

# **Edmund Husserl's Theory of Image Consciousness, Aesthetic Consciousness, and Art**

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## Introduction

The central theme of my dissertation is Husserl's phenomenological analysis of how we experience images. The aim of my dissertation is twofold: 1) to offer a contribution to the understanding of Husserl's theory of image consciousness, aesthetic consciousness and art, and 2) to find out whether Husserl's theory of the experience of images is applicable to modern and contemporary art, particularly to strongly site-specific art, unaided ready-mades, and contemporary films and theatre plays in which actors play themselves.

Husserl's commentators and followers interested in his theory of the experience of images have mostly focused on the concept of "phantasy" [*Phantasie*] or "imagination." Accordingly, the main interest is in the notion of the "image object" [*Bildobjekt*] and in the question of how something absent can appear in an image. In my dissertation, the central concept is "image consciousness" [*Bildbewusstsein*] which is a unique kind of experience: it involves both perception and imaging. I want to show that Husserl's early theory of depictive image consciousness (or *pictorial consciousness*) and his later theory of the experience of images (called *immanent imagination* or *perceptual phantasy*) can both be subsumed under the term "image consciousness". I want to point out that Husserl's revision of his earlier theory of image consciousness results in the distinction between depictive and non-depictive image consciousness, and that revision did not amount to an abandoning of the theory of "image consciousness." In addition, Husserl divides depictive consciousness into positing and non-positing depictive consciousness.

In my dissertation, I take the theory of image consciousness as the basis for explaining the experience of images, including the experience of visual works of art. In Husserl's definition of art: "Without an image, there is no fine art" (Phantasy, 44; Hua XXIII, 41). The theory of image consciousness also plays an important role in explaining aesthetic consciousness since the focus is on "the How of the image object's depicting" (Phantasy, 39; Hua XXIII, 36).

My aim is to accentuate the *subject* in image consciousness, rather than the *image object*. I want to show that whether the subject is involved in image consciousness or not makes the difference if we have a two-fold or three-fold experience of *seeing-in*. In this way, I can also compare

Husserl and Wollheim's theories of seeing-in: a comparison that has received minimal attention in the literature of pictorial experience until now. In addition, I aim to show that according to Husserl's theory, the *image subject* is involved only in depictive (and not in non-depictive) image consciousness. Moreover, I try to show that it is more difficult to define the image subject than the image object for the subject cannot be equated with the referent. Lastly, I will point out that Husserl mentions the possibility that it is the appearance of the subject rather than the image object appearance that we are focused on in aesthetic consciousness.

Another topic that has received minimal attention until now is Husserl's idea that depiction is involved in the experience of theatrical performance. The latter is primarily used by Husserl as an example of non-depictive image consciousness. I will examine how depiction can be involved in the experience of a theatre play in the case of actors playing themselves onstage. I will show that, in light of this example, either Husserl's theory of depiction need to be revised or we cannot say that depiction is involved when an actor plays a real life person. Again, the key issue is how the subject (and not how the image object) appears. Thus, I will try to apply Husserl's theory of depiction in explaining our experience of theatrical performances (and films). I will also try to use his theory of aesthetic consciousness in describing the experience of strongly site-specific art and point out what the difficulties are of using the idea of the limited synthetic unity of the aesthetic object in the case of strongly site-specific art which seems to have no prescribed margins that could correspond to the *limitedness*. In addition, I will show how Husserl's phenomenology, especially the notion of horizon, can be used to define visual art. I will defend the view that an object of art can be defined as art through an external co-determining horizon – *the artworld*.

My dissertation is divided into four parts. In the first part, I give an overview of the development of Husserl's philosophy from the period 1889 – 1920s with a special focus on the development of the theory of image consciousness. In that part, I introduce the notions of depictive and non-depictive image consciousness.

In the second part, special focus is on the depictive image consciousness or the theory of depiction. I will first explain the phenomenological approach to the experience of images and

what the difference and similarities are between Husserl and Wollheim's theory of seeing-in. Then I give more detailed description of the three objects or objectivities in image consciousness with the emphases on the image subject. Also, how the objects are related to each other: the necessary conflicts and a resemblance in image consciousness. Lastly, I will analyse Husserl's claim that depiction might be involved in the experience of theatrical performances and I will show what the difficulties are of applying this idea in the case of a theatre play in which actors play themselves.

In the third part, I examine Husserl's theory of aesthetic consciousness. I will first point out how the notion of "aesthetic object" is equated with that of "work of art" by Husserl. Then I will show the similarities between the aesthetic attitude and phenomenological attitude in general, and how aesthetic consciousness differs from image consciousness according to Husserl. In this vein, I will point out the difficulty of defining whether, following Husserl's texts, we are directed to image object appearance or the appearance of the image subject in aesthetic consciousness. Lastly, I will analyse Husserl's idea of the limited synthetic unity of the aesthetic object and whether this theory holds in the case of the experience of strongly site-specific art.

In the fourth part, I will give an overview of Husserl's notes on art and his attempt to define art. The question whether every visual work of art must be an *image* is also addressed. The fourth part is divided into two sections. Firstly, I will show how some of Husserl's commentators analyse artworks as analogues to or illustrations for Husserl's phenomenology: how some works of art are *doing* phenomenology. Secondly, how Husserl's phenomenology can be used to analyse our *experience* of artworks. In this section, I will examine Husserl's claim that all works of visual art are images. Also, I will show how Husserl's notion of the external co-determining horizon can be used to define art.

Some material used in my dissertation has been published in the following journals: *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics* (Vol. 5, 2013), *South African Journal of Philosophy* (Vol. 34(4), 2013), *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi (Studies on Art and Architecture)* (Vol. 23(1/2), 2014), *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics* (Vol. 11(1) Spring 2014).

## Part I: Phantasy, image consciousness and perception

Husserl's ideas on image consciousness, aesthetic consciousness, and art cannot be separated from his general theory of perceptual and phantasy presentations. The latter can also be described as the theory about the distinction between the phenomena of presentation and representation. Husserl became interested in this topic after attending Franz Brentano's lectures on "Selected Questions in Psychology and Aesthetics" [*Ausgewählte psychologische und ästhetische Fragen*] in the winter semester in 1885/86 in Vienna.<sup>1</sup> Although Husserl followed Brentano's philosophy in many respects, he nevertheless developed his own theory that deviated from that of Brentano. In the following chapters, I will give an overview of the development of Husserl's philosophy from 1896 until the 1920s, with the focus on the change of his theory of the experience of images.

### 1.1. Husserl's early theory (1895-1905)<sup>2</sup>

It will be shown that Husserl's theory deviates from Brentano's in distinguishing the object and the content of a presentation, and in considering phantasy as well as image consciousness to be intuitive representations. In addition, two theories of the "constitution" of objects of the representational consciousness will be discussed. Firstly, Husserl's refutation of the "image theory", according to which mental images are considered to be *inside* the consciousness. Secondly, Husserl's development of the content-apprehension-schema that plays an essential role in understanding the image consciousness (as depictive consciousness).

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<sup>1</sup> In *Wahrnehmung and Aufmerksamkeit* Husserl writes: "Die ersten Anregungen zur Beschäftigung mit denselben verdanke ich meinem genialen Lehrer Brentano, der schon in der Mitte der achtziger Jahre an der Wiener Universität ein mir unvergessliches Kolleg über „Ausgewählte psychologische und ästhetische Fragen“ las, welches sich (in wöchentlich zwei Stunden) nahezu ausschließlich um die analytische Klärung der Phantasievorstellungen im Vergleich mit den Wahrnehmungsvorstellungen mühte." (Hua XXXVIII, 3-4)

<sup>2</sup> I borrow this division from Julia Jansen's article "Phantasy's Systematic Place in Husserl's Work" in which Jansen explains the two phases of Husserl's treatment of phantasy (Jansen 2005).

### 1.1.1. Presentation and re-presentation

In *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Brentano divides all data of our consciousness or appearances [*Erscheinungen*] into two classes: the mental or psychical phenomena [*psychische Phänomene*] and the physical phenomena [*physische Phänomene*] (Brentano 1995, 59). Mental phenomena include presentations [*Vorstellungen*] that we acquire through sensory perception [*Empfindung*] or imagination [*Phantasie*]. Brentano emphasises that the term “presentation” here refers to the *act* of presentation and not that which is presented (Brentano 1995, 60). Thus, presentations are hearing a sound, seeing a coloured object, feeling warmth or cold, and similar states of imagination, e.g., imagining a sound, etc. In addition to presentations [*Vorstellungen*], all kinds of mental activities are part of the class of mental phenomena, e.g., thinking, judging, recollecting, expecting, doubting. Brentano also includes emotions, e.g. joy, sorrow, fear, hope, etc., in the class of mental phenomena. Physical phenomena, on the other hand, are concerned with the objects of our sensations, e.g., a colour which I see, a chord which I hear, odour which I sense, but also with images [*Gebilde*] which appear in the imagination [*Phantasie*] (Brentano 1995, 61). Brentano claims that all mental phenomena contain an object intentionally within themselves. This reference to a content or direction toward an object is characteristic only of mental phenomena and is deprived of physical phenomena (Brentano 1995, 68). A well-known quotation by Brentano says: “In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on.”<sup>3</sup>

Brentano divides mental phenomena into presentations and non-presentations that are based on presentations (e.g., judgement, emotion) (Brentano 1995, 221), but he also divides presentations into sensations and phantasy presentations. Sensations are those presentations on which outer (not inner) perceptions are founded and, in that sense, can be called *perceptual* presentations (Rollinger 1993, 198). Brentano claims that the difference between perceptual and phantasy presentations lies in the *intensity*. Of course, the idea that sensations are more intense than phantasy presentations is not an original idea (it goes back to Hume). Brentano’s claim, however, is that it is the *content* of the presentation that makes the difference (Rollinger 1993, 199). It

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<sup>3</sup> “In der Vorstellung ist etwas vorgestellt, in dem Urteile ist etwas anerkannt oder verworfen, in der Liebe geliebt, in dem Hasse gehaßt, in dem Begehren begehrt usw.” (Brentano 1973, 125)



means that the content of sensation is more intense than the content of phantasy presentation and the difference is not the way presentations refer to their respective objects. In R. D. Rollinger's view, Brentano conceives of presentations as phenomena occurring within a continuum: on the one extreme there are perceptual presentations and on the other extreme presentations that can never be perceptual. There is no sharp distinction between perceptual and phantasy presentations: the greater the intensity of the content of phantasy presentations is the more it approaches the content of sensations. Also, bearing this in mind, it becomes clear why Brentano states that "Phantasy presentations are unintuitive or inauthentic presentations which *approximate* intuitive presentations" [my italics].<sup>4</sup> Brentano does not only think that phantasy presentations are unintuitive presentations but he also considers unintuitive presentations to be *surrogate* presentations. It leads to the understanding that, strictly speaking, phantasy presentations have different objects than perceptual presentations (Rollinger 1993, 200).

