial consciousness, now, only when pictorial consciousness is founded on a perception. In that case, the fantasy picture may be 'saved' as a special case of picture with no direct perceptual basis – but then in favor of giving up of the definition of pictorial consciousness by the duplicity of similarity and contrast. This change is deeply connected to the whole transcen-dental *Kehre* in Husserl's thought which is evident from 'Phantasie als Durch und durch Modifikation. Zur Revision des Inhalts-Auffassungs-Schemas' from 1909. Here, Husserl begins by asking to the source of the ever failed attempts at under-standing the relation between perception and fantasy. The fallacy is localized in the distinction between 'Auffassung' and 'Auffassungseinhalt' which makes seem that one and the same content should be given for two different apprehensions in the two act types. This is wrong, instead '*Rather: "Consciousness" consists all the way through of consciousness, and already sensation as well as fantasy is "consciousness"* '[372] Where the content was earlier seen as an entity independent of consciousness which was subjected to different act types, now consciousness is closed around itself as a consequence of the transcendental reduction (or as its prerequisite?). This in contrast to the earlier doctrine where sensation and sensorial content was one, but on the other hand distinct from perception as conscious act. Now, sensation and perception are placed on one and the same, conscious level.

The earlier doctrine is, in this context, represented by Beilage XII ('Empfindung – Phantasma und die ihnen wesentlichen "Auffassungen" ', from 1904/05) where

the idea, quite on the contrary, is that sensation and fantasy as contents are not, in themselves, conscious, but only becomes so in perception and fantasy as acts which take the sensation and the fantasy, respectively, as objects. The difference between these two texts thus display very well the theoretical development from object to noema in the field of imagination types especially.[373] The reason why conscious acts here must direct themselves toward non-conscious contents is that the opposite is taken to lead into regression: the fantasy imagination is not itself a fantasy, and if it were, then it would require yet another imaginative act in order to grasp that, another, in turn, to grasp that, etc. But then, on the other hand, so goes the criticism of this earlier doctrine, the content must in itself be marked by the difference between sensation and fantasy, for we can not perceive a fantasy content nor vice versa: phantasize about a perceptual content. We may only make founded second-order acts like the perception of a fantasy imagination or the phantasizing about a perception.

Accordingly, we may quote two of the more elaborated taxonomies in order to illustrate the development in Husserl's thought. In Beilage IV (from 1904/05, 39), the typology is rendered in the following Porphyrian tree:
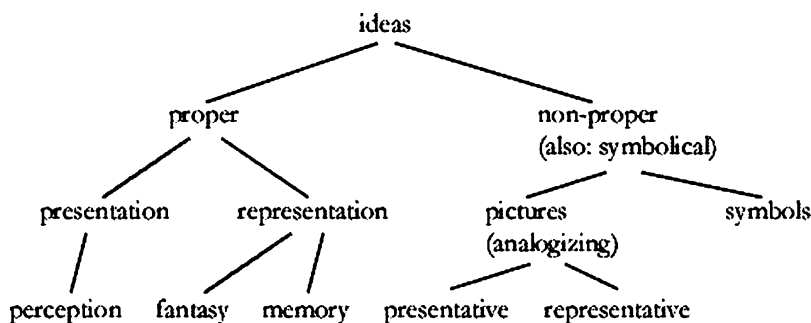

Figure 37.

The two subcategories under the picture category refers to pictures founded in perceptions and pictures founded in phantasies (picturing something not-remembered in fantasy), respectively. As is evident, fantasy is here taken to be representative (because it represents something not present), but not analogizing like the picture. It is clear that the type of representation here referred to (comprising fantasy and memory, differing from picture as well as from symbol) has a special character. It is construed as a derivative and secondary access to the object as compared to perception, but is opposed, on the other hand, to improper (uneigentliche) *Vorstellungen*, which require outer support in the form of pictures or symbols.

If we jump five years to 1910, we find in text 12 ' "Empfindung", Erinnerung, Erwartung und Phantasie als Modi des Zeitbewusstseins. Bewusstsein als Zusammenhang' a completely different taxonomy, motivated by the transcendental *Kehre*. The point of departure is now the molecule of time consciousness involving retention-presentation-protention. While presentation is characterized by

Gegenwart, presence, all three aspects of time consciousness may be subject to an assertive[374] repetitive consciousness ('Wiederbewusstsein') giving rise to three new categories: memory, perception and anticipation (Erinnerung, Empfindung, Erwartung), called forth by re-presentation, co-presentation, and for-presentation, respectively (Wiedervergegenwärtigung, Mitgegenwärtigung,Vergegenwärtigung). Finally, these three categories may be modified, in turn, by a non-assertive act giving rise to fantasy (which must fall in the same three temporal classes). This gives us something like the schema below (referring only to the left part of the former tree dealing with *Vorstellungen* proper):

Non-assertive Representation	F	A	N	T	A	S	Y	
Assertive Repetitive Consciousness	Memory			Perception			Anticipation	
Original Consciousness	Rentention			Presentation			Protention	

This paper virtually explodes (quite explicitly) of unsolved questions: what then with picture and symbol consciousness? They must now be the result of still further modifications – symbol consciousness as the mere associative linking of two conscious states, and picture consciousness (presumably) as the analogizing such linking. In this context, the overall principle now is the associationist credo '*Bewusstsein ist immer Zusammenhang und notwendig Zusammenhang*' (291) – consciousness is always connectedness and necessarily connectedness.

If we go on, however, to 1912 (in the large 'Modi der Reproduktion' and contemporaneous texts and fragments), fantasy again approaches pictorial consciousness, now in a reverse movement, so that the fantasy concept tends to embrace the picture concept rather than the opposite. The notion of fantasy must be generalized ('Reproduktion und Bildbewusstsein', c. spring 1912, 475), and two types of modification by *Vergegenwärtigung* – Husserl's word for representation – are presented: perceptive and reproductive, respectively (corresponding to fantasy proper and pictures). This happens based on the argumentation that the distinction between assertive and non-assertive is independent of the distinction between picture and fantasy and, more generally, independent of the distinction between impression and reproduction. These distinctions may be freely combined. This idea corresponds to that maintained in *Ideen* I, §§109–15. Thus both assertive and non-assertive pictures and phantasies exist, and the distinction from 1910 where phantasies were seen as non-assertive is given up.[375] On the other hand, pictures and phantasies now fall in the same category, both being reproductive acts in contrast to the impression of perception. The picture (perceptive or 'eikonische Bildlichkeit') now has the same structure as reproductive fantasy (as against perception and simple fantasy), both

may be (non-)assertive (384), both are pure *Darstellung* and may, in turn, give rise
to real propositions as well as fantasy propositions: 'I follow a play in the theatre,
or I contemplate a painting. Here differs, just like in reproductive fantasy, the ideas,
perceptions, judgments, emotions etc. which are produced in the picture (pictorially
produced) from the actual ones called forth in me, the observer. Actual is the very
production itself.'[376] – depending upon whether the acts in question are taking place
in fantasy (picture) or has fantasy (or picture) as their content.

