

## ART AND PHENOMENOLOGY IN EDMUND HUSSERL

*Milan Uzelac*

It is often pointed out that Husserl's disciples and followers produced significant works in aesthetics although Husserl himself was not particularly concerned with aesthetic problems, so at first sight it may appear quite obvious that one cannot properly speak about "Husserl's aesthetics;" it has also often been emphasized that his works contain few instances which explicitly deal with aesthetic problems. However, all this does not necessarily imply that one cannot attempt to reconstruct an "immanent aesthetics" present in his work; this is being done here not with the intention to shed light on Husserl's philosophical thought in general, but rather to point to the elements of far-reaching significance in aesthetic treatises of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I am convinced that it can easily be shown that even Husserl's incidental remarks on art give a highly clear scheme which would be the basis of interpretation of works of fine arts, drama and music, as well as their practice.

### 1. *The world as an image in the fantasy world*

According to Husserl, all art ranges between two extremes: on the one hand there is the given world and the given time (*gegebenen Welt und Zeit*) which are determined for us and make up our real world, our surroundings, while on the other hand there is the world of "make believe," a possible world, a possible time with its regulations [Hua, XXIII/540]; a representative of the former is found in visual arts, while pure fantastic art (*rein phantastische Kunst*) – music, playing fantasy (*spielende Phantasie*), is found in the latter. Art is thus on no-one's land: between the real and the possible (but not materialized) – it is a function of rendering the possible into the real.

The world of art is created by transferring fantasy into reality, the artist playing with the real on the other side of the actual (*das Wirkliche*). What comes to the foreground is the thing itself (*Sache selbst*), the work of art, and artists are no longer faced with the imperative of creation for creation's sake; what is insisted on is the introduction of new things into actuality (*Wirklichkeit*).

This standpoint is confirmed in Husserl, who says that “it is not the poet, but poetry that is being reconsidered” [Hua, XXIII/540-41], it is evident that stress is laid on the study of the objective: the work of art itself; this is a logical consequence of Husserl’s studies of the world of ideal, general objects; he terms this field of ideal objects *the world of a priori*, while these ideal objects constitute an object of particular, “categorical” experience, i.e. a possible object whose perception depends on a fixed description.

Bringing the concept of object under discussion (which any question regarding the essence of an artistic object aims at) here also implies the question concerning what, in fact, is meant by an “object.” Husserl points out that an appearance (*Erscheinung*) can be an *object* in a psychological statement (*Einstellung*), but this is not the case in an aesthetic statement; in an aesthetic statement the phenomenon is not observed and made the object of the theory, but the object or image-object (*Bildobjekt*) reflected in the medium of image is observed through perception; in observation, the subject is in a theoretical position, which is characterized by its direction towards the true being (*wahre Sein*) whose aim is to determine something; this is different from the practical position, which is characterized by aiming towards shaping or changing. A group of such objects is a world that has its equivalent in the field of transcendental consciousness (*Bewusstsein*) whose unity is provided for in the act of fantasy.

It is evident that it was precisely Husserl who made way for the space within which Heidegger (in accordance with Kant who was the first to be aware of this problem) postulated that a work of art is not an ordinary object, an utensil, but above all the ground (*Boden*) upon which real qualities are transformed into imaginary ones by the artist’s will, in other words, the place where truth takes place, where it appears; Heidegger lays much more stress on the truth than the appearance itself.

\*

It is by no means coincidental that the problem of fantasy reaches the core of studies seeking to shed light on phenomenological data (*Gegebenheiten*) as foundations aimed to be studied (*Versuch*) by the analysis of being (*Wesen*); in other words: what is borne in mind are intentionally objectivized experiences, such as, say, experiences which the artist has in the moment of creation of the work of art or experiences of the observer in the moment of shaping of an aesthetic object; what is meant here is inner seeing, as opposed to observation of the external (i.e. perception). It can easily be shown how perception is opposed to realization (*Vergegenwaertigung*) – i.e. what lingers before our eyes in fantasy [Hua, XXIII/3]. When Husserl places the concept of fantasy in the centre of his research one must bear in mind that he is not interested in fantasy as an activity of the soul (*Seele*); he above all seeks to search the phenome-

nological data which are the foundations of the analysis of essence (*Wesen*); these data are intentional objectifying experiences usually termed presentations (*Vorstellungen*) of the fantasy, or most often just presentations; such are, according to Husserl, presentations of a centaur given by the artist and those presentations are confronted with external observation, perception. The external, that which really appears is confronted by internal presentation, what is internally realized, that which, as we have already stated, "lingers in the fantasy;" realization is thus understood as the ultimate mode of intuitive presentation.

Fantasy could be understood as a simple illusion (*Schein*), but each sensory-perceptive illusion is not at the same time a fantasy illusion; the source of the illusion, which Husserl is especially interested in here, must lie in the subject and relies on his activities; thus the activity of fantasizing is opposed to perception which is always bound up with the present. While looking at a picture the observer lives in its pictoriality (*Bildlichkeit*); the object is realized in the picture. Awareness of this immanent pictoriality is of particular significance for aesthetic observation of a picture.

The interest arising here is not only caused by the subject contained within the picture, because, there where the picture acts (*wirken*) aesthetically, the action is not only a consequence of the existence of a subject, but also of colouredness. The colours themselves possess a certain power of words, so in order to reach the world created by the subject it is necessary to "set the fantasy game in motion," so in Veronese's or Dührer's pictures, says Husserl, landscapes and the period they lived in appear simultaneously.