Husserl avoids using Brentano's term "psychical phenomenon" [*psychische Phänomene*], although he maintains the idea that experiences are intentional<sup>5</sup>. Also, as Karl Schuhmann says, Husserl is less interested "in the problem of how sense presentations might become phantasy presentations, but rather in the possibilities and limits of our intuition" (Schuhmann 2005, 265). Contrary to Brentano, Husserl believes that phantasy<sup>6</sup> is an *intuitive* presentation. He shows this by, first, making the distinction between the *content* and the *object* of a presentation – a distinction that is lacking in Brentano's description of presentations. To quote Husserl:

For Brentano, "presenting" is the title of the first fundamental class of "psychic phenomena"; that is, of intentional experiences. He distinguishes presentation and what is presented: presentation is the *act*, what is presented is the *content*. [...] The content for him is ordinarily the sensation content belonging to perception. What we, guided purely

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<sup>4</sup> „Phantasievorstellungen sind unanschauliche, oder uneigentliche Vorstellungen, die sich anschaulichen Vorstellungen annähern“ (Brentano 1959, 86). See also (Mohanty 2008, 307)

<sup>5</sup> In *Logical Investigations* Husserl writes: "We shall avoid the term "psychical phenomenon" entirely, and shall talk of "intentional experiences" wherever accuracy requires it" (LI, V, 101; Hua XIX/1, 391). To quote Dermot Moran: "Husserl rejects Brentano's attempt to distinguish between 'psychical' and 'physical' phenomena, but sees his discovery of intentionality as having independent value (LI V §9)" (Moran 2001, lviii).

<sup>6</sup> "*Phantasie*" is a technical term that is often translated into English as "phantasy". I have used the same term. I also agree with Javier Enrique Carreño Cobos that "*Phantasie*" should not be translated as "imagination" (Cobos 2013, 150). It is because, in his later manuscripts, Husserl abandons the view that phantasy necessarily involves imaging or picturing.

by the sense of perception, call the perceptual object, that which supposedly stands over against us, that which supposedly is seen itself, is not clearly distinguished from this content, or is not actually distinguished from it at all. (Phantasy, 8; Hua XXIII, 8)

The same holds for phantasy presentation. Husserl believes that Brentano overlooks the distinction between the *content* that is experienced in the phantasy presentation and the *object* of phantasy. According to R.D. Rollinger, Husserl's understanding of that distinction (between the object and the content of a presentation) was influenced by Brentano's disciple, Kasimir Twardowski. In his habilitation thesis, Twardowski shows, by an analogy of painting, how the content and the object are to be distinguished in presentations. For example, we can say either that the artist paints a landscape or that the artist paints a *picture* of the landscape. In the case of presentation, accordingly, that which is presented, the object of the presentation, is analogous to the landscape, and that which is immanent in consciousness, the content of the presentation, is analogous to the picture of the landscape (Rollinger 1993, 203). Rollinger claims that Husserl never adopted Twardowski's description in explaining our *consciousness* – there are no pictures or images inside the consciousness – but, in his early texts, Husserl held the view that there is an analogy between phantasy presentation and picture presentation, the view which was influenced by Twardowski (Rollinger 1993, 207).

Husserl believes that the content functions as representative [*Repräsentant*] for the object. In other words, the content is *representative content* [*repräsentierender Inhalt*] in all presentations (LI, VI, 242; Hua XIX/2, 620). The only difference is that in signitive or conceptual presentation the content represents signitively (externally) and in intuitive presentation the content represents intuitively (internally) (*ibid*). Husserl also makes a distinction between presentations [*Gegenwärtigung*] and re-presentations [*Vergegenwärtigung*], and this should not be conflated with the notion of presentation's content: perception has a representative content but it does not make it a re-presentation. Husserl reserves the term *representation* for memory, expectation, phantasy and image consciousness (Brough 2005, xxx). These are all *intuitive representations* (as the subtitle of Husserliana XXIII *Phantasy, Image consciousness, and Memory* also indicates). It is true that Husserl sometimes uses the term *phantasy presentation* and *imaging presentation* [*bildliche Vorstellungen*] (*Phantasy*, 150; Hua XXIII, 136) but when he specifies

how to differentiate two major classes of *intuitive presentations*, he proposes using “presentation” for perception and “re-presentation” for other intuitive presentations:

Either we use the word “*phantasy*” itself, or we use the word “*re-presentation*.” Phantasy therefore stands opposed to perception, or re-presentation [*Vergegenwärtigung, Repräsentation*] stands opposed to presentation [*Gegenwärtigung, Präsentation*]. (*Phantasy*, 94; Hua XXIII, 87)

Since perceptual presentation presents its object as given to it, as grasped “itself” [*als "selbst"*], Husserl calls it *directly intuitive presentation*. Image presentation is, accordingly, *indirectly intuitive presentation* since the object meant (the “image subject”) does not appear itself but is represented by the appearing image (the “image object”) (*Phantasy*, 150; Hua XXIII, 136). Husserl also divides presentations according to the way in which the object is *posited*. What is important here is that perception is not the only *positing intuition or position* [*anschauliche Setzung (Position)*]; perception belongs to the class of positions that intuit directly [*in die Klasse der direkt anschaulichen Positionen*] whereas memory, expectation, and pictorial experience belong to the class of positions that intuit indirectly or in image [*in die Klasse der indirekt oder bildlich anschaulichen Positionen*] (*Phantasy*, 151; Hua XXIII, 137).

It should be noted that Husserl’s overall aim is to understand the difference between perception and phantasy (or indirect intuitions in general), and should not be equated with the aim to distinguish the term “presentation” from the term “representation”. It means that he is not very consistent in applying the term “presentation” restrictively to *perception*. John Brough, who has translated Husserliana XXIII into English, writes in Footnote 1 in *Phantasy* that: ““*Vorstellung*” will usually be translated as “presentation,” though occasionally as “representation” or “phantasy,” when the sense demands it” (*Phantasy*, 1; Hua XXIII, 1). Brough adds that the same applies to the term “*Darstellung*”, which can be translated as either “presentation” or “representation” (or “exhibition,” “exhibiting”) (*ibid*). Eduard Marbach, editor of the Husserliana XXIII, has also pointed out the difficulty of translating Husserl’s terms. He emphasises that not only is the term “*Vorstellung*” in German ambiguous, but so is “representation” in English (Marbach 2012, 236). It seems to me that the only terms that do not cause difficulty translating

are 1) “*Gegenwärtigung*” and “*Präsentation*”, which describe *perception* and should be translated as “presentation”; and 2) “*Vergegenwärtigung*” and “*Repräsentation*”, which characterise memory, expectation, phantasy, image consciousness, etc., and should be translated as “representation.”<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1.2. The image theory

Another question addressed by Husserl concerns the way the objects of representational consciousness are “constituted.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, he presents two ways of explaining the “constitution”: the “image theory” [*Bildtheorie*] and the “theory of representation” or the content-apprehension schema.

In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl criticises the “image theory” according to which there is an image in consciousness that does duty for a thing *outside* the consciousness (LI, V, Appendix to § 11 and § 20; Hua XIX/1, 436f). As explains Brough, Husserl also calls it the natural (or psychological) attitude (Brough 2008, 179–180). The general problem that needs to be solved in this context, according to Brough, is how something transcendent can be known: it is the riddle of “the correlation between immanence and transcendence” (Brough 2008, 179). In natural attitude, consciousness is taken to be “a worldly thing containing experiences of knowing,” and what is in the mind (the “immanent”) is taken to be in the same way as a thing is said to be contained in another thing (Brough 2008, 180). Husserl is against the “image theory” and claims that consciousness is not a bag or, as he says in the *Idea of Phenomenology*, “things given immanently are not, as it first appeared, in consciousness as things are in a box” (IP, Lecture V, 52; Hua II, 71).

It raises no doubts that Husserl rejects the image theory with respect to *perception* or, in other words, with respect to our knowledge about the external world.<sup>9</sup> One of the reasons there cannot be *images* that represent an object in perception is that the concept of the image refers to the idea

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<sup>7</sup> See also (Brough 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Brough calls this the constitutional dimension of re-presentational acts (Brough 2005, li).