The reintegration of the two may also get an expression as the following: if the
sujet is lacking in the fundamental triad of the picture (picture – picture object –
object), the result will be fantasy (in a narrow sense, we must assume) or memory
('Zur Lehre vom Bildbewusstsein und Fiktumbewusstsein', c. 1912, 489).

The result of this re-approchement of picture and fantasy – just like in the phase
prior to 1905 – is, consequently, that the *Widerstreit* is dampened to be a mere possi-
bility in pictures: 'But only where a pictorial consciousness is based in a perception
situation (where a perception does in fact form part of a perceptual context but is not
embedded in it unanimously) or where a pictorial consciousness in the same manner
is embedded in a memory context do we have pictorial consciousness connected
to contradiction; all this must be grasped in a more precise manner. I must protect
myself against unsuitable generalization: as if picture and contradiction necessarily
belonged together.'[377] Contradiction now is found in the special case of perceptual
pictures and memories only, while it is not present in pictorial consciousness
(comprising fantasy as well) in general.[378] Six years later, this continuous vacil-
lation in the relation between picture and *Widerstreit* is sought solved by a lucky
idea: a distinction between real and merely possible *Widerstreit*: 'One must distin-
guish between the *cases of real contradiction* as in the case of actorial presentation,
and the cases of *potential contradiction* which depend on environmental intentions
which hang on to the object intuited but which must first be 'developed' in order
to lead to real contradiction.'[379] Contrast needs not be explicit, it may lie as a
possibility in the relation of the picture to its context (that is, the Widerstreit of the
picture, fantasy, memory against the actual world of perception). This was antici-
pated already in the distinction between actual and potential assertion in the *Ideen*.
We shall return to possible consequences.

The reason for the new subsumption of pictures under fantasy as a special sort
of perceptive reproduction is to be found in the insight that both forms may include
real moments of perception within them – and thus constitute different combi-
nation possibilities between perception and reproduction. The problem is first of
all apparent in fantasy: Husserl observes that fantasy very often takes its point
of departure in matter from perception which is then recombined, transformed or
otherwise changed. Later he goes so far as to say that it is dubious whether pure
fantasy without any connection to acts of experience does exist at all (1918, 509).[380]
With a recurring example – the reading of fairy-tales – Husserl argues that here
factual information is mixed with fictitious phenomena into a fantasy, a quasi-reality
(379) with the consequence that the *Widerstreit* is bracketed (382).[381] Generally,
'quasi'-concepts in this period become a central way to present the broad fantasy

concept's way of functioning. In fantasy, I am quasi-attentive; what I invest in a fantasy is a quasi-I who quasi-perceives and quasi-judges. The phenomenological basis for Ingarden's theory of literature with its emphasis on quasi-judgment is outlined in these strains of Husserl's work around 1912 (see Chap. 17 – we can add that Ingarden in just this period began as Husserl's student and assistant).[382] The description by means of the 'quasi'-operator may thus without problems be extended to pictures proper which may now be defined as '*quasi* Setzung der perzeptiven Anschauung (Bildanschauung).' (468) of which holds that 'Jedes echtes *Bild*, perzeptives Bild, ist *quasi* Auffassung und nicht etwa Intention, nur herabgedrückt.' (399) – pictures have a quasi assertion of perceptive intuition and are thus only quasi experience.

This large text from 1912 ends with a chapter on terminological clarification whose main distinction goes between passive sensoriality and the whole series of spontaneous activities subsequently built upon it (a constant, dating back to *Logical Investigations*, now in new clothing). This clarification, however, also leads to a new series of questions. The overall problem seems to be that Husserl now has a rather productive combination calculus of many different modifications and intentions – without this combination, on the other hand, being completely free. While the later texts (from 1909 and clearly from 1912 onwards) build upon the transcendental *Kehre*'s closure of consciousness as well as a weakening of the *Widerstreit* as a criterion, they also add lots of interesting new insigths and ideas: the introduction of anticipation in the context of imagination (that only memory should be covered by the picture-fantasy problem seems strange), the close relation to time consciousness, as well as a series of sophistications of the description of the aesthetic *Einstellung*.

We shall here go on to assume the *Widerstreit* as a basal criterion, even if it for us must be freed from its tie to the consciousness concept and be relativized into a merely *possible* consciousness of contrast (just like Husserl himself proposed, tied to the merely possible assertions implied in parts of every picture [383] – see above). The contrast or contradiction between the three poles of a picture is a purely objective relation, and the idea of any explicit consciousness of contradiction runs into problems like that of illusions: perceptions which are fooled by a picture (like a trompe-l'œil when it in fact works). Here, the *Widerstreit* is temporally realized (just like in fantasy), but what did the gaze actually *see* during the time span before the *Widerstreit* was discovered? Then, there was not – according to the picture definition by *Widerstreit* – yet any picture at stake, but it would be ridiculous to claim, on the other hand, that it is a case of ordinary, direct perception, because a non-existing object is what is seen. The formation of a new and strange category to absorp illusions may be avoided by assuming that the picture *did* function as pictorial object – but now without the first, founding sensation became conscious as such. The perception so to speak began with an 'imaginary moment' without contrast consciousness. But the question of whether explicit consciousness is a necessary prerequisite to contrast can be generalized to pictorial consciousness as such. A similar argumentation may be made regarding subliminal perceptions (of which Peirce was one of the first experimental investigators): the fact that it

is possible for the mind or brain to process pictures (measured by the fact that they inflict upon behavior) without they reaching consciousness at all. It would be meaningless to say that such pictures are not pictures only because no explicit picture consciousness can be traced. We shall therefore argue for a modified version of Husserl's plastic 1918 suggestion and keep the contrast definition as central – only, it must be generalized to a merely potential contrast.[384]

Let us leave now this long philological discussion with the aim of outlining the most central proposal for the solution of the fantasy/picture problem. We can say that, to Husserl, that discussion never ended. The latest text in *Hua* XXIII (Beilage LXV from the middle 20s) ends, significantly, with the re-emergence of the *Widerstreit*, now accompanied by a question mark: 'Is there not contradiction in all fantasy, also pure fantasy? In perceptions, memories, anticipations. I inhibit all positing of a world. But does not every fantasy possess some place, something, which contradicts it?'[385] Potentially, yes.

Let us now focus upon a series of different interesting detail ideas regarding the picture especially.