At the same time, Husserl rightly emphasizes that what interests us in a picture is not the subject but the manner in which it appears and how much it appeals to us aesthetically. Husserl writes about it in 1904/1905 in his lectures *Phantasie und Bildbewusstsein* and, what is most important, he draws his examples mainly from visual arts, stressing that without pictures there is no visual art. This assertion is quite in accordance with the classical conception of the picture, which does not take the aspect of process as one of the work's dimensions. Such a thing could be expressed in the case of the art of music, but it is by no means coincidental that Husserl uses poetry and visual arts in order to speak about the work, whereas when discussing the art of drama he researches the dimensions of reality, so time as a way of existence is not found within the horizon of his research.

This could mean that Husserl's postulates remain within the sphere of thinking of classical art and they do not "function" in the case of modern art; this would probably be correct were it not for the penetration into a new, postmodern space and the reversal which opens up a new insight: namely, the essence of classical, modern and postmodern art is the same. The difference, if there is one, is only in the way of interpretation of objectification, which is constituted in the creative act. In his already mentioned lecture Husserl states

that a picture must clearly be distinguished from reality [Hua, XXIII/41]; in this way he anticipates Hartmann's later insistence on the necessity of existence of means of derealization, means by which a work of art is separated from the real world and thus avoids becoming a surrogate of reality.

One must bear in mind that the questions opened here by Husserl are not at the same time those he primarily aims at, because otherwise he would have explicitly built a theory of aesthetics; it is a fact that he is interested in the aesthetical rather than the aesthetic dimension, and analyzing the phenomenon of sensuality (*Sinnlichkeit*) his concept of the aesthetic approaches Kant's.

The picture possesses its own space which is not identical with the one we perceive in the picture, although its ground is in the real space and in reality with momentary perceptions (*Wahrnehmung*) in it; the invisible part of the space belonging to the picture is opposed to the part of space which can be grasped by experience [Hua, XXIII/509]. The encounter of the two spaces and their combination creates fictions: a king on the stage, says Husserl, is a real man with real clothes, when he leaves the stage and leaves his royal attire in the dressing room he again becomes an ordinary man and the hitherto royal clothes again become ordinary clothes.

Thus we recognize that the question of the essence (*Wesen*) of art, in case of visual arts, is treated as the question of the essence of the picture, so we must return to the question of the picture in the light of the relationships between reality and non-reality, or the question of the world of the picture within the world of real objects; this is one of the reasons why Husserl's student and collaborator, Eugen Fink, analyzes the world and consciousness of the picture following his teacher's footsteps in the thirties. Fink's analyses start by raising the subject of the phenomenological sense of non-reality, which he does not understand as a term contrary to reality, because the *non* does not mean negation here, since Fink is not interested in the problem of being (*Sein*) or non-being (*Nichtsein*) of the so-called intentional objects; on the contrary, non-being is contained within the being.

It is a fact that Fink, studying the constitution of unreal experiences [Fink 1966, 67], which should imply an insight into the ontological fundamental character of the picture, starts from the picture as an object of our surrounding world; it could be a work of art or a photograph; the question whether it concerns a purely given work or only a "picture" acquires its object form from human subjectivity. The picture is shown as a product of culture, as a purposeful (*zweckmaessig*) creation (*Gebilde*). What interests us most in a picture, as Fink points out, is its meaning (73), but it does not belong to the pure phenomenon of the picture.

How is this to be understood at all? Obviously, it is a matter of unreality in the sense of ideal meaning which is manifested as the ideal singularity of a work of art. What ultimately precedes cognition are the subjective intentions of

the author of the picture, and those intentions, in turn, arise by means of cognition (P. Riker), which finally concludes explanation. Explanation meant here is of particular importance, as it emphasizes the significance of understanding which directly occurs in front of a picture.

In his above mentioned work E. Fink determines a picture as a unity of the real bearer (*Traeger*) and the picture world borne by it. The picture world (*Bildwelt*) is always bound up with the real bearer; it always has its own space and its own time, and there is also a sphere which surrounds the world of the picture and which fades in the open horizon of its spatiality (*Raumlichkeit*) (74). The objects appearing in a picture are not real objects of space and time but possess their own space and their own time. This makes possible for us to have a constant present (and that present has its past and future, i.e. the past and the future of the world of the picture and not the real past or future of the picture).

Pointing out to the unreality of the world of the picture, Fink at the same time wishes to emphasize the real “illusion” of this world; it is a matter of reality (*Wirklichkeit*) of “unreality” (*Unwirklichkeit*) itself. The bearer of the picture here is not in the centre of attention because we are aware of it all the time; after all, the bearer is not only the material, canvas or paint, but, as Fink stresses, the entire surface layer of the picture – what “covers” the bearer, which is the way in which the bearer of the picture is given to us.

We are dealing with an important structure of awareness of the picture: in the measure that the awareness of the picture has an effect of unity, the bearer has an almost anonymous function. This anonymity has a specific character of certain self-understandable self-givenness as such. The water surface is not seen as much as the reflection on the water.

The way in which the picture is given, discussed by Fink here, which in his opinion has the function of the bearer of the world of the picture is a new moment in the analysis of the structure of unity of the picture; this is quite different from what we find in Hartmann who sees in the bearer only the material layer of the picture, but also an important motif taken over later (consciously or unconsciously) by R. Ingarden.

In the last chapter of his inaugural dissertation Fink dedicates attention to the phenomenon of transparency of the picture; the entire picture is only a “window” into the world of the picture. This account of the window and transparency of the picture is largely parabolic. The world of the picture through its perspective is oriented towards the observer, who is the centre of orientation of the world of the picture. With the concept of “window” as the structure of the essence of the phenomenon of the picture Fink finds that he has reached the fundamental concept which must lie in the basis of intentional-constitutive analysis of the picture. A window, which is at the same time real and “unreal,” is a noematic correlate of the medial act of “picture awareness,” i.e. nothing but the pure phenomenon of the picture.