<sup>9</sup> See also the chapter „Die Widerlegung der Bildtheorie“ in Paolo Volonté’s book *Husserl’s Phänomenologie der Imagination* (Volonté 1997, 168).

of resemblance between the image and the represented object. But, as Mohanty puts it, the perception “does not contain a picture of the object (the assumed “Bild” would be, if it were there, a second “thing” similar to the original)” (Mohanty 2008, 219). In the *Thing and Space*, Husserl writes:

The perception thus does not contain an image of the object, taking the word "image" in its ordinary sense, as a second thing, one that is a representative of an original by way of similarity. Perception contains neither a repetition of a whole thing nor of such individual features. The image-theory is, looked at from any side, countersensical. Here we have one of these sides (TS, 39; Hua XVI, 45)

In perception, the object appears straightforwardly. However, it is not the only way the object can appear in Husserl’s view. In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl writes that the essential and *a priori* peculiarity of acts “consists in the fact that in them 'an object appears', sometimes straightforwardly and directly, and sometimes as 'counting' as a 'representation by images' of an object that resembles it” (LI, V, 126; Hua XIX/1, 438). More specifically, in the image presentations [*bildliche Vorstellen*] the depicted object [*abgebildete Object*] is meant, and meant by the way of the *apparent image* [*erscheinendes Bildobjekt*] (LI, V, 126; Hua XIX/1, 436). Also, in a text from 1904/05, Husserl believes that phantasy and physical imagination involve “mental images” [*geistiges Bild*]:

In the case of physical imagination, a physical object that exercises the function of awakening a “mental image” is presupposed; in phantasy presentation in the ordinary sense, a mental image is there without being tied to such a physical excitant. In both cases, however, the mental image is precisely an image; it represents a subject. (*Phantasy*, 22; Hua XXIII, 21)

In the same text in *Phantasy*, Husserl holds the view that phantasy presentation is similar to image consciousness (physical imagination) in the sense that in both cases we can distinguish two objects: an “image” and a “subject” (*ibid*).<sup>10</sup> Given this, there seems to be a contradiction

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<sup>10</sup> For more about the theory of image consciousness see Chapter 2.2., “Three objects in the image consciousness”

between Husserl's claim that consciousness is not a box and the claim that there are mental images. At first glance, it seems that Husserl's theory of consciousness does not fit with his theory of image consciousness; or that in the case of image consciousness we are still in the natural attitude. John Brough points out that Husserl "largely accepts the image theory with respect to phantasy and memory until about 1907" (Brough 2008, 180). This could be taken as a criticism towards Husserl that he still held the "image theory" in explaining the image consciousness in his texts before 1907. However, I believe that by using the notion of "mental image" Husserl is not maintaining the "container conception of consciousness" (Brough 2008, 180) because he does not think that mental images are like physical objects inside a box. Husserl calls it the "naïve interpretation" of the mental image, according to which "the image lies hidden in the "mind," and, in addition, an object possibly exists "outside"" (*Phantasy*, 22; Hua XXIII, 21).

But the naïve view errs above all in that it conceives of the mental image as an object really inhabiting the mind. It conceives of the image as there in the mind just as a physical thing is there in reality. Phenomenologically, however, there is no image thing [*Bildding*] in the mind, or, better, in consciousness. (*Phantasy*, 23; Hua XXIII, 21)

And so Husserl asks rhetorically: "If I put a picture in a drawer, does *the drawer* represent something?" (*Phantasy*, 23; Hua XXIII, 21) In fact, Husserl thinks that we can talk about the existence of mental images only in a modified sense. The image does not truly exist, it has no physical existence, which means that "not only that it has no existence outside my consciousness, but also that it has no existence inside my consciousness; it has no existence at all" (*Phantasy*, 23; Hua XXIII, 22).

In my view, we can understand Husserl's refutation of the image theory in at least two different ways. On the one hand, Husserl rejects the image theory according to which there are images inside the consciousness that refer to the objects outside the consciousness by the way of resemblance<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand, Husserl's image theory can also mean the theory of *image*

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<sup>11</sup> This way to understand the refutation of the image theory is present in (Jansen 2005, 222), (Brough 2005, liii–liiv) and in John Brough's "Consciousness is not a Bag" (Brough 2008).

*consciousness*: “what Husserl called the image theory takes presentation and representation to be forms of image consciousness, which means that presenting or re-presenting entails “making an image of something”” (Brough 2005, lii), and we do not have to say that Husserl rejects the theory of *image consciousness*. On the contrary, as Paolo Volonté argues, it is the refutation of the image theory (of perception) that allows the real meaning of the image consciousness to come forward. In this way, the image consciousness is taken as a unique experience [*selbständiges Erlebnis*], as *the* pictorial presentation [*Bildvorstellung*] (Volonté 1997, 190).<sup>12</sup> Now, one could say that Husserl also rejects the image theory in the second sense. In his earlier texts, Husserl believed that in the image consciousness there is an appearing *image* that depicts the *subject*, and he thought that this held true in the case of physical imagination (e.g., a photograph representing a child) as well as in the case of phantasy. Accordingly, the appearing “image object” in physical imagination is *analogous* to the “phantasy image” in phantasy (*Phantasy*, 29; Hua XXIII, 18-19). In his later texts, however, Husserl revised his theory and stated that the phantasy appearance relates to its object straightforwardly and there is no *phantasy image* mediating in between (*Phantasy*, 92; Hua XXIII, 85). Thus, Husserl rejects the image theory as the theory of image consciousness, but *only* with respect to phantasy and not with respect to image consciousness as depictive consciousness or to “immediate perceptual phantasy” that occurs in the experience of theatrical performance.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.1.3. The content-apprehension-schema

As explained in Chapter 1.1.1., “Presentation and re-presentation”, Husserl makes a distinction between the content and the object of presentation. Since Husserl takes contents to be *immanent* in the presentation (although not identical with the entire act of presenting) (Rollinger 1993, 203), the theory of content-apprehension-schema has been claimed to be an example of the *image theory* in the sense that there is something *inside* the consciousness.<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting in this respect that the schema was rejected by Husserl in his later text, although, as Brough claims,

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<sup>12</sup> “Gerade die Widerlegung der Bildtheorie ermöglicht die eigentliche Auffassung des Bildbewußtseins, nämlich seine Erwägung als selbständiges Erlebnis, als Bildvorstellung.”

<sup>13</sup> For more about the experience of theatrical performance, see Chapter 1.2.3., “Immanent imagination”.

<sup>14</sup> Cf (Brough 2008, 184). Also: “This early doctrine of Husserl’s is seated in an empiricistically influenced theory of consciousness. This theory assumes present, experienced contents – sensations and phantasms – *within* consciousness (however they may have arisen) [my italics]” (Bernet, Kern, and Marbach 1993, 260).

only partially. According to Brough, Husserl later rejected the schema with respect to phantasy and memory (and time consciousness), but the schema persists as the explanation of the constitution of perception in his later texts, e.g., *Ideas I*, EJ (Brough 2005, lxi). More importantly, the content-apprehension-schema plays an essential role in explaining the constitution of the image consciousness as *depictive consciousness*, as will be explained below.<sup>15</sup>

The content-apprehension-schema [*Inhalt-Auffassung-Schema*] (*Phantasy*, 323; Hua XXIII, 265) is based on Husserl's theory about the different modes of the relation of consciousness to its object. It is best explained in *Logical Investigations*, in which Husserl says that every representation includes three parts: 1) the *form of apprehension* [*Auffassungsform*] that defines whether the object is presented in purely signitive, intuitive, or mixed fashion; 2) *the matter of apprehension* [*Auffassungsmaterie*] that defines whether the object is presented in this or that "sense"; and 3) the *apprehended contents* [*aufgefaßten Inhalte*] (LI, VI, 245; Hua XIX/2, 624)<sup>16</sup>. Since contents are non-intentional by themselves and they do not refer to anything until they are interpreted: "the content wins its intentional relation to something objective only through an interpreting apprehension" (Brough 2005, lvii). Thus, the content-apprehension-schema presents an idea that consciousness consists of contents that need to be apprehended (Jansen 2005, 223).<sup>17</sup>

Husserl calls the content of perceptual presentation sensation [*Empfindung*] and that of phantasy presentation phantasm [*Phantasma*] (*Phantasy*, 11; Hua XXIII, 11). Husserl thinks that Brentano errs in not making the distinction between sensations and phantasm and in claiming that these are essentially the same sensuous contents that differ only with respect to intensity (*Phantasy*, 99;

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<sup>15</sup> Thus, I believe that the criticism of the "container conception of consciousness" (Brough 2008, 180) is correct if it applies to the content-apprehension-schema, that is, to the idea that *contents* are immanent. But it is not correct to say that "mental images" are *inside* the consciousness in the case of image consciousness. (See the previous chapter)

<sup>16</sup> Although Husserl adds to the definition of the *form of apprehension* that "Here also belong the differences between a perceptual and an imaginative presentation" (LI, VI, 245; Hua XIX/2, 624) he only wants to say that it is not the *matter of apprehension* that gives the difference between the two. When it comes to defining the difference between perception and phantasy, he is primarily interested, however, in the *content*. In other words, he is concerned with whether the content of perceptual presentation (sensation) and the content of the phantasy presentation (phantasm) exhibit some intrinsic difference independently of the *form of apprehension* (Rollinger 1993, 205).

<sup>17</sup> How the schema of apprehension/apprehension content (*Auffassung - aufgefaßter Inhalt*) works in Husserl's theory of knowledge, see Dieter Lohmar (2006) "Categorical Intuition." In H. L. Dreyfus & M. A. Wrathall (Eds.), *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism* (pp. 115–126). John Wiley & Sons

The content-apprehension-schema in perception is also discussed by Kevin Mulligan (1995) "Perception". In *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, (pp. 168–238); and by Walter Hopp (2008) "Husserl on Sensation, Perception, and Interpretation". *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 38(2), (pp. 219–245).



Hua XXIII, 92). In Husserl's view, the difference of the phantasy and perception is neither in the degree of *intensity of the content* as Brentano claimed, nor in the object, since the phantasy presentation and the object of the perceptual presentation can be identical, which was denied by Brentano (Rollinger 1993, 199f).