PICTURES AND SENSES

An important issue in Husserl's account deals with the basic relation between picture and sensation. The prototypical picture in Husserl is always visual, but Husserl emphasizes in the early period en passant (Beilage III, 1904/05, footnote, 138) that pictures may exist only in the sense modalities of vision and touch – presumably for the reason that any picture must possess a partially contrast-evoking sensorial skin – which these two senses should be the only ones being able to give rise to. Also in this dimension, Husserl's picture category is more narrow than Peirce's (hypo-)icon theory which does not only cover all senses but also abstract, ideal images. But Husserl does not give any closer argumentation for the idea that only these two senses should be picture generating. It seems hard to ignore the picture potential in, e.g. the classical effects of radio theatre: a man in the studio repeatedly bites noisily in an apple, and in the living room of the listener footsteps in snow are heard . . . But you don't need to go that far: if the visual gestalts of the actors on stage pictorially display the figures of the drama, then their voices supposedly fulfill exactly the same task auditively? Husserl seemingly has not thought the issue through which also seems to appear from the fact than in later discussions (cf. below) he, without further notice, may list auditive examples like the relation between different versions of Beethoven sonatas and the intention of the composer. If we expand the question to cover not only pictures as they appear directly for the senses, more problems appear. The sujet which the picture depicts needs not be an individual object,[386] such as might be the spontaneous idea, and the later Husserl is, in fact, ready to admit that the picture as such is an ideal object (537). This opens up the vast issue of the relation between pictorial and fantasy consciousness to the possibilities inherent in categorial intuition and *Wesenserschauung*[387] to grasp ideal objects. In the LU, the distinction between perception and imagination, so important for the intuition

of empirical objects, became irrelevant for categorial intuition. Here lies one of the most important lacunae in Husserl's theory – stemming from the spontaneous idea that the objects of pictures and phantasies are necessarily individual. But ideal objects may – as we know from the 3rd investigation – be co-intended as aspects of individual objects, and hence it would not seem strange, rather the opposite, if these aspects might be isolated for access in pictures and phantasies. Rather it could be said that the quasi-character of the picture entails that its object can never be thoroughly determined in all aspects by pictorial means alone (cf. Ingarden's related idea of 'schematized aspects' referring only to certain properties of their object, see Chap. 17), and that the picture for this reason possesses ideal character, just like the later Husserl should maintain. Peirce has, as we have seen, a ingenious solution to this problem in his concept of the diagram.

HUSSERLIAN AESTHETICS

A recurrent feature in Husserl's treatment of the picture/fantasy problem in the whole period is that he tries to develop aesthetic corollaries from it. His basic aesthetic ideas are taken from the definitory triad of the picture and it is contained in the simple idea that the aesthetic attitude highlights the appearance of the picture object, while the sujet, the object of reference, loses interest – cf. Beilage VI (c. 1906) where the interest in the reference object is opposed to the aesthetic interest in the appearance of the picture object. This approaches aesthetic contemplation to fantasy in a narrow sense, to theoretical reflection, as well as to neutralization as the non-assertive presentation of an object or a state-of-affairs, as the later Husserl remarks. In the first round, Husserl seeks to determine aesthetics by the pleasure of appearance contemplation (ibid.), but he constantly returns to the attempt at further understanding of what is special in the aesthetic interest in appearances.

In Beilage IX (c. 1905, 159), the ambiguous quality of aesthetic apperception is highlighted. Husserl comes to this conclusion from the simple nesting of picture consciousnesses within one another. The reproduction of a work of art, e.g., involves two separate pictorialities (the etching as a picture of the original painting vs. the etching as a picture of the object of the original painting – the sonata as Beethoven intended it vs. the sonata as the expression of certain emotions). It is hard to see precisely how the conclusion follows from these premises, but we can observe that if a picture has, in this way, two nested objects, then it has also two nested appearances. Aesthetic interest may then be directed towards each of them – and, what is more, it is not, in general, predictable which level of appearances aesthetic intention may chose to focus upon (the picture as color, the picture as form, the picture as the result of an expressive act, the picture as the reproduction of objects in a 3-D space, the picture as the reproduction of certain recognizable objects in a 3-D space, etc.).[388] Aesthetic contemplation may not only highlight one or more of these strata of appearance, but also focus upon their possible interaction. In addition to this, a classical demand in the contemplation of art is maintained ('Forderungen, die die Teile des ästhetischen Ganzen gegeneinander üben ...', ibid.) which must also

involve these different levels of appearance as aspects of the wholeness of aesthetic experience – an idea of course taken further in Ingarden's idea of a 'polyphony' of the different levels of the work of art.

In addition to this, it must be emphasized that this preliminary formalism with its bracketing of the referred object also must be modified by object properties. In the second picture theoretical assault period ('Modi . . .', 1915, 390) Husserl claims that '*The content of the object itself is not aesthetically insignificant.* It is not the same whether it is an emperor or not, if it is a significant or an everyday event, etc. Is it then about a co-sounding of effects of emotions (awe, affection)? But also something else: Any objectivity which motivates existential pleasure or phantasizes *quasi*-pleasure. In itself, this pleasure is not aesthetical. But aesthetic pleasure which is dependent on the mode of appearance may connect itself with this pleasure (as an actuality) and the whole has the character of a heightened aesthetical pleasure. Stilleben. The interaction between actual pleasures or *quasi*-pleasures (in nature: pleasure with the fertile fruit trees, fields, etc.) and suffering and other actual positions taken is, however, in itself a main piece of real aesthetical pleasure. So also this belongs to the "mode of appearance".'[389]

Not only the play in between the levels of appearance, but also the interplay between appearance and object – form and matter, if you like – belong to the appearance of the aesthetic, while the aesthetic contemplation at the same time brackets any existence claim as to the matter side, hence the connection to 'quasi'. It is important to maintain that Husserl in these brief determinations thus distinguishes between the aesthetic level (tied to the interplay between forms of appearance and matter, as well as to the emotions involved herein) and the far more comprehensive category of the fictive which is characterized merely by the fact that the distinction between assertive and non-assertive is suspended – cf. the quasi-judgment characteristic of fictional literature in Ingarden's theory of literature. And it is equally important to underline that this aesthetic interplay does not, necessarily, appear explicitly as thematic, conscious content and object of attention (392). But these basic aesthetic determinations hold, without further notice, for picture as well as fantasy; they even hold for aesthetic aspects of the theoretical interest (ibid.): the pleasure of theoretical insight, the beauty of a mathematical proof.[390]