In his work *Phantasie und bildliche Vorstellung* (1898) Husserl distinguishes between a picture and a thing (*Sache*); as regards the former, it is possible to speak about (a) a picture as a physical thing (a thing that can be sent by mail, a thing that can be hung on a wall or destroyed) and about (b) a picture as an object which appears by means of certain paints and shapes. The latter is not a reflected object, or subject of the picture, but an analogue of a fantasy picture; this means that one must constantly be aware of the distinction between the represented and the representing object of the picture (*Bildobjekt*) which are, again, different in relation to a physical picture [Hua, XXIII/109-110].

If a step out of reality is taken as its negation, as a rejection of reality or its decomposition, while reality is confronted by the actively perceived object, it is quite sensible to raise the issue of the character of that active apperception: is it on the side of the observer or is it a feature of an actor who, while saying his lines, simultaneously feels the content of the script and himself as two distinct facts of consciousness; in other words: in which way does the perceiving consciousness recognize the same object in two separate dimensions? What constantly occurs as a problem is the boundary which must be crossed in order to reach the art world from the real world; it is a fact that this boundary is constantly moving and is not determinable once forever, but is determined by the work which we see as artistic.

In that "seeing" lies the foundation of existentiality of a work of art, which is why the thesis about the world as a picture in the world of fantasy can justifiably be defended. The duality of the worlds (although any usage of the concept of the world in plural is logically nonsensical) discussed here is only a parable by which the peculiarity of the artistic phenomenon is interpreted. If this is impossible within the Aristotelian determined categorical apparatus of Western philosophy, it is quite possible if thinking in images is introduced (in the manner of pre-Socratics) or thinking which makes use of a complex game of mutually (to a certain extent) equivalent fundamental phenomena, as done by E. Fink.

When a thing is "imagined" in fantasy then the ratio of the "idea" and the thing is analogous to the ratio of a photograph of that thing and the thing itself; in both cases the images of things (considering their object dimension) are *nothing* and discourse on them has quite a modifying sense which points to a completely different existence from the one which causes them; Husserl warns that there is no object in the picture, but only a photographed object and real colours on paper, as well as the corresponding complex of perceptions experienced by the observer of the picture [Hua, XXIII/110]; likewise, the picture in fantasy does not really exist, but there is a corresponding complex of sensory contents of the fantasy in the experience of the presentation given us by the fantasy. What is objectified in the mind is not the picture but the object as a fictional image.

What must be borne in mind here is that fantasy, when this term is taken in its popular sense, does not only refer to artistic fantasy (where our examples

mostly come from); even less so is it used in its narrow range such as is usually found in psychology under the title *productive fantasy* (which is modifying in the way as used by the artist); the usage of this term implies the employment of a third road upon which the concept of fantasy would develop equally both regarding its perceptive and reproductive dimension.

In Husserl it is not a matter of the concept of fantasy in the function of art; but, as he sees phantasizing as opposed to perception, fantasy can be understood as a particular, specific way of understanding, which is a point where in one moment the already announced issues coming from aesthetics must be in the core of research. It concerns the aesthetic way of observation in whose centre is the interpretation of a picture-object (*Bildobjekt*) which is on the other side of interest for being and non-being because it is a matter of observation in which no attitudes are taken: “die ästhetische Betrachtung fordert den Ausschluss des theoretischen Interesses, die theoretische Einstellung muss weichen der ästhetischen” [Hua, XXIII/591]. Although the differentiation between the two domains is not a recent result, it is only today that we are becoming aware of the far reaching decision made explicit by A.G. Baumgarten. Therefore the growing interest in this over two centuries forgotten thinker is hardly accidental, as it coincides with the new thematization of nature in postmodernism, which is comparable to the interest in nature among the first Romantics and their immediate predecessors.

What characterizes an aesthetic statement is a possibility to revert to it, to observe reality as an “image” within it; this means that we possess the possibility to imagine the reality represented in the image, or vice versa, to imagine the image in which the reality is represented. We can ask the question, what is the object encountered in the field of that reality and answer immediately: it is the totality of everything that exists for the subject, what is valid for him and endures; if such an object occurs in the centre of fantasy, it might happen to be in the middle of an imaginary conflict, since, isn't pure fantasy, asks Husserl, a conflict (*Widerstreit*): a conflict with perceptions, recollections (*Erinnerungen*), anticipations? All the statements about the world excluded, does fantasy still have its place, something it could stand against [Hua, XXIII/593]? What are the boundaries imposed on fantasy? Do they come from the outside or do they spring from inside itself?

Here it is evidently not a matter of play, but of exclusion, of putting the confronted perceptions out of play, illusion no longer being reality but manifested only as *quasi*-reality. The question of reality, introduced by the concept of illusion, appears as the fundamental question of any aesthetic research, which is why any philosophy of art is eventually modified as ontology of art.

The world of art is a world of modifying fantasy, perceptive or reproductive, partially perceptible, partially imperceptible; we have already ascertained that during the performance of a theatre play we live in the sphere of perceptive

fantasy: the images occurring before us form a unity, and the establishment of this unity of images in fiction termed by Husserl “immediate imagination” (*unmittelbare Imagination*) [Hua, XXIII/515] is of decisive significance in determining the aesthetic character of a picture; it is clear that here we are dealing with a sensory presentation of images produced by the actor in his play: his job is to reproduce the past in sensory way and thus render it directly into the present for us.

## 2. *The world as the site of the played play*

Among Husserl’s works on the phenomenology of perceptual realization (*anschauliche Vergegenwärtigung*) the text *Zur Lehre von den Anschauungen und ihren Modis* (1918) published in 1980 in volume XXIII of his complete works (*Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung*) is of special significance; there Husserl, relying apart from visual arts especially on performing arts, points to the relationship between reality and its representation in a dramatic work; if for him art is a field of modifying fantasy which may be perceptive or reproductive, perceivable, partly also not perceivable, since art is not necessarily within the range of perceptibility [Hua, XXIII/514] the domain of art is fiction which is not the same as reality but only a possibility; this fiction is composed of *quasi-real* things abiding in their own (fictional) space and time; those things are in an indefinite, undefined horizon of a world inside which there exists an opposition and confrontation between the objects of experience and objects of imagination.