The contents of phantasy acts, however, are not *sensations* since in phantasy there is no physical thing one can get sensations of. The phantasy object is not perceived, it is absent. Now, what about pictorial consciousness? A painting, for example, is a physical object that is *present* and perceived. Therefore, as Husserl writes, "In the imaginative presentation occurring in the contemplation of a painting, we certainly do have sensations as contents of apprehension" (*Phantasy*, 27; Hua XXIII, 26). But we also see something *in* the painting that is not physically present but absent. We might think that, in this case, we have both sensations and phantasms; and thereby all together two apprehensions. This is suggested by Rudolf Bernet:

Translated into the terminology of Husserl's early analysis of perception, this means that in pictorial consciousness there are two apprehensions, one based on the other, the first of which is supported by sensations and brings the pictorial image to appearance while the other animates mere "phantasms" and thereby explains the givenness of the pictorial subject depicted in the pictorial object. (Bernet 2003, 203)

But this is not correct. According to Husserl, there are all together three apprehensions in image consciousness (as pictorial consciousness); and the first two apprehensions use the same sensory data or sensations: "The same color sensations that we interpret at one time as this objective distribution of colors on the paper, we interpret at another time as the image child but not as the real child" (*Phantasy*, 118; Hua XXIII, 110). Bernet is probably referring to Husserl's text in *Phantasy* on page 25 (Hua XXIII, 24) where Husserl explains the difference between perceptual and phantasy apprehension. However, this text belongs to Husserl's early theory of phantasy, according to which phantasy is *pictorialisation* [*Verbildlichung*] (*Phantasy*, 27; Hua XXIII 26). But even in his early texts, Husserl does not think that phantasy is identical to pictorial consciousness in the proper sense (Husserl also calls the latter *physical imagination*). Both phantasy and physical imagination involve the *image* and the *subject*, but only physical

imagination involves the *physical object*. To quote Husserl: “Three objectivities were interwoven in physical imaging; two were interwoven in phantasy” (*Phantasy*, 30; Hua XXIII 29). Every object in pictorial consciousness is apprehended separately, although, as Warren puts it, neither of them is apprehended in isolation from the other (Warren 2010, 315). Because of the presence of the *physical object*, it is not correct to say that there are *only* two apprehensions in pictorial consciousness.

Also, it is not correct to talk about *phantasm* in connection to pictorial consciousness (in the proper sense). The subject in pictorial consciousness is apprehended, but nowhere is Husserl saying that the apprehension of the subject animates *phantasms*. The image subject is intended in a singular way. It does not have an appearance of its own, as a second appearance in addition to the image (image object) appearance. It is because there are no contents (left) that could be apprehended as a new presentation or appearance:

The new apprehension is not a new presentation: From where is it supposed to take its apprehension contents? All of the sensuous contents available have already been used up in the constitution of the image object. (*Phantasy*, 28; Hua XXIII, 27)

Thus, it is more correct to say the image object appears with the additional *objectivating characteristic* [*objektivierender Charakter*] (*Phantasy*, 31; Hua XXIII, 30) that brings about a new apprehension – the apprehension of the subject. The new apprehension is founded in the apprehension belonging to the image object<sup>18</sup> and this is why Husserl calls the apprehension of the image object the *direct objective apprehension* [*direkte gegenständliche Auffassung*] and that of the image subject the *indirect apprehension* [*indirekte Auffassung*] (*Phantasy*, 34-34; Hua XXIII 33). In any case, there are no separate contents – neither sensations nor phantasms – available for the appearance of the subject. Moreover, the notion of phantasm should be reserved only to (pure) phantasy:

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<sup>18</sup> As Ferencz-Flatz put it, “[...] the apperception of the image-object is abnormal precisely because it is the bearer of a new apperception, to which we owe the constitution of the depicted-subject (the same way a read sign serves as basis for an apperception of meaning)” (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 482).

The apprehension of experienced sensuous contents – of sensations in the case of the contemplation of a physical image, of phantasms in the case of phantasy imaging – yields the appearing image, the appearing representing image object. (*Phantasy*, 24; Hua XXIII, 23)

In sum, Husserl claims that there are no apprehension contents left for the subject because the (available) contents are already used up in the constitution of the image object. Given this, it is interesting to read Husserl's theory of how the apprehension of the physical object and that of the image object use the *same* apprehension contents. These contents are sensuous contents of the perceived object, i.e. the physical object. In other words, the same sensuous contents are interpreted as a physical thing at one time and as the image object at another time.<sup>19</sup> In Husserl's words:

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

For instance, we have a piece of paper with a system of lines and shadings on the surface in front of us. If we see it as a drawing of something, we do not see it as *lines and shadings on the surface* at the same time. As Cobos puts it, “when we contemplate a depiction, there is a sense in which the canvas, brush strokes, and ink blotches do not quite appear for what they are; instead, we see the image sustained by these components” (Cobos 2013, 148). In pictorial experience, image apprehension displaces the physical object apprehension. It means that the sensuous

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<sup>19</sup> The apprehension of the physical thing is a normal perceptual apprehension (*Phantasy*, 48; Hua XXIII, 44). The image object apprehension is *perceptual* apprehension only in a very specific sense: “The image-object appearance is perceptual [*perzeptiv*]: insofar as it has the sensation's sensuousness, which undergoes apprehension. It is not, however, a perceptual appearance [*wahrnehmungerscheinung*]: It lacks “belief”; it lacks the characteristic of reality” (*Phantasy*, 584; Hua XIII 489).

contents are *used up* for the image appearance, and – since apprehension contents now function as the apprehension contents of the image object – the perceptual apprehension is *deprived of* apprehension contents (*Phantasy*, 49-50; Hua XXIII, 45-46).

However, “while we are living in the imagining of the subject, the visual field of our perception does not disappear” (*Phantasy*, 49; Hua XXIII, 45). Husserl believes that in pictorial experience we still have the perception of our surroundings, “even if not in the form of a primary act of meaning” (*ibid*). Moreover, the perceptual apprehension is still there even if the image object’s appearance *triumphs* over the physical thing (*Phantasy*, 50; Hua XXIII, 46). For example, having pictorial experience of touch-screen images, we see a depiction of something. In this case our *primary act of meaning* is directed to what is depicted in the screen but, at the same time, we are aware of the thickness of the screen (that we touch a physical object) and the surroundings of the screen. Hence, as Brough explains it, the displacement of the normal perceptual apprehension is not an absolute cancellation (Brough 1992, 250).

Now, Husserl does not explain *why* we apprehend our sensations as images of something or what would motivate us to do it. He believes that in normal cases, when we are looking at a picture, we do not attend to the physical thing. There is, however, the possibility of switching attention. As Nicolas de Warren explains this, the image’s givenness is precarious: at any moment, we can refuse to see the image as an image and perceive it as an ordinary thing instead. He states that “An image requires the consent of my consciousness in order to be completely seen as an image of something” (Warren 2010, 317). However, Husserl does not think that it is so easy to change the focus of our attention.<sup>20</sup> In most cases, even if we want to, we cannot “push aside the appearance belonging to the image object and then see *only* the lines and shadows on the card” (*Phantasy*, 583; Hua XXIII, 488). The exclusive regard to the physical thing would take place when a conservator examined the chemical consistence of a canvas or the thickness of the colour layers of the picture. While doing that, the conservator is not experiencing the painting as *depiction of something*. Thus, when the perceptual apprehension is prevalent, no image consciousness occurs. We are left with pure perception.

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<sup>20</sup> See also Chapter 2.1.2.2., „Seeing-in is involuntary act“

## 1.2. Husserl's revision of his early theory (from 1905)

In his later texts, Husserl revises his theory of phantasy and that of image consciousness in many steps. First, he shows that there are no mediating objectivities in phantasy (no image object in phantasy) and claims that the phantasy appearance relates to the object just as straightforwardly as perception does. Accordingly, phantasy is distinguished from image consciousness (and imagination). This result is revised again and thus, as a second step, he elaborates a new description of phantasy according to which phantasy is a reproductive re-presentation; and image consciousness becomes a special type of representation, namely *perceptual representation*. In addition, Husserl later distinguishes depictive image consciousness from another type of image consciousness, namely *immanent imaging*.<sup>21</sup>

### 1.2.1. Phantasy versus image consciousness

Already in the last parts of his lecture course in 1904/05, Husserl started to doubt about the determination of phantasy as a type of (depictive) image consciousness which eventually led to the abandoning of the content-apprehension-schema. Earlier, he believed that phantasy presentations re-present their object in the phantasy image, just as ordinary image presentations

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<sup>21</sup> It must be noted that the publication of the *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory* (Husserliana XXIII) in 1980 acts as a milestone. Books and research papers on Husserl's theory of imagination (and phantasy) written before 1980 do not reflect the change of Husserl's theory of phantasy. Moreover, as Julia Jansen says, "the "early" theory is, unfortunately, taken as *the* Husserlian account of phantasy" (Jansen 2005, 222). Characteristic to the early theory is that phantasy and image consciousness are understood by Husserl as two kinds of the more general imagination [*Imagination*] (Jansen 2005, 224).

Maria Manuela Saraiva's book, *L'Imagination selon Husserl* was published in 1970. In that book she claims that Husserl uses the notion of imagination for two different forms of consciousness [*deux formes de conscience différentes*]: the mental image in a traditional sense, that is, the simple and direct phantasy representation [*la représentation imageante simple et directe*] and the image consciousness based on perceptual object [*la conscience d'image à partir d'un objet matériel perceptif*], e.g., the painting, portrait, statue, etc. She believes that the original approach of Husserl is to bring these two "forms" under the same title of imagination: "[...] Or nous pensons que l'assemblage des deux espèces de conscience imageante sous la désignation générique d'imagination est propre à Husserl, et qu'avant lui aucun philosophe ne l'avait fait" (Saraiva 1970, 54).