Fictionality, pictoriality in a sufficiently broad sense as to include theoretical knowledge, thus seem to be a prerequisite (but hardly sufficient) to aesthetic contemplation. But a decisive feature in fictivitiy and indeed in representation in general is that it – contrary to empirical reality – is endowed with what Ingarden later named 'Unbestimmtheitsstellen' which in Husserl's brainstorm is merely called *Unbestimmtheit* (1922/23, 561), given by the fact that the pictorial object only represents the object in certain selected aspects and in other respects appears empty: 'Auf die Frage, was der phantasierte Zentaur am Phantasiemorgen essen wird, mit wem sie unterhalten oder kämpfen wird, gibt es keine Antwort.' (1918, 523) – nobody may know what a fantasy creature had for breakfast.[391] The fact that all fantasy and picture activity has this character (not to speak about signitive intentions; nine tenths of Ingarden's literary theory consists of a phenomenological linguistics) is in some

sense a simple consequence of the definitions Husserl gave already in the years after the *Logische Untersuchungen*, but these implications are made explicit only more than ten years later. A related fact which Husserl also only thoroughly realizes in this period is the crucial ideality of the picture – exactly because the picture shares the empty slots, it is so to speak endowed with those algebraical variables which already in the Prolegomena to the *Logische Untersuchungen* were characteristic for ideal objects and which in *Erfahrung und Urteil* opens the epistemological possibility of their determination by means of 'eidetic variation'.[392]

Husserl's argument simply concludes that as fantasy does not present reality, it may only present possibilities. And the possible is, as against reality, not individual, it is ideal, on some or other level of generality. About the picture of a mountain, Husserl claims – as against the real mountain, existing in time – that 'Dieses "Bild" ist ein *idealer* Gegenstand (nicht etwa ein Reales in der Zeit Dauerndes), der Berg bietet dieses Bild dauernd, aber es selbst ist kein dauerndes.' (Beilage LVIII, c. 1917, 538). But if the object of a picture is ideal, it can not be real, but merely possible. The ideality of pictures thus refers to pure possibilities, and fantasy in general is unable to imagine individual entities: 'Thus fantasy can not really represent any individual, it gives "something" which is shaped in the form of an individual and which is only made intuitive with its (in relation to individuality) undecided meaning content.'[393]

ICONICITY BETWEEN HUSSERL AND PEIRCE

In the very last text about pictorality from the 20s, Husserl surprisingly approaches many of the central ideas in Peirce's icon concept (the icon's possibility, vagueness, and ideality, icons as the base of communication, their connection to predicates, their lack of conformity to the principle of contradiction, even continuity . . .):

– Vagueness: In 'Reine Möglichkeit und Phantasie' (c.1922/23, **X**), the 'als ob seiend', the 'quasi' of fantasy is described thus: -'Possibilities, individual pure possibilities are flowing.'
– Non-observance of the Principle of Contradiction: imagination gives – 'Infinitely many possible realities, which are mutually inconsistent, etc.' (Bilag LXII, c. 1918, 566) – an infinity of possible realities which are mutually exclusive.
– The predicate character of pictures -'*Predicate* is something identical which may be identical in many, in "manifold", which appears identical in changeable and different possibilities and may determine the concrete.'
– The picture as a prerequisite to any communication of meaning: fantasy as pure possibility is a presupposition for the communication of signification between subjects as intersubjective fantasy, because the subjects involved refer to the same 'intersubjektiv identisches.' (568)
– The predicates of fantasy as something which may be completed by the filling-in of a subject: -'And correspondingly I can think of some subject which supposes this on the basis of its facts.'

– Even an idea analogous to Peirce's metaphysics of the continuum with the loss of individual identity is hinted at, when Husserl says '... when I, in an exemplary manner, run through the extension as pure extension, then it does not occur to me to intend the respective subjective, individualizing differences. If I imagine one single centaur, then I do not mean "it" as imagined exactly by me. Should we say that the singular of a pure extension (of an extension of pure individual possibilities) that the exemplary single is, in itself, already a general, an *identical which, in turn, has a pure extension of possibilities*?' (Our italics). The pure extension of a predicate does not refer to individual objects but to a general object which, in turn, refers to an extension of pure possibilities.[394]

This ideality of fantasy and picture is also developed in relation to aesthetic issues. With respect to decisive references, literature is, e.g. principally undecidable:

In the horizon of undecidability which the given world and time has for everybody, the poet places himself, deciding it, filling it in with Gestalten.

Reader, poet in a world and time. Two extremes:

a) The given world and time may be so fully determined as our surrounding world right now is (not the real world). For instance today's Berlin determined in that way in which it is for us and even for the Berliners themselves. b) Extreme counterexample. Once upon a time in some fabulous country, in another time, in another world with quite different animal beings, even other natural laws, etc. Between these two extremes all art develops.[395]

Correspondingly, art goes forward between depicting something existing (by pictorial consciousness) and producing pure fantasy worlds, between (empirical) realism and (imaginary) idealism. Here, numerous intermediary possibilities may be developed. It can immediately be added that this theory of genre in spe (for all art forms) has its phenomenological basis in the very observation of pictures, namely in its two potential phases, with and without pictorial consciousness, respectively. Also this idea dates back all the way to 1904/05 when Husserl made the distinction between the observation of the picture endowed with *Widerstreit* on the one hand, and the direct grasping of the object through the picture on the other, what was later recognized as a phantasizing relation to it, corresponding to Peirce's 'imaginary moment'. The *Widerstreit* is simply suspended when I focus upon the sujet. (467, 1912).

The possibility grasped may of course be more or less 'pure', depending on whether it involves individual reality (548); this also lay implicitly already in Beilage V where a distinction was made between genuine pictorial consciousness which truthfully sees what is alike in what is alike, and different grades of 'impure' consciousness, all the way down to when the impurity is present to so large an extent that we can no longer grasp the sujet through the pictorial object as if it was in some sense present itself (143).

This continuous variability in the degree of resemblance between pictorial object and sujet may be discussed in the light of Husserl's different concepts – or rather, metaphors – for more or less adequate perception. The recurrent concept of covering ('Deckung') is used already in the *Logische Untersuchungen* as a concept for adequate perception, and in Beilage V, this concept is also used about such 'impure' cases where we only remotely recognize the sujet in the pictorial object – e.g. in a

rude children's drawing. We can grasp that it is *meant to* depict a human being, even
if we do not *see* the human being in it. 'Or maybe yet a little bit. We have covered
the men, the two of them cover each other, but give widely apparent differences.
The difference is so crude that we no longer feel disturbed by the consciousness
of falsity by our tendency to identify, on the contrary, the tendency to identify is
lacking and because of the huge distance we find the representation ridiculous.'[396]
It is, however, hardly the only reaction possible; we may also find such a rendering
of the object practical, economical, diagrammatical. The decisive thing, however,
is the metaphor of 'covering' which allows us to grasp the difference: we sort of
place the picture 'on top of' the object, we map the one onto the other and by
doing so we grasp the degree of difference between them. The interesting thing
here is that this discontinuous idea of covering in the same text intermingle with a
continuous idea of 'merging'. The example with the children's drawing is further
analyzed as two intentions depicting the same object which are connected and
merge into a synthetic unity. This results in a 'Übererinsstemmungsbewusstsein'
displaying similarity where 'eins in der andere *verfliesst* und doch wieder als anders
empfunden wird'[397] (our italics). But this similarity is triggered by a continuous
deformation or variation process rather than a 'covering'. Maybe one could say
that the two of them are necessary as simultaneous procedures to keep similarity
as well as difference, the flowing together as well as the covering? The continuous
variation is tied, of course, to the possibility of unfolding relations lying implicitly
in the picture, cf. below.