The *experience world* here is a limitless system of current experiences which can be made explicit within the horizon created by experience; the sphere of freedom and self-willed changeability is limited within it. *Fantasy worlds* are completely free worlds, each fantasy thing abiding in the fantasy world as a *quasi-world*; the horizon of the fantasy world’s indefiniteness cannot be made explicit by some analysis of experience. The peculiarity of fantasy lies in its arbitrariness, i.e. in arbitrary self-will [Hua, XXIII/535].

Insight into the existence of quasi-worlds has as its consequence that a work of art, especially a literary work of art, can be understood as a set of *quasi-statements*, which Ingarden later attempted to present as his original contribution to the research of stratification of a work of art. What appears far more important is the way in which Husserl poses this problem: if a poetic work is a set of asserting statements, then there is reason to search for its origins in Aristotle, who was the first to describe the specific structure of mode of existence of the world of the artistic (*Kuenstlerische*).

In the above mentioned lecture from 1918 Husserl points to the nature of the world produced by performing a dramatic work (*Schauspiel*): if the essence of



visual arts contains representation in an image which can be determined as a reflection of a real object, such a way of modifying could not be accepted as paradigmatic for all other arts as well, so in the case of the works of dramatic art it should be stressed that there is a form of realization within the fictional world in a different, not simply reflecting, manner. What takes place is creation which does not reflect things, but forms them from themselves. They grow from out of themselves, occupy the real space and, thanks to the power of the observer to be simultaneously aware both of the real and the fictional, they have a real existence in the unreal world, the only reality being the played play.

During the performance of a theatre play we live in the world of perceptive fantasy, finding ourselves on the ground of *quasi*-reality; we see a sequence of images and link them into a single image, but here it is obviously not a matter of a reflection such as we have in the case of works of visual art. What happens on stage is a reflecting representation (of a historical character, e.g. Richard III or Wallenstein); this representation obviously has an aesthetic function; it is evident that we are not dealing with a reflection but with an image produced in the imagination; it is a matter of perceptive fantasy, of immediate imagination [Hua, XXIII/515]. Depending on the dramatic work in question, Husserl thinks that there are two modes of fantasy to be distinguished: first, fantasy which brings something from the past to the present (such as the case of realist, bourgeois drama, termed by him *fantasy of the past*, and, second, *pure fantasy*, such as we encounter in Hoffmannsthal's fairy tales.

The actors on stage produce an image; it is an image of tragic action, and each of them creates a character of an acting personality; however, the image of personality (*Bild von*) formed on stage is not the same as the reflection of a personality (*Abbild von*), so the actor's representation does not have the same sense as the image-object in which a subject is represented (*Bildsujet*). Neither the actor nor the image he creates before us is an image in which another object would be reflected. The actor's representation is the production of an image by means of his real activity, his movements, mime, his external appearance (which are his product) [Hua, XXIII/515].

\*

In his lectures on perceptions and their forms (1918) Edmund Husserl spoke about how a represented play (*dargestellte Schauspiel*) is a pure perceptive figment (*ein reines perzeptives Fiktum*) [Hua, XXIII/515]. In this way he directly brought under discussion the reality of what is represented on stage; in other words, while being led by quite other motives, Husserl asks the question: what is it that we really see? – and points out that our seeing is only a result of what we have learned to see, what we are prepared to see at all. This further

means that what we see is not really what we are looking at, but something else, something yet to be seen if we observe the (dramatic) play artistically.

Everything on stage, as pointed out by this philosopher, has the character of *as if* (*Als-ob*). Actors as real people, real things: the set, the furniture on the stage, the real curtains, all this *represents*, serves to transfer us into artistic illusion (516). Everything that appears on stage, although it has a representing character, is not there to represent itself, but above all to make present something that is not there but is in its being more present than what is directly given to our senses at that moment.

Thus the spectator is in a paradoxical situation: while watching he does not perceive what he actually sees in order to perceive what he cannot see in reality and what is ultimately the only reality on stage.

Only this double seeing, which enables the spectator to abide simultaneously in two different worlds and to be equally aware of the existence of each of them separately throughout the duration of the performance, is a necessary precondition of seeing the artistic in performing arts.

Living an illusory experience in a completely illusory position within the world as an image of the world we no longer possess the experience of the real world (especially not the experience acquired by representation of realities offered to us), above all because it was excluded from the play at the very outset; a drama does not play with the world but makes possible for the world to play its play within it. That is why the furniture on stage is real in the same measure as it is fictional in the world of image; on the other hand, on stage it is not an image of fiction, but is completely real and determines the attitude of the observer who lives in the stage performance.

Of course, it is not real furniture, but the furniture in the room of a certain person and thus, Husserl would say, it is fictional furniture, furniture embodied in fantasy; thus it is opposed to real actuality to which real furniture belongs. Pieces of furniture are utensils and have a certain function in the room; but the room, being opposed to reality now, is a fiction – it is usable, but for characters who are fictions themselves, so the perceived in fantasy is not something resembling reality, the present or the past, but is cognized in its *as if* contents, as an as-if reality.

Perceptive fantasy arises on the ground of real things; the spectator sensorily perceives one reality and experiences quite another. This first reality, termed by N. Hartmann the front, material plane, is a presupposition of appearance of all we have termed fictional and unreal; this, on the other hand, exists only in the observer's consciousness, that of the observer who can see artistically, who has the ability to see beyond reality, to penetrate the other reality shaped by actors on stage through their performance.