What is more problematic is, of course, the tendency to use the terminology that Husserl had in his early theory in explaining Husserl's later theory without reflecting the change of the meaning of these terms. As Christian Ferencz-Flatz points out: "Thus, the association of image-consciousness and phantasy under the same term of "imagination" is characteristic only for Husserl's position in the *Logical Investigations* and this is precisely why the rendering of commentators using this term for interpreting Husserl's later statements are highly problematic" (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 480).

do (*Phantasy*, 117; Hua XXIII, 109). Accordingly, there was a parallelism between phantasy and depiction: the *phantasy image* in phantasy being analogous to the *image object* in image presentation (depiction). An example of the latter case would a portrait in which the person depicted in a painting (the “image subject”) is represented in the appearing image (the “image object” [*Bildobjekt*]). In his later texts, Husserl abandons the parallelism and claims that there is no “image object” in phantasy for there is nothing “present” in it:

In phantasy, we do not have anything “present,” [*Gegenwärtiges*] and in this sense we do not have an image object [*Bildobjekt*]. In clear phantasy, we experience phantasms and objectifying apprehensions, which do not constitute something standing before us as present that would have to function first of all as the bearer of an image consciousness. (*Phantasy*, 86; Hua XXIII, 79)

Thus, we can say that Husserl later “distinguishes phantasy from picture-consciousness precisely by the lack of a counterpart to the picture-object in phantasy” (Jansen 2005, 226); or, to put it differently, that the distinction between image and subject collapse (Brough 2005, liv). It means that phantasy “relates to its object just as *straightforwardly* as perception does” (*Phantasy*, 92; Hua XXIII, 85). However, at this point, he is not claiming that all acts of consciousness function in the same way, that is, intent the object straightforwardly. He believes that image presentation relates to its object *indirectly*. These so-called “genuine images” [*echte Bilder*] still point toward something else (the subject) (*Phantasy*, 92; Hua XXIII, 85). Thus, when it comes to depiction, Husserl still keeps the view that he wrote in 1898:

In perceptual presentation, the appearing object itself is meant, and consequently it presents its object as given to it, as grasped “itself.” In image presentation, on the other hand, it is not the appearing object that is meant but another object, for which the appearing object functions as a representant by means of its resemblance to it. The image presentation, therefore, has an indirect way of relating to its object (*Phantasy*, 150; Hua XXIII, 136)

Now, if phantasy intends to its object as straightforwardly as perception does and if there are no mediating images in phantasy, then it follows that phantasy cannot be called “imagination” anymore:

Now how are we to understand simple phantasy presentations? If our phantasy playfully occupies itself with angels and devils, dwarfs and water nymphs [...], then the appearing objectivities are not taken as image objects [*Bildobjekte*], as mere representatives, analogues, images of other objectivities [...] The word “imagination” [*Imagination*], the talk of phantasy images [*Phantasiebildern*], and so forth, ought not mislead us here any more than the talk of “perceptual images” does in the case of perception. (*Phantasy*, 92; Hua XXIII, 85)

Therefore, Husserl believes that any formation of the word “image” should be reserved only for *depiction* (depictive image consciousness). As he writes, “it nevertheless seems most appropriate to speak of “imaging” [*Bildlichkeit*], of “image apprehension” [*bildliche Auffassung*], only in cases in which an image [*Bild*], which for its part first functions as a representing object for something depicted [*für ein Abgebildetes als repräsentierendes Objekt fungiert*], actually appears” (*Phantasy*, 94; Hua XXIII, 87). In the case of simple phantasy, no such image as *representing object for something depicted* occurs and therefore it is best to use a different term than “imaging” (*ibid*).

As said previously, Husserl no longer has the view that phantasy is analogous to image consciousness. Instead, he now thinks that phantasy is analogous to perception. The change arises not only because Husserl realises that there is no image object in phantasy but also because he has difficulties defining *phantasms*. As Brough explains this, Husserl cannot clarify the distinction between sensations and phantasms, but neither can he solve the question whether phantasms are present or absent (Brough 2005, lix–lx). According to Brough, on the one hand, Husserl claims that there is nothing “present” in phantasy. On the other hand, since phantasms and apprehensions serve as representants for what is not present (the phantasy object) they must be present, for Husserl believes that something absent or *not-present* can be represented only by

something *present*.<sup>22</sup> But then problems arise. For instance, how exactly is it that (present) phantasm “undergoes apperception into something that is not there itself” (*Phantasy*, 201; Hua XXIII, 166)? Moreover, how can there be any *present* contents in consciousness in the first place?<sup>23</sup> After a long struggle with the questions, Husserl finally comes to the understanding that the real problem lies in the content-apprehension-schema itself.

Husserl began to express doubts about the efficacy of the schema around 1905 (Brough 2005, lix). In 1909, he writes:

I had the schema “content of apprehension and apprehension,” and certainly this schema makes good sense. However, in the case of perception understood as a concrete experience, we do not first of all have a color as content of apprehension and then the characteristic of apprehension that produces the appearance. And likewise in the case of phantasy we do not again have a color as content of apprehension and then a changed apprehension, the apprehension that produces the phantasy appearance. On the contrary: “Consciousness” consists of consciousness through and through, and the sensation as well as the phantasm is already “consciousness.” (*Phantasy*, 323; Hua XXIII, 265)

Husserl no longer believes that “color as a really immanent occurrence is given, which then serves as the representant for the actual color” (*Phantasy*, 323; Hua XXIII, 265). Moreover, he thinks now that, if we follow to the schema, the sensed-colour [*Empfindungsfarbe*] and phantasm-colour [*Phantasmafarbe*] cannot be differentiated; they would be “one and the same, only charged with different functions” (*ibid*). He comes to the conclusion that phantasm is not an immanent content waiting to be apprehended, instead, “phantasm dissolves into pure intentionality” (Brough 2005, lxiii). As Jansen explains this, the new theory states that “there is nothing in consciousness that is not already intentional, that is, no contents can be found that are in separation from their apprehensions” (Jansen 2005, 229). As a result, Husserl now thinks that

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<sup>22</sup> Brough calls this the “prejudice of presence” according to which “one can be aware of what is absent only through something present” (Brough 2005, liii). Later, Husserl changed the view and claimed that the consciousness of what is absent “does not depend on the actual presence of some content or image in consciousness” (Brough 2005, liv). Thus, even an absent object (in memory, phantasy) can be intended directly.

<sup>23</sup> This is related, as Jansen points out, to the analysis of internal time consciousness and the idea of absolute consciousness: “It is impossible for an absolute, a-temporal consciousness to “contain” present sensations or phantasms” (Jansen 2005, 228).



phantasy corresponds to perception (instead of image consciousness) for they both have the same intentional structure (Jansen 2005, 229). To quote Husserl: “perceptual apprehension and phantasy apprehension are *essentially* the same” (*Phantasy*, 326; Hua XXIII 268). However, not exactly identical, and this leads to the understanding of phantasy as *reproductive representation*.

### 1.2.2. Reproductive re-presentation and perceptual re-presentation

Although phantasy corresponds to perception in (having the same) intentional structure, it is nevertheless only *quasi*-perception. Husserl believes that perception is *impressional*<sup>24</sup> or originary [*originäres*] consciousness of the present, it is the consciousness of what is there itself [*Selbstda-Bewusstsein*]. But phantasy is the *reproductively modified consciousness of the present* [*das re produktiv modifizierte Gegenwartsbewusstsein*] which means that it is the consciousness of what is there itself as it were [*gleichsam Selbstda*], of what is present as it were [*gleichsam Gegenwärtig*]. In other words it is the consciousness of the phantasy present [*Gegenwartsphantasie*] (*Phantasy*, 323; Hua XXIII, 265-266). In this way, perception and phantasy stand in contrast: the “as it were” is contrasted with “actual” (*Phantasy*, 325; Hua XXIII, 267).

Hence, phantasy is now defined as *reproductive modification* (*Phantasy*, 325; Hua XXIII, 267). It is, however, important to specify what exactly “reproductive” means in this context. In text no. 14 (1911/1912) in *Phantasy*, Husserl writes that *reproduction* [*Reproduktion*] is the re-presentation [*Vergegenwärtigung*] of internal consciousness which, however, does not mean that an originary experience belonging to the earlier internal consciousness is produced again as if in an afterimage of the earlier internal consciousness (*Phantasy*, 372; Hua XXIII, 310). Rather, what is re-presented in the sense of “reproduction” is the *act* but not the *object*: “The act is said to be reproduced, its object to be re-presented” (Brough 2005, lxiv). Thus, a re-presentation can re-present the same object than that of perception: “Now it belongs to perception’s essence as perception that a parallel re-presentation corresponds to it in the sense that the latter re-presents the same thing that the perception perceives” (*Phantasy*, 372; Hua XXIII, 310). In sum, *re-*

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<sup>24</sup> The term “impression” is a synonym for sensing or sensation (Brough 2005, lxii).

*presentation* has a specific duality: it is directed at the re-presented object and at the re-presented (in the sense of reproductively modified) perception (Marbach 2012, 231). In this way, “by reproducing and act, the object is re-presented” (Brough 2005, lxiv).

One could infer from this that phantasy is not free and is always tied to perception – phantasy is a *re-presentation* of the presentation, that is, perception. It is true that Husserl, in explaining the reproductive function, refers many times to *memory* as an example of this. It is easy to understand how memory functions as a reproduction of previous perceptual experience.<sup>25</sup> However, Husserl is convinced that in order to have re-presentation no “corresponding” perception is needed, and thus I can phantasy an act “that I have never impressionally experienced” (Brough 2005, lxvi). Therefore, reproduction can be creative and inventive (*ibid*)<sup>26</sup>. This has to be kept in mind when we start to examine the *modes of presentations*, namely positing and non-positing or *neutralised representation*.

The distinction between positing and non-positing representation is best explained by Husserl in the *Ideas I* where he writes that phantasy is a *neutrality modification* [*Neutralitätsmodifikation*] (*Ideas I*, 260; Hua III/1, 250). By introducing this term, Husserl wants, on the one hand, to specify the peculiar character of *pure* phantasy, and, thus, claims that phantasy as a *non-positing representation* is a neutrality modification of a *positing representation*, that is, memory: “phantasying is the neutrality modification of “positing” presentation, therefore of memory in the widest conceivable sense” (*Ideas I*, 260; Hua III/1, 250). On the other hand, Husserl claims that the neutralising modification is a *universal* modification of consciousness as such (Bernet, Kern, and Marbach 1993, 147). As Husserl writes in the *Ideas I*, the distinction between positionality and neutrality is “universal difference pertaining to consciousness” [*ein universeller Bewußtseinsunterschied*] (*Ideas I*, 272; Hua III/1, 262). The universalisation consists in the understanding that all positing acts have their possible counterpart in *neutral* acts (Bernet, Kern, and Marbach 1993, 147). But it also involves *pure* phantasy. It means that in phantasy I do not *actually* experience all the immanent experiences, but only “presentiate them to myself (in imagination [*einbildend*]), perform them only inactually [*inaktuell*] in a neutralizing manner, that

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<sup>25</sup> (Marbach 2012, 231). The perceptual object is re-presented, the previous experience of perception is reproduced (since memory is a new experience, a new act of consciousness).