PICTURES WITHIN ORDINARY PERCEPTION

Let us finally use the results of this discussion of Husserl's concept of pictures to
argue for a new phenomenological distinction between two types of pictures, in the
first approach regarding visual pictures of a non-moving kind. Our point of
departure will be a couple of Husserl's fragmentary ideas. In Beilage VI Husserl
wonders why it is that we have the insight of everyday phenomenology that nature
is able to be spontaneously given as a landscape and thus function as a picture.
How is that possible?

Why does nature, a landscape, function as 'p i c t u r e'? A remote village. The houses 'small houses'.
These small houses have a) a changed size as against the houses as we normally see them, b) a lessened
stereoscopy, changed colours, etc. They are just like pictures conceived as toy houses. The same with
human beings: dolls.[398]

The picture thus lies enfolded as a possibility *within ordinary perception already*.
When the gaze assumes a certain distance to things, they lose stereoscopic depth as
well as size – and, we could add, they also lose immediate corporeal relevance to the
perceiving subject. It implies that already the regard at a distance implies a certain
neutralization (as well known from everyday idioms like '. . . seen at a distance . . .',
'. . . seen from Sirius . . .'), from where the things assume an objectivity which is, at
the same time, the basis for fantasy variations (the houses turn into dolls' houses).
This is, in fact, a grounding of the possibilities of picture and fantasy *already* in the

'schlichte' perception which is apt to counterargue all claims that the competence of producing and understanding pictures should be something conventional requiring learning, analogous to language acquisition.[399] The remote gaze is, in fact, a double gaze complete with *Widerstreit* and all what follows: we may shift between seeing the remote houses as real houses at a long distance and as dolls' houses very close; we can not see both at once. It is, so to speak the naturalness of puzzle pictures for perception which founds the inherent pictorality of nature.[400] These two ways of seeing are, of course, correlated to to corresponding sets of actions: the neighboring village I can walk to, trade with, exchange women with, wage war against, etc.; the dolls' house village I can play with in an action space of fantasy. This corresponds furthermore, as Husserl will later say, to two different egos involved in the two different attitudes. Thus, there is an *Ichspaltung* already in perception.[401] There is nothing tragic in this splitting of the ego, however, quite on the contrary it corresponds to a panel of possibilities for the subject which may dress up in different fictitious roles, all depending on the character of the picture.

Now, let us take a closer look on the subject's relation to fantasy and picture (nr. 16 (1912), 467): 'I may well also 'phantasize myself into' the picture. This can only mean that I extend pictorial space over me and my surrounding space and include myself – with the exception of the real things which I see – in the picture whereby I bracket by actuality; I myself then become a modified I, without positing. Then my participation is that of a depicted observer (it belongs to the pictural object), not that of a sympathetic observer outside the picture.'[402] This means that, in the phase of the 'imaginary moment' I perform a more or less conscious, fictitious splitting of the ego and appears as a fantasy figure *inside* the picture. When the split in the picture stops, the observing subject is so to say split instead and a phantasized ego enters into the object in the imaginary moment. This ingenious observation gives a new meaning to the traditional embedded observer in romantic painting (Friedrich) which merely makes explicit and thematic a relation which has a broader phenomenological generality: when we observe a landscape picture, we automatically already – even if most often unthematically – find ourselves in the midst of it. When we see the dolls' house village, we already are in it. But given this double character of landscape, a whole bundle of different experimental possibilities open themselves for the fictitious observer who is now placed in its foreground. He may undertake his walk towards the village in the distance. Or he may reach out his arm and begin playing with the dolls' houses in it. The real observer's splitting off of a fiction observer immediately gives rise to the possibility of the splitting off of a second order fiction observer. But we are not threatened by a regress. The doubling will rarely be repeated more than a few times.

But we can speculate – which Husserl does not – what *other* competences may be ascribed to the subject finding itself inside the picture – apart from mere observation. The further evolution of bodily phenomenology since Husserl (from Merleay-Ponty to Rosch, Lakoff, etc.) will highlight, of course, the fictive observer as a body possessing a whole series of characteristic ways of action which may be played through in fantasy action in the picture. As regards the picture formally

conceived of as a sign, the Peircean viewpoint will maintain that any use of a picture which rationally distinguishes its parts and their interrelation and indulges in experiments with those interrelations, is diagrammatical. Thus, we must assume that the *observing fiction observer may investigate the picture due to those diagrams he may construct on the basis of bodily action possibilities* – or, in any case, those of them which is actualized by the inherent action possibilities offered by the picture in question. Diagrammatical experimentation with schemata is thus not a privilege for maps and scientific models only, rather, these media are made possible (genetically, of course not a priorically) by the more primitive competence of gaining access to a landscape by means of a body.

Peirce's diagrams, as we know, allow for an experimenting manipulation which corresponds to hypothetical situations allowing that an information which is not explicit in the picture, is extracted and made explicit. Husserl does not develop any corresponding idea, but certain passages in him seems to suggest that he vaguely realized the possibility. Thus, in Beilage XXXIV, he says about the synthesis of ideas that it may possess the character of '. . . new formation of such syntheses and analyses which separates partial appearances from the unitary appearances with the partial meanings put into synthesis etc. In the explicit, new matter (kernels) appear. Thus *explication of what was concealed in the formerly given appearances.*'[403] New formation of syntheses may produce matter which was hidden in the given appearances – but this is, exactly what characterizes diagrams as synthetical signs. When the fictional observer in the picture makes such new syntheses experimenting with the matter of the picture, he makes diagrammatical experiments with parts of the picture using his spontaneous bodily relation to the pictorial scenario. Thus, this ability in picture observation unites Peirce and Merleau-Ponty.

This idea gives rise to a long range of different possible ways of contemplating pictures, depending on which bodily stance is adopted – a yet unmapped, or at least only vaguely mapped region in traditional theory of pictures. In the next section I shall try to cover one dimension (among many possible) in this new field.