This background (*Hintergrund*) is made up of perceptions and experiences produced by real things, so an artistic object is *represented* in that background –

it is an illusion and, whether we want it or not, we are actually dealing with illusions. Husserl asks the following question here: what is this representation characterized by?

When it concerns illusion in its ordinary sense, in the sense of make-believe, what takes place is perception characterized by the possibility of traversing to other perceptions or reproductive experiences, perceptions which are originally illusionist and are in confrontation with other perceptive moments [Hua, XXIII/516]. But when it concerns a theatre performance, what appears is a play (a fragment of the world of make-believe); here one does not begin with a normal perception, one does not start from the reality of the perceptively manifesting; from the outset we know that what we see is not something real, all that is seen has a nullifying character. The real becomes existentially neutral and makes it possible for the unreal to reach the foreground, to be seen as real.

It is not the same as when we have a pure illusion by which we stand on the ground of experience, so we counterpoise the experiential to the illusive and thus negate the latter. In the case of theatrical illusion, it is an illusion of a different kind: we accept it, it is our starting point, we “see” its objects as objects of reality. It should be added here that the spectator never confuses the real with the make-believe; the *artistic image* which we accept as a representation of reality is reality for us, but reality of a special kind which would not be “mixed up” with reality; we may conditionally say that it is an *image of reality*.

Our unmodified experience is covered by that image of reality. In the spectator’s consciousness there are simultaneously two layers of experience of “the same thing,” but two layers of such structure that can never merge; otherwise we would lose their specific difference, which is where the possibility for the spectator to later form his image of a work of art lies, in other words, what is called *aesthetic object (Gegenstand)* in aesthetics. This concretization is a result of a pulsating movement between two realities which appear on stage. As soon as the curtain rises the spectator is found on the ground of illusion and make-believe; he remains conscious of that until the end of the performance. Having found himself on the ground built by the perception of fantasy he begins actively to judge, fear, hope, suffer; all this, reminds Husserl, is done by the spectator in an *as if* mode, in the mode of fantasy. Otherwise he would not be able to remain calm and would not be able to endure the intensity of the experience of what happens on stage. This justifies the thesis that it is not a matter of a “real experience,” but above all an artistic experience.

There are reasons to suppose that this relationship of the actor and what takes place on stage is of more recent date; the Greeks did not see an embodiment of fiction, but above all a manifestation of true existence. That is why what happened in the theatre was so moving and why they, watching what could not be seen in reality, watched, in fact, what lay in the structure of things or, more pre-

cisely, in the structure of the cosmos. The represented did not have a mode of fiction for them, it was a manifestation of real being in its true, unhidden form.

Since what was represented on stage was a drama of the cosmos playing with itself by using both gods and people in its play, so the latter are playthings in a twofold manner: once playthings of the world, another time playthings of gods; so the actors on stage were only a manifest form of cosmic powers – confronted principles from whose conflict the world arises, both on stage and in the spectators' consciousness. Actors wore masks then because they were not individuals (an individual, as rightly noted by Nietzsche, can only be comic but not tragic), but incarnations of power. Their role (from the technical side) was easier than today because there were no problems with miming or gestures – what was necessary was only to utter the text clearly and articulately; on the other hand, their task was also more difficult because their responsibility was greater: by taking part in dramatic events they also took part in the world order, they were the world itself and drama then was a skill without art.

If the situation has changed since the decline of Greek art and if the role of actors in the new age is different, if now, by using real means, they impersonate real characters in order to achieve the effect of the unreal, we may ask ourselves, in which way do they manage to represent the above mentioned *quasi-reality*? If the aim of theatre, as finely remarked by Husserl, is *putting-into-work* (*Ins-Werk-Setzung*), and we know that one of his renowned disciples would later say that art is *putting-into-work-of-truth* (*Ins-Werk-setzen-der-Wahrheit*) it could be possible to say that the new theatre no longer has aims to educate the spectators towards the truth (as in antiquity) but towards another perception: theatre today prepares the experience how to arouse double perception, double perceptive understanding.

The *quasi-world* of the *quasi-experiential* character on stage is infinitely indefinite [Hua, XXIII/535] in the same measure as the world lying outside our current experience is indefinite, containing within itself a possibility of fantastic modification, a possibility of appearance of fictional beings, only fictionally confronted before us in their stage reality. The confrontation remains, and one could say that it is permanently present in the genesis of a dramatic form, although it has lost its original sense long ago. The essence of confrontation has fallen into oblivion and drama is ruled by fiction.

The fictional, arising before us while we are in the theatre, is not the essence of the cosmos at work; the fictional is represented in the thing itself, as one of the given states in its own perceptive manifestation; that is why what we really perceive is fiction. Husserl notices that it is only a reflection and a certain *putting-into-relationship* (*Ins-Beziehung-Setzen*) of the two attitudes (real and fictional) in their givenness [Hua, XXIII/518]. The art of drama has been transferred onto transcendental ground (*Boden*): the confronted data (*Gegebenheiten*) abide on the ground of consciousness.

Art has become a domain within which one immediately learns the ability of simultaneous double seeing: the world of fiction arises from the real world; the states of both worlds are immediately given to us one by the other, they intertwine in the same character who is both a real and a fictional person; the spectator possesses the awareness about this twofoldness and that awareness makes possible aesthetic enjoyment of a work of art which we have always “known” to be fiction from the standpoint of “everyday reality.” The possibility of aesthetic pleasure is another sign of change discussed here: the Greeks did not have that aesthetic attitude towards a dramatic work and they did not enjoy an actor’s acting, i.e. they did not see or seek in a work the same as we do. That is why their works are irreversibly past for us.