<sup>26</sup> See also Cobos, p 151-152; Hua XXIII, text no. 15

is, without a positing of belief” (Bernet, Kern, and Marbach 1993, 147). I can phantasise myself into an experiencing and feel *as if* I were experiencing (*ibid*).

Husserl also analyses depiction as neutrality modification in the *Ideas I*. He says that the neutral image object consciousness [*das neutrale Bildobjektbewußtsein*] is the neutrality modification of normal perception. It is a neutrality modification because the depicted world is perceptually [*perzeptiv*]<sup>27</sup> presentive.

The consciousness of the "picture" (the small, grey figures in which, by virtue of founded noeses something else is "depictively presented" by similarity) which mediates and makes possible the depicting, is now an example for the neutrality modification of perception. This depicting picture-Object [*Bildobjekt*] is present to us neither as existing nor as not existing, nor in any other positional modality; or, rather, there is consciousness of it as existing, but as quasi-existing in the neutrality modification of being. (*Ideas I*, 262; Hua III/1, 252)

It is characteristic to all re-presentations that the object is not “present” in the same way as the perceptual object is. In the latter case, the object is present “in person” [*leibhaftig*]. Husserl explains the distinction between the object of presentation and that of representation in connection to time consciousness in the text 18 in *Phantasy*. In perception, the object is given in the *originary mode* [*Ursprungsmodus*], that is, in the mode of actuality “in person,” [*leibhaftig*] which is called the present [*Gegenwart*] (*Phantasy*, 601; Hua XXIII, 500). As Brough explain this, “Presence in person involves both temporal presence – the object is perceived as now existing – and presence in the sense that the object is there, standing over against the perceiver and not re-presented as something presently existing but absent from the perceptual field of regard” (Brough 2005, xxxiv). In perception the object is actually existing and *present* whereas in memory or recollection the object is given as *no longer present* and in expectation or

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<sup>27</sup> The term “perceptual” [*perzeptiv*] here does not mean “taking of something as true,” as the German word *Wahrnehmung* means. See the translator’s note in *Phantasy*: “Husserl sometimes uses *Wahrnehmung* and its derivatives in contrast to *Perzeption* and its derivatives to indicate the difference between ordinary perceptual experience with its belief in empirical reality (*Wahrnehmung*) and the unique kind of perception involved in the experience of an image (*Perzeption*).” (*Phantasy*, 556)

anticipation *as coming into being in the future* (*Phantasy*, 602; Hua XXIII, 501). But in phantasy “we are not unqualifiedly conscious of an intuited object as actual, as present, past, and so on; on the contrary, we are conscious of it together with its content “as if” it were present” (*Phantasy*, 605-606; Hua XXIII, 504). It is actuality “as if” [*Wirklichkeit "als ob"*] (*ibid*). Now, depictive consciousness has similarities with phantasy but is nevertheless not identical to phantasy. Husserl thinks that we can surely say that the image in a painting stands before us *as actuality “in person”* [*als leibhafte Wirklichkeit*] and in that sense the image is perceived<sup>28</sup>. However, it does not mean that the image in a painting appears exactly the same way as the object of perception. This *present* and *actuality* of the image is only *actuality as if* [*Wirklichkeit als ob*] and, thus, “the image only hovers before us perceptually” [*das Bild schwebt nur perzeptiv vor*] (*Phantasy*, 607; Hua XXIII, 506).

In his later texts, Husserl takes the concept of phantasy to be a universalised concept for all representations, including image consciousness. Thus, we may say that when phantasy was taken as analogous to image consciousness in Husserl’s early theory, then image consciousness is taken as a subtype of phantasy (in the sense of re-presentation in general) in his later theory. Of course, Husserl still differentiates pure phantasy from image consciousness but the differentiation lies in the *specification* of the concept of “phantasy” (as representation in general). He now thinks that memory, expectation and (pure) phantasy are *reproductive* phantasies or representations and image consciousness is *perceptual* phantasy or representation (Brough 2005, xliv)<sup>29</sup>.

The distinction between reproductive and perceptual phantasy is already given in text no. 16 (1912) in *Phantasy* (here Husserl also equates the concept of “phantasy” with the concept of “representation”):

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<sup>28</sup> It is very likely that Husserl is accidentally using the term *wahrgenommen* instead of *perzeptiv* in this text (in German) because this would lead to the understanding that seeing an image in painting is perception. Husserl admits that here he is confusing the phantasy (pictorial experience) and actual experience (perception) in the footnote to the same paragraph (*Phantasy*, 607 (footnote 14); Hua XXIII, 506 (Fußnote 1)).

<sup>29</sup> It has been claimed that the diction is crucial in Husserl’s theory of image consciousness. “The distinction that presented so many difficulties at the time of the *Logical Investigations*, that between pure phantasy and normal picture-consciousness, is finally universalized terminologically as the distinction between reproductive phantasy (or presentation) and perceptive phantasy, that is, presentation [*Vergegenwärtigung*] in a picture, in pictorial representation [*Darstellung*] (cf.,e.g., nos, 16 and 18a [1918])” (Bernet, Kern, and Marbach 1993b, 144).

We must therefore universalize the concept of phantasy (let us say, the concept of re-presentation). There are two fundamental forms of re-presentation [*Vergegenwärtigung*]:

- 1) reproductive [*reproduktive*] re-presentation;
- 2) perceptual [*perzeptive*] re-presentation, that is, re-presentation in image, in pictorial exhibiting [*bildliche Darstellung*]. Since reproductive modifications correspond to every experience, the perceptual re-presentation then also passes into reproductive re-presentation; pictorializing re-presentation grows into phantasy re-presentation (or into memory). (*Phantasy*, 565; Hua XXIII, 475-476)

This could also be taken to mean that image consciousness is not *purely* reproductive representation because, being a perceptual representation, it is “penetrating a founding perceptual consciousness” (Bernet, Kern, and Marbach 1993, 152). What is important, however, is that image consciousness is again related to phantasy, although not in the same way as in Husserl’s earlier texts. As Frederik Stjernfelt puts it, earlier Husserl held the view that phantasy is a sort of (pictorial) image consciousness, but later he believed that the phantasy concept embraces the picture concept instead, and thus the relationship had the opposite direction in his later texts (Stjernfelt 2007, 289–296). In sum, image consciousness is now called *perceptual phantasy*:

The image-object consciousness, which is the foundation of every mediate intuiting of the kind that we call depictive consciousness [*Abbildbewusstsein*], intuiting “in” the image, is an example of a perceptual phantasy [*perzeptive Phantasie*]. Every phantasy that is called phantasy in the ordinary sense is an example of a reproductive phantasy. (*Phantasy*, 605; Hua XXIII, 504)

In this quotation, Husserl calls depiction an example of *perceptual phantasy* in order to differentiate it from phantasy in the ordinary sense. Ten pages later (in text no. 18/b), Husserl starts to specify the concept of image consciousness and comes to the conclusion that *perceptual phantasy* has to be distinguished from *depiction*. The perceptual phantasy is now also called *immanent imagination*.

### 1.2.3. Immanent imagination

As said previously, in his later texts, Husserl no longer takes phantasy to be analogous to depictive image consciousness. Instead, the image consciousness is now taken to be one type of reproductive representation (phantasy). But there is another change in Husserl's theory of image consciousness and that involves the understanding of image consciousness as *depiction*. The theory of image consciousness as depictive consciousness is prevalent in his early texts, especially in the lecture course 1904/05 in which he presents the theory of three objects of image consciousness: the physical image, the image object and the image subject. It means that, as a rule, every time the term "image consciousness" is used, depictive consciousness is meant in the earlier texts. In the same vein, Husserl (earlier) had the view that every work of fine art must be a depiction and that the image subject must always be presented in the image object.<sup>30</sup>

In text no. 18/b (1918) in *Phantasy*, Husserl revises his theory of image consciousness as depictive consciousness and claims that there can be images that are not depictions. Husserl believes that this is the case with theatrical performances:

Earlier I believed that it belonged to the essence of fine art to present in an image, and I understood this presenting to be depicting [*Abbilden*]. Looked at more closely, however, this is not correct. In the case of a theatrical performance, we live in a world of perceptual phantasy [*perzeptive Phantasie*]; we have "images" within the cohesive unity of one image, but we do not for that reason have depictions. (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 514-515)

Husserl thinks that, in most cases, when an actor plays somebody he creates an image – an image of some tragic event or an image of a character in the play – but the image is only an *image of* [*Bild von*] and not a *depiction of* [*Abbild von*] something (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515). As Husserl puts it, "The actor's presentation is not a presentation in the sense in which we say of an image object that an image subject is presented in it"; and he adds, "Neither the actor nor the image that is his performance for us is an image object in which another object, an actual or even

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<sup>30</sup> See also Chapter 2.2.3., "The image subject".

fictive image subject, is depicted” (*ibid*). However, since *images* are involved in our experience of a theatrical performance, we can still call the experience the *image consciousness*. As Husserl says, theatrical presentation is *imaging presentation* [*bildliche Darstellung*] and the imaging involved here is *perceptual phantasy* [*perzeptive Phantasie*] or *immediate imagination* [*unmittelbare Imagination*] (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515). The image created by the actor (which is that which appears in a theatrical presentation) is called a *pure perceptual figment* [*ein reines perzeptives Fiktum*] (*Phantasy*, 617; Hua XXIII, 515).