PICTURAL ACCESSIBILITY

It is well known how the opposition between abstaction and figuration which dominated large parts of early modernism in painting long since seems outdated or irrelevant. No partisans of one or the other any longer roam – and if a few should remain, they are unable to put forward their ideas without a moldy taste of retro or of arbitrary or irritating politicizing. This has the simple reason that abstract and figurative is no longer (nor have they ever been) oppositions, but rather extremes on a continuum of possibilities – corresponding, but not identical to Husserl's continuum between the timelessness and the timeboundness of art. An abstract painting is still depicting, more or less, this lies in its basic character of being an idea containing slots of indeterminacy. Minimalism and concretism from the 60s onwards might point towards another tension, which was independent of the depicting qualities of the artwork, but rather involved that function on the one

hand and the direct perception of the picture as a physical object on the other: the
tension between abstract and concrete. One and the same work may be grasped as
abstract, that is depicting something, even if on a general level, and as concrete,
that is, depicting nothing but its own matter and form, present for the observer
and cut loose from any pictorial signification or reference. During a certain period
also this tension gave rise to politicizing partisan activity for one of the other of
these possibilities – but this in vain, as the two possibilities in many cases are
just as much properties of the observation as properites in the artworks. Of course,
it remains to be the case that different criteria must be expected for what counts
as a successful artwork, depending on the two attitudes – but it is very difficult
to seen which arguments should conclude the strife for one of the attitudes being
more aesthetically authoritative than the other – no matter what avant garde partisan
myths one or the other may serve. The fact that partisan wars of this kind may be
ceasing is one of the good consequences (hopefully, that is) of the victory to death
of avantgardism as an ideology in the art institution: art is not politics and to be
artist or critic is not to be a partisan.

This leaves, on the other hand, the field open for more sensitive phenomenol1ogial
investigations distinguishing different basic possibilities in the picture – without
having to choose one or the other as a partisan. A distinction for which I shall here
argue has its basis in Husserl's determination of the picture as founded already
in ordinary perception (cf. above) – and his idea that picture perception installs a
fictitious observer within the very space of the picture. These determinations give
rise to the distinction between pictures which immediately opens up a space for
the perceiving body to move around in – as against pictures which do not open up
such a space. The prototype of the former is of course landscape pictures which the
observer digests with the abilities of the wanderer. The picture is mapped by the
observer moving along one of the possible routes which the picture displays. On the
other hand, lots of pictures do not offer such possibilities. The prototypical picture
here is probably the portrait where a face typically provides the main fraction of
the picture plane and where the background only rarely challenges the observer to
bodily investigation – so much more as the observer is kept still by the presence
of the person portrayed, often even by his or hers insisting gaze, and kept at bay
by the no-go zone of bodily distance. We speak of prototypes here, of course, the
tension between these two types defines here, like in many other cases, a continuum
where we may expect a huge zone of intermediaries of many kinds where tempting
mountain walks call behind Mona Lisa or where, conversely, all of the central field
of the landscape picture is occupied by monolithic tree groups and makes access
difficult for the walking or floating body.[404]

It any case it is important to notice that this distinction between accessible
and inaccessible pictures is orthogonal to e.g. the continuum between abstract and
figurative. A first idea might be to identify the figurative picture with accessibility
and the abstract one as inaccessible, but this is not the case. The portrait, as
mentioned, but also the Stillleben, the scientific planche or diagram, and the close-up
are picture types which do not, or at most marginally, permit the crossing routes

of the wandering body. It is not, it is true, precluded for the imaginary body to change form into a fruit beetle and undertake the six-feet walk between the exquisite volumes of the Stillleben and conquer the fruit bowl as a mountain range by the filigran-like diving into the labyrinths of rot of the grapes – but still it remains a marginal and derivative praxis in relation to the immediate observation which rather strikes an evaluative pose on a distance equipped with an imaginary fruit knife. Many abstract pictures have, of course, the same kind of rejection of bodily movements. This holds, of course (but not only) for the strong tendency in abstraction to highlight the surface and the two-dimensionality of the picture, very often coupled with a a concretist emphasis on the material character of the picture plane. It is hardly possible to access the typical Warhol because already the fat layer of silk print gives the picture a fundamental and abstract two-dimensionality, no matter the figurative character of the motif. It is hardly possible to access a Mondrian, even if it ever so much displays the traffic of New York's street grid seen from a skyscraper (the top achievement will be following one of the stylized cars on a restricted, 2-D ride). Or a Barnett Newman where one must push the eye to its limit for seeing the vertical lightning bolt as an opening or the two surrounding planes as scenographic pieces it is possible to traverse. But many different abstract pictures are indeed open to access in this use of the word – not only the later Monet where the spaces depticted has long since freed themselves from any direct reference to the water lilies, but also Kandinsky where the single elements in the picture often float in a diffusely defined, but undoubtable 3-D space. Or Rothko, where the titillating bichromatics often suck like a pipe leading directly to an out-of-the-body or light-after-death experience of occultism. Pollock, where you float around in intergalactic dust, if it does not devaporate into oatmeal. The reason behind these different spatialities is of course the different formal means by which the imagined space in question is constituted – and they do not depend on whether the objectivities depicted are recognizable in any figurative sense of the word.

These means to space construction constitute a long list of artistic devices with each their rules and structures:
– Dedicedly elaborated perspectives with vanishing points on a horizon facilitated by parallel lines in the motif naturally immediately opens the picture plane and erects a space, but far less than that may suffice
– A hint of a horizon line may be sufficient
– A light-dark opposition may construct space, as a tendency letting the lighter parts lie closer to the observer than the darker ones
– A figure-ground distinction which lets the ground draw back and the figure jump forth: this distinction may give rise to whole foreground-middle ground-back ground hierarchies, so that uncut pregnant forms immediately appear as standing before forms whose pregnant contour has been broken 'by' the foregrounded forms

- A differentiation in sharpness drawing the sharply contoured phenomena into the foreground at the expense of more diffuse phenomena relegated to the background
- An articulated grading of the light fall on a surface may let it define its spatial location and, e.g. assume an oblique position from the foreground into the background
- An articulated patterning of increasing tightness in a texture or a pattern where the less tight part turns toward the observer and the more tight parts away from him
- 'Expressive' lumps and bits of color which in addition to their concretion has a tendency to occupy the foreground of the picture, differing from the thinner, more delicate layer of color disappearing into a remote dim
- Bright, violent color valors claim foreground positions while more discrete nuances vanish behind them because of the fact that light intensity falls proportionally with the square of the distance – and atmospheric air adding a further dampening of color intensity
- The related fact that atmospheric air reflects blue light to a larger extent than red light implies that colors from the red end of the color spectrum seem, as a tendency, closer than colors from the blue end
- The upper part of the picture automatically offers itself as celestial and more remote than the lower parts' pieces of middle and foregrounds, due to the fact that we live on the surface of a planet endowed with gravity

Any of these devices may, of course, be counteracted by one of the others, and, in figurative pictures moreover by the mutual relations of recognizable items (the matchbox close, the car remote, if they should not be reinterpreted as high-rise and toy mobile, respectively). But in general, these devices make possible that the body may spontaneously access a large spectrum of abstract paintings which only very remotely or in a very stylized way could be said to possess figurative content, if at all. If some of these effects work against each other, a further effect may result because they do not necessarily simply annul each other – the result may be spaces which remain undeniably spatial but contain zones hard to define, or have a composite character with *kippfigur* – like changing possibilities of spatial interpretation of certain parts or contrasting interpretations of different parts.