Husserl stresses the possibility of change of thematic attitude: this happens when one abandons the ground of reality and starts a life of perception which is no longer founded in experience but in fantasy; then the world of fantasy is born, reached by the spectator by the act of nullifying reality; this act is of particular significance as it is precisely with its appearance that the deficiency of philosophical thinking is shown, since philosophy is unable to raise *any* issue and arrange it explicitly. It is a fact that it constantly strives towards it, that it sees it as its most urgent task, but it is also evident that it constantly fails to attain it. But in art such a thing is possible: only art, by embodying the transition from the real into the fictional world is in the position to immediately, practically *show*, but not *express* what is actually taking place there.

The constituted possibilities within the consciousness of fantasy are not in conflict with relations of reality, because we are concerned with two separate, parallel worlds: while the world of experience signifies an infinite system of current experiences with horizons of experience which can again be made explicit in experience, so within that system there are little (specifically limited) spheres of freedom, the worlds of fantasy are completely free worlds and any “invented” thing, as Husserl notices, has such a world as a precondition of its “existence” [Hua, XXIII/534-535].

The world of fantasy does not have a limited horizon, it extends depending on the powers possessed by the observer; at the same time, this “unlimited horizon” cannot be made explicit by means of a definite analysis of experience. Fantasy is characterized by its arbitrariness, in the possibility to assume multifaceted forms, and at the same time, in all its modifications, to remain in correspondence with the work upon whose ground it arises. Therefore, if the art of acting modifies the spectator, the spectator’s consciousness is the only place where this skill can be made concrete; consciousness is a condition of the durability of acting and, having found itself in a transcendental dimension, acting as an art becomes constant as a principle of seeing and experiencing the world in its diversity.

### 3. *Reality of the World of Poetry*

A poem, in its linguistic body as well as in its “spiritual” form, is an *idea*, to a greater or lesser extent ideally materialized in the act of reading in an infinite number of ways. It is, as pointed out by Husserl in a less well-known work, an individual, “objective” idea [Hua, XXIII/543]; an essential quality of this idea would consist in possessing its own timeness originally (in the linguistic idiom) set up by the artist. Thus the poet makes the ideal intersubjectively accessible, so any such objectified idea (especially one which is an expression of the beautiful and the worthy), objectively considered, is a *work*. This immediately raises the question of the poet, as well as his place in the world of art. Who, in fact, is the poet and what it is that he can set up? Is it a matter of a special power, a power of constituting, which lies outside the sphere of rational grasp and interpretation, or is it a peculiar way of constituting in which the poetic of the poetic is reflected in its full transparence?

It is especially significant that Husserl in the quoted text approaches the forming of a poem to the power of fantasy: with the starting points (1) that in any fantasizing there is the fantasized (that which lives in fantasy, i.e. fantasized reality) as well as (2) that the reader as the current subject possesses fantasy in an ontic sense, Husserl suggests that in any research of the nature of a poem one must previously search the ground of its origin (and at the same time the ground of its reception), i.e. the creative subject which materializes fiction as a constant, intersubjectively accessible object. This brings us back to the question, who, in fact, is the poet and what is this power of realization he possesses in the moment of creation of a poetic work? How is it possible to say that it is precisely a poetic work that is created in that moment? Isn't there room for doubt that it could be a matter of something else, something misunderstood, misinterpreted, finally, something that is rather anything else but a poem in its primordial form?

But what can be the meaning of the statement that it is a matter of a poem in its primordial form? A poem does not arise from the primordial, it has no common points with the primordial; it owes its existence to accidental circumstances which are only shown to be primordial in its further existence. The origin of a poem is related to the poet and his origin is only subsequently blended with the work which he created in one moment of his existence; if he rendered his fictional dream into an existing tissue, he only showed that the sphere of fiction is not an auxiliary field we would take recourse to only in the moments when we fail to establish meaningful relations within the world bordered by reality and our half-dreamt dreams.

Placing the problem of fiction in the core of analyses leads Husserl to the question of the ontological dimension of a work of art; only one step leads from there to opening the possibility for a comprehensive ontology of art which

would make possible an ontological interpretation of a work of art; it would be misleading to think that Husserl was led by the demand for solving aesthetic problems present in treatises at the beginning of this century. It would be incorrect to start with, because most research of that kind at the time was still imbued with the yet living, dominating psychologism; at the same time, this means that the ontological dimension of a work of art was far in the background; it was raised only thanks to the works of N. Hartmann, but on the basis not only on Hegel's but also Husserl's fundamental idea. This failure to comprehend that entire phenomenology can be conceived solely as ontology is incomprehensible itself; it is understandable only if what one has in mind are only the traditional definitions of metaphysics, disregarding its metamorphoses; finally, all philosophical thinking is and remains metaphysical to its ultimate boundaries. What remains disputable is, of course, the determination of metaphysics, but if we understand it correctly, if we grasp it without all the ideological and extra-philosophical admixtures, there hardly remains any room for ambiguity; it will be shown that we are faced with an unreal problem, with something which, in fact, is not a problem at all. All the dreams about non-metaphysical thinking will melt like soap bubbles.

It takes a long time to understand that those bubbles are only metaphors by means of which we seek to fathom the ultimate limits bordering the primordial domain of the poem; bearing in mind that a great number of theoreticians think that metaphor is the key to the understanding of a poem, that there can be no poem without metaphor (which may be correct, but by no means can it be a demand posed before a poet); it could be claimed that a poem is defined by certain configurations of concepts whose supernatural nature is supposed to emanate a trans-rational reality. A fundamental research shows all this to be wrong. The work of a poet should not be mystified, nor should the result of his ideas be mystified. A final scientific analysis (unless we decide to contest the power of science in this aspect) would show that poetry and the poetic entirely conforms with the material domain of research which is, perhaps slightly extravagantly, inaugurated precisely by phenomenological philosophy.