However, some commentators suggest that the term “image consciousness” and its derivatives, like depictive image consciousness, should be reserved only for Husserl’s theory of depiction that he developed mostly in the 1904/1905 lectures. Javier Enrique Carreño Cobos, for instance, calls Husserl’s early theory the *image consciousness* or *depictive image consciousness*, and the later theory *perceptual phantasy* or *immediate perceptual phantasy* (Cobos 2013). It seems that one of the reasons why Cobos avoids the term “image consciousness” in describing Husserl’s later theory is that, in his view, the perceptual phantasy is *more* than just image consciousness. In other words, it is more than “the mere intuitive appearance of something absent or fictive *in* image” (Cobos 2013, 152). In fact, one of the aims of Cobos’s article is to show that the perceptual phantasy is *nonintuitive*. In this way he also challenges the claim that, according to Husserl, phantasy is an intuitive consciousness (Cobos 2013, 158). In my view, his claim is not very convincing.

Cobos claims that in the case of perceptual phantasy such as a theatrical representation “phantasy is literally *nonintuitive*” (Cobos 2013, 159). He seems to suggest that the experience of the theatrical representation is twofold: the objects (and actors) on the stage are perceived and in that sense are given immediately and intuitively but these are also taken *for* something else, that is, taken for phantasy objects; and the phantasy objects are given nonintuitively. Since phantasy objects in this case are neither depicted nor reproductively phantasised, they remain nonintuitive.

[...] those in the audience are required to take the perceived objects on stage for fictive objects. Some objects on stage may even seem to fulfill both functions of imagination – e.g., a doll on stage may trigger the depiction of a baby – but even here the non-intuitive

phantasy function takes precedence, for the doll is not meant to depict a baby (not even one in the world of fiction) but to be taken *for* a baby in that world, unless it is meant to be taken precisely for a doll in, e.g., *The Nutcracker*, following the artistic intention fashioning *that* world. (Cobos 2013, 159)

Cobos's aim is not to show that the theory of "nonintuitive phantasy" should be taken as the only correct Husserlian account of phantasy. As he writes: "to bring about an intuitive presentation of something fictive – whether in the manner of depiction or else in pure reproductive phantasy – is only *one* of the imaginative functions that an artwork might require of a participant" (Cobos 2013, 159). And he adds that another function might be "to take something perceived for something fictive" (*ibid.*).<sup>31</sup> However, I claim that his account of *nonintuitiveness* in the case of perceptual phantasy is not satisfactory.

Firstly, it is true that Husserl refers to the possibility of nonintuitive phantasy and that he introduces the possibility in the same text in which he discusses the experience of theatrical performance (perceptual phantasy). At the beginning of text no. 18/b, Husserl writes:

Art is the realm of phantasy that has been given form, of perceptual or reproductive phantasy that has been given form, of intuitive phantasy, but also, in part, of nonintuitive phantasy. It cannot be said that art must necessarily move within the sphere of intuitiveness. (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII 514)

But Husserl is not saying that the phantasy object is nonintuitively given. Instead, he writes that we take phantasy intuition as our basis and only what is *real* is given nonintuitively: "we have from the beginning only the artistic "image"; and what is real that functions as presentation, what is actually experienced without modification, is continuously concealed — concealed, though

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<sup>31</sup> Cobos's example of how nonintuitiveness is involved in the case of portrait is the following. "The shadowy edges around *Mona Lisa*'s mouth, left deliberately diffused in *sfumato*, are not "filled in" *intuitively* by the viewer as either a candid smile or a stiff upper lip (as in a daydream): the viewer does not alter the appearing image (lest she hallucinate) nor necessarily goes on to daydream about a fully graspable smile of the *Mona Lisa* (though she could). Rather, the viewer who actively engages the artwork not only grasps the depicted *Mona Lisa* but also phantasizes *non-intuitively*, joining the game and taking the *Mona Lisa* to be, e.g., in a glad or else sour mood, etc (Cobos 2013, 159–160).



there is consciousness of it, only consciousness of it nonintuitively and in the peculiar fashion that the word “concealment” suggests in this case” (*Phantasy*, 618; Hua XXIII, 517).<sup>32</sup>

Secondly, it is not sufficiently explained in Cobos’s article why the phantasised objects are intuited in the case of pure phantasy (or reproductive phantasy) and not in the case of perceptual phantasy (theatrical performance). In both cases the phantasised object is absent and not “actually and bodily existing before me” (Cobos 2013, 159). In sum, I see no reason why Husserl’s later theory of immanent imagination (or perceptual phantasy) should not be called *intuitive* perceptual phantasy and an “image consciousness.”

Another question is, of course, whether Husserl’s theory of non-depictive image consciousness that was meant to explain the experience of theatrical performances should be applied to other examples of visual art as well? In other words, does the new theory say that paintings, photographs, etc. are *not* depictions anymore? In my view, there is no evidence that Husserl abandoned the theory of depictive consciousness. First of all, even in the case of a theatrical performance, Husserl admits that depiction might be involved. That takes place when an actor plays a real-life person: “If Wallenstein or Richard III is presented on stage, depictive presentations are surely involved [...]” (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515).<sup>33</sup> Secondly, I believe it is correct to say that as a result of Husserl’s revisions we can distinguish pictures that depict from non-depictive pictures. This idea is also defended by Shigeto Nuki who believes that Husserl’s later theory is even better since it is also applicable to modern art:

While the old theory applies only to traditional pictures, which depict something outside the canvas in three dimensional space, his new theory has the advantage of covering paintings without a subject (*Bildsujet*), such as abstract expressionism or minimalism, and also of being relevant for literature and theater pieces. (Nuki 2010, 335)

In my view, in order to understand Husserl’s later theory, we must understand the distinction between depiction [*Abbildung*] and imaging presentation [*bildliche Darstellung*], both of which

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<sup>32</sup> See also (Brough 1992, 259).

<sup>33</sup> For more about depiction in theatrical performances see Chapter 2.4., “Depiction and theatrical performance”

are examples of image consciousness [*Bildbewusstsein*]. They differ with respect to the image subject. It means that in his later theory, the third “object” of the image consciousness, that is, the subject, becomes *optional*. Accordingly, we can say that the image consciousness is sometimes a twofold and sometimes a threefold experience<sup>34</sup>. For example, abstract paintings that “do not represent any particular subject or a subject of a particular kind” (Brough 2010, 45) are still *images*, although we do not call them *depictive images*. At the same time, if depictive consciousness is involved, then these three objects must be involved as well – the physical image, the image object and the image subject. This is why I believe that Husserl’s early theory of image consciousness (with three objects in it) can still be used as a model for explaining depicting pictures – his theory is still valid in explaining depiction even after his revisions of the theory of image consciousness.

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<sup>34</sup> To quote Brough: “While both ordinary phantasy and ordinary perception may be said to have a single object, the object of image-consciousness is twofold, and in some instances threefold. [...] if the image-object represents a subject, as a portrait does, it also includes (3) an “image subject” (*Bildsujet*)” (Brough 2010, 30–31). See also Chapter 2.1.2., “Seeing-in”.

## Part II: Image consciousness

Husserl calls our experience of image the *image consciousness* [*Bildbewusstsein*]. In his lecture course from 1904/05, he believes that image consciousness is necessarily depictive. He claims that the depictive or image consciousness involves three objects:

- 1) the physical image [*das physische Bild*] or the physical thing [*Bildding*] – a thing made from canvas, paper or some other materials;
- 2) the image object [*Bildobjekt*] – the representing or depicting image, also the appearing image, the mental image;
- 3) the image subject [*Bildsujet*] – the represented or depicted object  
(*Phantasy*, 21; Hua XXIII, 19).<sup>35</sup>

For example, in a photograph representing a child, the image object is the photographic image of the child in miniature size and photographic colours; the real child who is represented or depicted by this photograph is the image subject, and the photograph as an imprinted paper is the physical image thing (*Phantasy*, 20-21; Hua XXIII, 19-20). To quote Husserl: “The physical image awakens the mental image and this in turn presents something else, the subject (*Phantasy*, 30; Hua XXIII, 29).

In his later manuscripts, Husserl revised the theory and claimed that image consciousness does not necessarily have to be *depictive* consciousness. He then presented two possible cases of image consciousness: we have a *depiction of* [*Abbild von*] something or an *image of* [*Bild von*] something (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515). The latter is characteristic of our experience of theatrical performances. It can also be said that the distinction is between depictive image consciousness and non-depictive image consciousness, both of which will be examined in the following chapters.

The main source for Husserl’s theory of image consciousness is Husserliana XXIII *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory* which is a collection of Husserl’s manuscripts from the

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<sup>35</sup> See also Hua XXXVIII, 350.

period 1898-1925.<sup>36</sup> It shows that the topic of image consciousness appears in Husserl's texts already in 1898.<sup>37</sup> However, the theory was developed in more detail in his lectures from the winter semester 1904/05 taught by Husserl in Göttingen. These lectures are published in *Husserliana* XXIII under the title "Phantasy and Image Consciousness", but partly in *Husserliana* XXXVIII *Wahrnehmung und Aufmerksamkeit*.<sup>38</sup> In the latter *Husserliana*, one can find a text called "Die Bildtheorie für Wahrnehmung und Vergegenwärtigung (Bildbewusstsein)" (No 3, § 10), for instance. Husserl also mentions image object [*Bildobjekt*] and image subject [*Bildsujet*] in connection to the "image theory" in Appendix to §11 and §20 in the Investigation V in *Logical Investigations* (LI, V, 125; Hua XIX/1, 436), and also the three objects – *das Bild als physisches Ding, Bildobjekt, Bildsujet* – in explaining the notion of "presentation" [*Vorstellung*] in the Investigation V in *Logical Investigations* (LI, V, 172; Hua XIX/1, 523). In *Ideas* I, Husserl discusses the three objects of image consciousness in explaining our experience of Dürer's engraving "Knight, Death and the Devil" [*Ritter, Tod und Teufel*] (*Ideas* I, 261f; Hua III/1, 252f). Husserl also refers to "pictoriality" [*Bildlichkeit*] in text no. 45 (Part B) in *Husserliana* X *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* in which his main interest is, however, in pictures of memory and expectation (*Time*, 317-322; Hua X, 172-176 [306-310]).