Very often, we probably have a spontaneous urge to interpret such spaces as landscapes or exteriors in some generalized use of these concepts, even if they are not inhabited by any figurative landscape effects at all and do not even have to have any horizon. What does the body do when accessing such pictures? The prototypical access is, of course, that of the wanderer, investigating where you can move by foot along walks, roads, stairs, openings, doors, etc. in the picture – and, furthermore, imagining the changing views while being subjected to these transports – most often involving phantasizing due to the slots of indeterminacy in the picture.

But the plasticity of fantasy gives rise to a series of other variations – where the experimenter changes the very rules of the spatial picture as diagram. First, the observer may continuously change his size (and thus crawl upon the pyramid of lemons in the fruit bowl or, conversely, with the steps of a giant gain access to the remote city on the horizon). Second, a series of subcategories must be

distinguished, after which modus of movement is allowed for the searching body when accessing pictural space. In certain pictures, you morph into an air spirit and fly over cities and abysses, in short assume properties intermediary between bird and deity, experiencing the whole of 3-D space offered by the picture. Another type of change in movement mode is tempo which (most often) may be speeded up so you hastily can cover different possibilities in the picture, still another will cover other changes in movement type: maybe you not only walk or fly, but sail, swim, drive, etc. – just like an experiment may change the types of hindrances accepted (you walk unhindered directly through a bush, or a house, or a mountain).[405] Thus, we must claim that Husserl is wrong when he (text 12, 1912, 476) tries to understand the character of *Stimmung* in the landscape painting and claims that this has nothing to do with the fictive observer: 'Such represented atmospheres, feelings, etc. do not presuppose a co-representation of the observer, even if he enters action in his own way. More precisely, I – with *this* atmosphere – do not belong to the picture.'[406] Quite on the contrary, our hypothesis would be that the *Stimmung* of a picture is highly dependent upon the bouquet of possible peripathetical action possibilities determining which kind of access to the pictorial space is possible (I do not claim, of course, that the *Stimmung* depends *only* on this). Take as a commutation test a picture of a forest wilderness with no pathways appearing in it. Its *Stimmung* will change abruptly if a narrow, but well-trodden walk is introduced in a small corner of it, leading through it. As an addendum to this chapter, at series of different picture examples are added with differing degrees of accessibility and different positions on the abstract/figurative continuum.[407]

   The hypothesis that this wandering access (and its different possibilities and impossibilities) play so huge a role in the understanding of pictures is based on several assumptions. A genetical – and non-phenomenological – assumption is that we, as a mammal species, must possess the basic competence of orienting ourselves in a set of surroundings, find our way, trace prey, avoid predators, deal with species fellows – which implies a high degree of competence presenting qualified guesses of what may hide in the indeterminacy spots of a given set of exteriors. An a priori explanation, a phenomenological essence description (which needs in no way to conflict with the former, as they refer to empircial and ideal regularities, respectively) will point to the idea that understanding is necessarily diagrammatical – it includes maps, diagrams, schemata on a spatial substrate which are dealt with by moving around in an abstract space of possible spatial behaviors and by changing such an abstract mapping. Cognitive semantics has pointed to the fact that such mechanisms are widespread in human behavior and ordinary language. Thus it is no coincidence that it is the case in both concrete, metaphorical, and abstract landscapes that it is possible to run wild. As Husserl – exactly in relation to the question of pictures – metaphorically said:

   DIE DINGE SIND ABER DIFFIZIL, UND MAN GEHT LEICHT
                     IN DIE IRRE …

APPENDIX: PICTURE ACCESSIBILITY EXAMPLES

The following ten pictures demonstrate some of the different combination possibilities between abstract/figurative on the on hand and accessible/inaccessible on the dimensions of the other

Figure 38. Wooded Landscape.
(Gillis van Coninxloo, 1598)

While prototypical landscapes provide a bundle of pathways for the viewer, Coninxloo is one of the first to close these roads, positioning the observer lost in the midst of dark forests. Despite a huge degree of figurativity, we make a considerable way along the axis from accessibility to non-accessibility. We have a deep 3-D gaze into the thicket, but no path is taking us there.
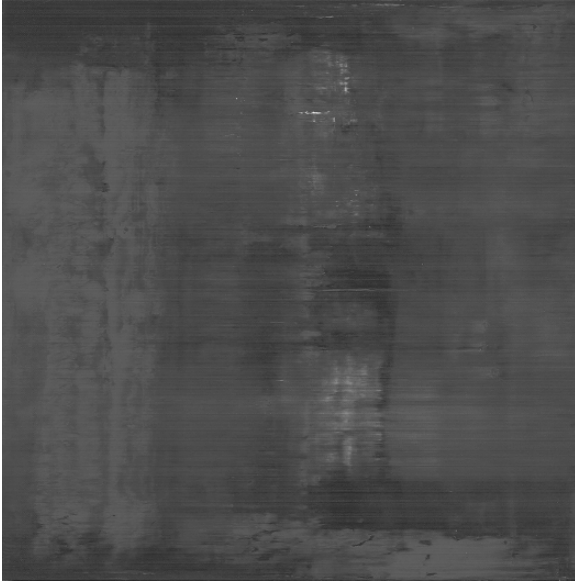
Figure 39. Abstractes Bild.
(Gerhard Richter, 1991) © Gerhard Richter and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
The later pictures of Gerhard Richter are arch-examples of a virtuoso playing on the axis between accessible and non-accessible. In these almost completely abstract paintings, with color drawn over the surface with wide paint scrapers, a dim haze or thin curtains or spyholes in a surface hint at an underlying space to move into.