It should therefore be hardly surprising that Husserl in his works does not aim towards solving artistic issues, but when he confronts difficulties he uses it and its leading concepts to develop fundamental theses of ever arising phenomenological philosophy which, in turn, had from the outset been focussed on the research of subjectivity, so it had to put in the foreground the essential ways in which a subject (and, in final consequence, subjectivity) is manifested: thus what appeared in the foreground as a creative moment in the creation of a poetic work was fantasy, whose presence was most conspicuous. Even if it was not a basic characteristic of poetry, things were evaluated with regard to judgments arising on the ground of fantasy, because in the consciousness of the

history of poetry there was a certain influential tradition of interpreting the art of poetry which ascribed decisive significance to the power of fantasy.

\*

A characteristic of fantasy is that logical thinking and foundation laying do not take place within it. But what does *foundation laying* mean here at all? Who is the one that founds and what is being founded? At first sight one might say: it is the poet that does the founding, and the founded is the poem. Is the second part of the answer correct? It is the poem that is being founded or only that which makes it possible? Isn't the poem only a result of something that existed prior to it, something that makes possible for the statements within the poem to be familiar and at the same time to contain infinite unpredictability? Who is able to claim that a poem exists only for the poet and not for the one who knew it before it was written? Here, of course, we are by no means dealing with a teleological justification of the poem. Such considerations are out of place in phenomenology. What it is primarily about is that the poem exists prior to its manifest forms. By its immersion into another reality it is a foundation from which spring all the interpretations and justifications of the reality in which we (not by our own fault) happen to be.

All poetic statements are *as if* statements or, as one may put it in accordance with Aristotle's conception of art: all literary statements are neutral with regard to being. This neutrality is what makes it possible for us to enjoy a work of art at all, because it allows us to enjoy in the *representation* of an object and not the object represented. Enjoyment in the latter would prove the work to be a failure, only a surrogate in the real world, it would mean that we are actually unable to distinguish a work of art from the state of affairs in the world. It is therefore hardly accidental that the essence of fiction with all its modes of reality always "stands" before our eyes as a live present moment; in this way it is confirmed that reality (as we see it, as "real reality") is not a possibility, and possibility is not reality, so any mention of foundations and foundation laying in such a context should be taken conditionally: it is primarily a matter of "neutralization" where the building of a fictional world nullifies the perception of the real world.

If this is the way things are understood, then it is precisely art that offers an infinite multitude of perceptive fictions among which can be distinguished already at first sight (a) purely perceptive and (b) purely reproductive fictions. At the same time, the processes of fantasy do not take place independently from us although they do have their objectivity despite being prescribed for us in a certain manner; it can even happen that we feel that they are imposed on us (though not in the same way) as things of the real world [Hua, XXIII/519]. Those arising fantasies originate in the work and cannot arise independently of the subject and things; one may rather say that they arise in collaboration, in



incessant pulsation between the subject and things. From the noetic standpoint experience and fantasy are in synthesis, they build up a compositional unity which would best be described by saying that it is precisely thanks to them that it is possible to speak of building up the unity of consciousness as a foundation upon which with its decisive portion rests the world of art.

When they say that the artist has absolute freedom in creation, what one has in mind is absolute freedom in playing with fantasies, which he possesses thanks to the complete freedom in treating perceptions; this, of course, is only seemingly so: absolute freedom, so much relied upon in treatises on art, is in fact not there and it never was there, neither in the moment of creation of the work of art nor in the moment of its reception; one should rather speak of the illusion of absolute freedom taken as a pure possibility which exists prior to creation itself. In creating, the artist is in one way or another from the very outset tied to certain aesthetic ideals, whether he wants it or not, whether he is aware of it or not, he is a product of the time which he partially produces himself by his presence and activity in the sphere of art.

What kind of freedom are we dealing with at all? Who determines that freedom and which foundation does it spring from? How can one speak about the foundations of freedom without tackling non-freedom, without mentioning the void from which anything metaphysical rises towards infinity? Mere possession of element links of a work of art is on no account a reliable key to understanding what always escapes final understanding, a hint about what the artist had envisioned or succeeded in fixating in an ontically highly doubtful material.

The reader (or the observer) must seek to follow the artist's intention to render the given novel or the given dramatic work which contains a fictional life or fictional fates into a *quasi*-experience [Hua, XXIII/520]. In this way what is already fictional is again rendered into the fictional and thus a world of fiction is composed, not less objectual than the real world (though not equally real, of course). Statements or judgments about the personality of a character in a work may be given in the way of objective reality, although (this must be borne in mind) they refer to fictions. While we live in fantasy we possess an imagined reality and during that time it is the only reality for us which possesses an ontological sense; at the same time, as real beings, we possess fantasy in an ontic sense, fictions are given to us as objecthood, we "count on them," but as the mentioned *real beings* we are aware of the reality and we cannot live only in fiction. It is precisely that awareness of the reality that makes possible life in the world of fiction and its acceptance as an *as-if* world.

It is clear that to fantasize is not the same as to try out, because in fiction there is only the fictional, while the real is found in the experiential so an imagined individual is not the same as a given individual; this is no trivial objection to poetry; on the contrary, it is a matter of raising the issue of the distinction between the two worlds and the twofoldness itself, as a foundation

upon which the possibility of poetry arises. Even if the content of fantasy can be explicit and described, the individual content within fantasy is not the real content, which means that the language about the givenness of contents which we have in fantasy is a modified language, while the language of poetry should be ultimately understood solely as an establishment of what all the time abides outside or below the very language reflected in thinking.

The existence of a multiple possibility of answer is of special significance; what is manifested there is the multifaceted power of movement of thinking, rejecting at the same time the one way direction towards the object led by the Hegelian idea of irreversibility. In this case the postmodern strategies have an undeniable advantage. Poetry presupposes multiplicity of interpretations, such as musical works already carry in themselves the possibility of multiple interpretations. Thus the reality of a poem can be understood in two ways: once it is an imaginary world contrasted to the world of real facts, another time it is an array of possible materializations which make up the permanently unfinished world of a work of art.

It should be noted that the fictional character of objects does not imply that relations between them are fictional; things may be fictional, but the relations in which they are from the moment of creation of the work are not. These relations outlined from primordial times are not at the same time judgments in the real sense because they have as their object only characters and actions which exist solely in a certain *as if* mode; the mentioned judgments express what we (being not in the natural but a fictional position) expect; while describing the action of a character in a novel or a drama, or their motives, we are undoubtedly in the world essentially shaped by fantasy, but instead of seeking simply to reproduce or mechanically repeat that power we develop its *as if* sense through fantasizing and thinking in the elements of fantasy, we fulfill intentions, we perform what pertains to life and action in the true perceptive *quasi*-experiential interior of thoughts or senses, i.e. in the interior of the motives which are usually obscure and hidden [Hua, XXIII/520].

If a fictional person makes a judgment about a character, things or relations which in a certain way belong to the fictional picture created by the artist, that judgment could be a fiction, but it could also be a judgment containing truth or falsity, which would mean that all judgments contained in a work are subject to verification. Judgments within a work of art as separate realities could be marked as *quasi*-judgments and they are modifications of real judgments, but as such modifications they can be true or false, they are equally subject to all logical (but also non-logical) laws, since logic does not give advantage to the given reality but expresses rules for any possible reality [Hua, XXIII/522]. What takes place here is compliance with the logic which rules inside the work but which ultimately remains strictly formal without affecting in any way the

issue of existence of what is uttered in the work, or the relations between what exists in the work and its real correlate.

Perhaps it is hardly coincidental that this thesis occupies the focus of treatises on art today, so Ingarden renders Aristotle's insight on the being-neutral sphere of art into discourse on *quasi*-statements which preserve the neutrality and "reality" of a work of art, which was rightly questioned by K. Hamburger in the example of statements which make up the texture of a historical novel. It seems that Heidegger is quite right to question the logical foundations of metaphysics, as well as the right of logic to utter statements on being; what is, perhaps, justifiably criticized here is a long unproved, dubious claim of logic on something that cannot be done without going beyond one's own limits and possibilities.

It could be claimed that Husserl is wrong in wanting to subordinate the statements of all the regional domains to the rule of logic because this narrows the space previously allotted to regional ontologies; there are reasons to claim that the sphere of art escapes precisely the logic of logic and thanks to it one can construct one's own "logic" of art which is by no means a logic of the real world; finally, it may be in the nature of art to see the world "from the other side," so when Heidegger, in his *Beitraege zur Philosophie*, speaks about *Kunstlosigkeit*, i.e. about the impossibility of existence of art as a symptom of the modern age, it should be understood as an expression resulting from the awareness of the consequences issuing from the acceptance of the possibility of art as art and the time when its possibility is entirely endangered; at the same time, it is a sign of determination not to accept the possibility of existence of works which do not comply with the logic of reality. If logic as we know it cannot reach the being, if it cannot reach the relations established between fictional beings within a work, then the existence of art, in any of its modalities, would be the harshest critique of philosophy which has, unawares, reached its end.

Is it possible, and to what extent, to ask the question about the existentiality of fiction which characterizes a work of art? This question makes sense if we are aware from the outset that it is not a matter of existence of the simply represented, but existence of ideal representation of the represented; existentiality itself as such is not of decisive importance and even less so concluding for an evaluating consciousness. If it were so, a real object would at the same time be the most valuable, but here it is not a matter of nature which would deliver valuable things to us, since things do not carry their value on themselves. It is a matter of ideal objects which are not subject to the natural space and the natural time: all art ranges between the real and the indefinite; it is a link between the shaped, the fixed, and the amorphous, prone to shaping and life in all its aspects. This already supplies enough reason for the assertion that art is the ground and site of conflict between the actual and the imaginary, the real and the unreal, the objectual and the non-objectual, the actual and the possible; if this ten-

sion is always confirmed within a dramatic work, in the case of poetry one may say that the conflict is maintained in the relation of the poem and the real world.

Art is characterized by the effort to form the unreal from real material and to form the inexpressible in the plane of the expressible; it names by not naming, and this naming holds its power which becomes visible only at the border of two worlds hovering over the void. That nothingness (from which the poem absorbs its strength and sense) gives poetry the opportunity to survive in the moments when it seems that the situation is hopeless on both sides.

There seem to be many reasons to ask the question about the sense unconsciously brought out to the foreground by new poetry; here above all we have the "tendencies" to express in a brief form something that others need much more space for. In that case, such poetry could be modern, but no longer post-modern. In any event, it is a poetry that belongs to a certain period and which can only exceptionally be significant for the time to come. This cannot be given any consideration; what we must not forget is the lesson coming from phenomenological philosophy in the moment when it was least expected: the poet's task remains to lay foundations for the temporality of time in his poem, while the density of the poem is not the density of the time. Is there a higher task for a poet than what stood before an artist at the beginning of the Renaissance, Giotto: to paint an angel, not an angel in space but an angel embracing space?

That is precisely what poets do; they encompass space without being encompassed by anything; they are not in space, they are not outside it either; is there still time for poets, is there still space for their works whose linguistic tissue can neither be felt nor completely grasped by thought? Time passes and poets are still here; they always speak in the present; they know very well that all the three tenses are always contained in the present time.

### *References*

- [Fink 1966] E. Fink, *Vergegenwaertigung und Bild. Beitrage zur Phaenomenologie der Unwirklichkeit* (I. Teil), in *Studien zur Phaenomenologie 1930-1939*, Phaenomenologica XXI, M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1966, 1-78.
- [Husserl 1980] E. Husserl, *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung*, Husserliana XXIII, M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1980.

Akademija umetnosti  
Djure Jaksica 7  
21000 Novi Sad (YU)