Figure 40. Untitled #223.
(Cindy Sherman, 1990) © Cindy Sherman, Untitled #223, 1990, color photo 58 × 42 inches, Courtesy
of the Artist and Metro Pictures
The portrait is presumably the prototypical case of a non-accessible genre. The insisting gaze, or, like
here, the intimate occupation of the person portrayed maintains a no-go-zone. The acute difference
between the foregrounded person and a background losing depth, specificity, and meaning, approaching
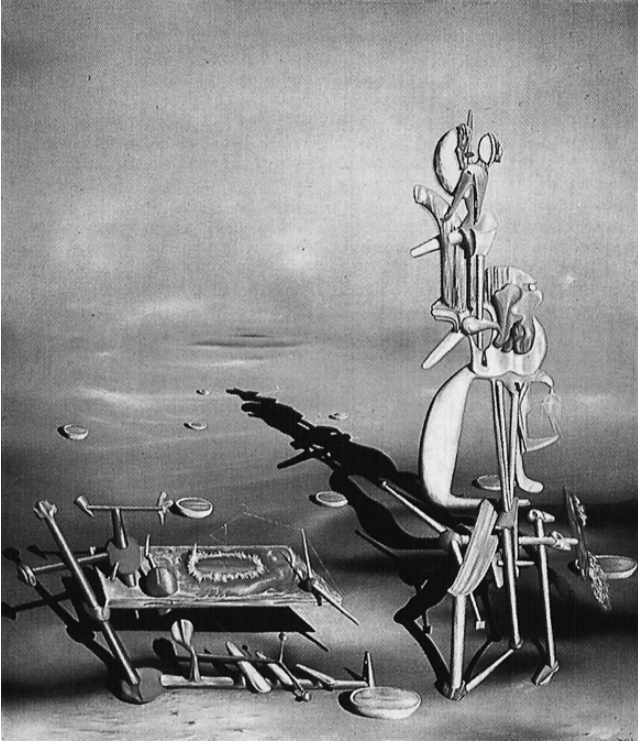uniform darkness, prevents the body from entering the picture.

Figure 41. Infinite Divisibility.
(Yves Tanguy, 1942) © Yves Tanguy, Infinite Divisibility, c/o Beeldrecht Amsterdam 2007
An almost too clear-cut illustration of the fact that the axis of accessibility does not coincide with the abstract-figurative axis is provided by the work of Tanguy. Here, we find ourselves in an undoubtable 3-D space, complete with ground, sky and object shadows, opening up for a horizon-seeking wanderer – but where the represented objectivities are abstract.

Figure 42. Press photo from the England-Hungary 3–6 match
(Wembley, London, 1953 [photographer unknown])

The sport photograph illustrates how the ability to read a picture based on the imagined movement of the observer's body may, in many cases, presuppose a massive amount of tacit knowledge on the part of the observer. To understand and appreciate a football picture you must not only know the rules, but also typical playing situations so you can continue the movie the next decisive seconds by the identification of yourself with one or several of the playing bodies, maybe trying different possible developments.

Your stretch your leg a little more than the front player depicted and you reach the ball.

Figure 43. Still-life with Wine Glass and Silver Bowl
(Pieter Claesz, undated)

The still-life genre of course explicitly depicts a stiffened tableau. On the figurative level, it gives the viewer the role of observer of an arrangement organized by others who may have regretted and left. Without further notice, you can sit down by the table and imagine sipping the wine, but there is no reason not to metamorphose into an imaginary fly and take a more ambitious round-trip in the inviting space produced.

Figure 44. The Lu Mountains
(Wang Hui, 1692)

In the Chinese landscape tradition the network of pathways in a 3-D thicket is a frequent topos. In a Husserlian sense, the movement possibilities organized by a picture are most often present in an unthematized way. They are temporal 'back sides' of the frozen moment of the picture. The exception to this rule is roads and pathways – here somebody has walked before you – which explicitly thematize the possibility of movement transgressing the crystallized moment of the picture. The depiction of wanderers may make this possibility actual.

Figure 45. Bare Træer
(Per Marquardt Otzen: Drawing from the anthology *Bare Træer* ['Trees Only'], Copenhagen 1994)
© Per Marquard Otzen

The prototypical path to follow lies in the middle of the field of vision. By blocking this part of the picture, the possibilities of access is preserved because you can enter through one of the side routes. Still, a forceful reduction of movement possibilities is notable, and a picture such as this is a compromise between accessible and unaccessible pictures.
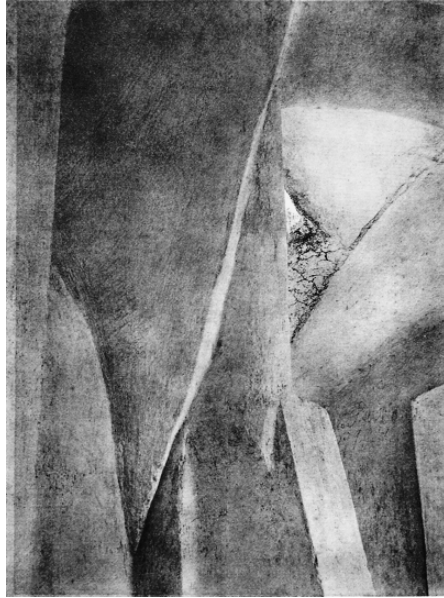
Figure 46. Church Interior. Tepotzotlan
(Tina Modotti, 1924)
A completely figurative picture showing the ceiling in a church loses 3-D interpretability and thus
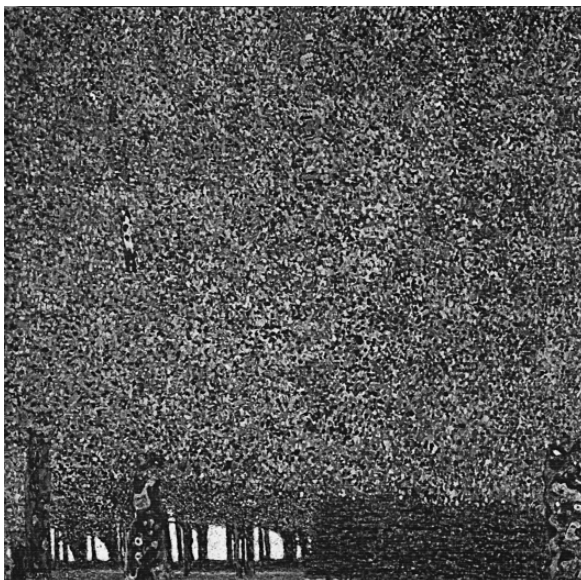assumes a both abstract and non-accessible character

Figure 47. Park
(Gustav Klimt, before 1910)
Despite the fact that 90 percent of the picture surface seems unaccessible and is vacillating between
figurative and abstract and is only pushed into the former by the bottom line of the picture, this painting
is eminently accessible. A rich bundle of ways opens into the park landscape at the bottom left