In the following, I will first give some outlines of Husserl's phenomenological method of explaining the experience of images. I will also compare Husserl and Wollheim's theory of seeing-in. Then I will analyse the structure of image consciousness: first, I will describe the three objects of the image consciousness, and, second, the conflicts and the resemblance that occur between the objects. Lastly, I will examine in more detail Husserl's theory of depiction in connection to theatrical performances and I will point out some of the difficulties that result from this analysis.

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<sup>36</sup> The book was published in 1980, and the English translation in 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Rollinger believes that the treatise written in 1898 was used as a basis for the 1904/05 lectures by Husserl (Rollinger 1993, 201).

<sup>38</sup> I am thankful to Dr. Peter Andras Varga for drawing my attention to the texts in Hua XXXVIII (at the Cologne-Leuven Summer-School, „Essentials of Husserl's Phenomenology“, July 22-26, 2013).

## 2.1. Phenomenological approach to images

### 2.1.1. Methodology

Pictures and images can be analysed from different perspectives. Husserl's phenomenological approach is from the perspective of the viewer. To quote Husserl: "The source of the semblance must lie in the subject; the semblance must be ascribed to the subject, to its activities, its functions, its dispositions" (*Phantasy*, 4; Hua XXIII, 4). Of course, this is not the only way to analyse images. We could take as the standpoint the intention of the artistic agent (the one who creates the images or pictures) and claim that a picture displays an agent's conscious control of creating the picture which also guides the viewer's interpretation of the picture.<sup>39</sup> In my view, Husserl's approach is not ignorant with respect to the activity of the artist for it is the artist that creates the "physical image" and thereby prescribes what can be seen in it.<sup>40</sup> In addition, I do not agree with Christian Lotz's criticism that Husserl does not take into account the cultural and social dimensions within our experience of pictures. Firstly, Husserl has claimed that works of art are cultural objects (EJ, 55; EU, 55) and this also influences our understanding of the objects.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, Husserl's aim is to provide an *eidetic structure* of the experience of images in which case the "cultural dimension" is really irrelevant. Nicolas de Warren explains this in the following way:

From a phenomenological point of view, image-consciousness is approached through an explicit indifference or suspension of the particular cultural content of an image; this methodological precaution neither denies nor diminishes an image's status as an item of a visual culture. Rather, our interest is directed towards detailing the constitution of image-consciousness, its condition of possibility, in the sense of its specific eidetic structure – that essential structure and performance of consciousness without which any actual image-consciousness could not at all be given. (Warren 2010, 314)

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<sup>39</sup> (Wilson 2012, 55). In the article, Dawn Wilson suggests that in the case of self-portraits of photographers as artists the perspective of agents is not irrelevant. As Wilson writes, "Thus, we would not just be interested in finding out "why the experience of viewing a photograph is different from viewing a painting"; we would also be interested in finding out "why the experience of posing for a photograph is different from posing for a painting" – just as one example" (Wilson 2012, 56).

<sup>40</sup> See also Chapter 3.3., "Limited synthetic unity of the aesthetic object"

<sup>41</sup> See also Chapter 4.2.3., "Artworks appearing in a "cultural horizon" (the artworld)"

Husserl's eidetic analysis is applied to our experience of paintings, photographs, engravings, cinematographic pictures, sculptures, and images created in a theatre play or appearing to us in reading a novel.<sup>42</sup> What is probably not well-known is that Husserl even tries to apply the theory of image consciousness to music. In Appendix IX in *Phantasy*, where Husserl writes about multiple imaging, he gives an example of Beethoven's sonata played by the piano player. He believes that every performance of the sonata creates an *image* that can be taken as the image of the original sonata *just as Beethoven meant it*. To quote Husserl:

Likewise the reproduction of a sonata by the piano player and the sonata itself. The original is the sonata just as Beethoven meant it. Or rather, as the person who brings about this image consciousness apperceives the sonata as the sonata meant by Beethoven. [...] Everyone has his ideal Beethoven. Every artist interprets him differently. One artist, hearing another artist's interpretation, takes it as a good or bad, adequate or inadequate image of his own Beethoven, of his own interpretation. Perhaps in his own performance he will fall short of his interpretation. He fails to bring out this or that passage as he intends. (*Phantasy*, 189; Hua XXIII, 158-159)

However, since this is only a marginal idea in Husserl's writings, I will not focus on the imaging experience of music in my dissertation.

Now, I agree with Lotz that Husserl's theory does not explain how our experiences differ with respect to various media – what is specific to our experience of drawings, photos, oil paintings, water colours and digital images, for example – and that this could be taken as a shortcoming in his theory.<sup>43</sup> However, I think that Husserl has made very important distinction between positing and non-positing image consciousness (*Phantasy*, 564; Hua XXIII, 475) that can also be used to

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<sup>42</sup> Even when a fictional character starts to phantasise, there occurs image consciousness: "Take the case of reading a novel in which the hero phantasies, dreams, remembers. The story in the novel: It is not, however, an actual story; on the contrary, it only represents such a story. This is an *image* consciousness." (*Phantasy*, 251; Hua XXIII, 207) In my dissertation, I will not focus on works of literature for, in my view, that requires a separate study.

<sup>43</sup> Although I do not necessarily think, as Lotz suggests, that "different picture-types are different *cultural* formations" (Lotz 2007, 179).

explain the difference between our experiences of painting and photographs.<sup>44</sup> He also distinguishes analogical moments from non-analogical moments in the appearing image (*Phantasy*, 161; Hua XXIII, 141)<sup>45</sup> and points out that the range of analogical (or depictive) moments differ with respect to picturing media: “The range is greater in the case of an oil painting or oleograph than in the case of an engraving or ink drawing” (*Phantasy*, 61; Hua XXIII, 56). Thus, Husserl arrives at distinguishing the different *degrees* and *levels* of adequacy of the presentation to its object (*ibid*) (Brough 1992, 253).

### **2.1.2. Seeing-in**

Husserl’s theory of image consciousness can also be called the theory of *seeing-in*. The German words used by Husserl are “*hineinsehen*” (*Phantasy*, 134; Hua XXIII, 122), “*hineinschauen*” (*Phantasy*, 37; Hua XXIII, 34) or “*hineinblicken*” (*Phantasy*, 164; Hua XXIII, 143).<sup>46</sup> In the field of pictorial studies, Richard Wollheim’s theory of seeing-in is definitely more known than Husserl’s theory. Therefore, I will, first, compare Husserl and Wollheim’s theories of seeing-in, and then explain how seeing-in is an involuntary act in the following two chapters.

#### **2.1.2.1. Seeing in as three-fold experience**

It is generally agreed that Edmund Husserl’s theory of depiction describes a three-fold experience of seeing something in pictures, whereas Richard Wollheim’s theory is a two-fold experience of seeing-in. In the following, I will show that Wollheim’s theory can also be interpreted as a three-fold experience of seeing-in. I will first give an overview of Wollheim and Husserl’s theories of seeing-in, and will then show how the concept of figuration in Wollheim’s theory is analogous to the concept of the image subject as the depicted object in Husserl’s theory. I will claim that our experience of non-figurative pictures is a two-fold seeing-in, while that of figurative pictures is a three-fold seeing-in.

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<sup>44</sup> See also Chapter 2.4.2., “The posited image subject in non-positional depiction”.

<sup>45</sup> See also Chapter 2.3.2., “Resemblance”.

<sup>46</sup> These verbs are mostly translated by Brough as “to immerse ourselves in (the image).”

Richard Wollheim calls seeing-in a special kind of experience that is marked by a duality called two-foldness: We see 1) the marked surface and 2) something in the surface (Wollheim 1998, 21). In other words, seeing-in permits simultaneous attention to the medium and to the object (Wollheim 1980, 212–213). To understand the difference between ordinary visual experience and pictorial experience, Wollheim introduces the terms *configuration* and *representation*. A picture that depicts something is both a two-dimensional configuration of lines and strokes on the picture's surface, as well as a three-dimensional representation. The configuration is something physical and definitely visible. However, it is wrong to compare our visual experience of an object with that of a picture's configuration: "it is only when we think of our drawing as a flat configuration that we can talk of the unalikehood or dissimilarity of the thing we draw and the thing we see" (Wollheim 1974, 22). Seeing the configuration means to attend to what might be called the *physical dimension* of a picture, which must be differentiated from its *pictorial dimension*. For example, when black paint is put on a white canvas, our seeing of the paint on the canvas is the physical dimension, and our seeing how the black is on the white is the pictorial dimension (Wollheim 1974, 26–27). The latter involves awareness of depth, which is also the minimal requirement for representation.

Edmund Husserl describes the experience of seeing something in a picture in his lecture course "Phantasy and Image Consciousness," of 1904/05. According to Husserl, depictive or image consciousness involves three objects: 1) the physical image [*das physische Bild*], 2) the image object [*Bildobjekt*], and 3) the image subject [*Bildsujet*] (*Phantasy*, 21; Hua XXIII, 19). Husserl gives the example of a black and white photograph representing a child. In this case, the image as a physical thing is the imprinted paper, which is a real object taken as such in perception. The physical thing can be torn or warped, and even destroyed. The image object or representing/depicting object, on the other hand, "has never existed and never will exist" (*Phantasy*, 21; Hua XXIII, 19). It is a photographic image of a child that deviates from the real child in many respects. The real child, that is, the image subject, has red cheeks and blond hair, for example, but the photographic image of the child has none of these colours. It displays photographic colours and deviates from the real child in size.



Until now, minimal attention has been paid to the similarities and differences between Husserl and Wollheim's theories of seeing-in. But from the few texts that have been published, a general view emerges, which sees Husserl's theory as providing two levels of seeing-in: we see the image object in the physical image, and the image subject in the image object; whereas Wollheim's theory deals only with the first level of seeing-in. Göran Sonesson, for instance, thinks that Husserl's explanations are more precise only in explaining the seeing-in of the image subject in the image object, but, in his view, the question of how to see the image object in the physical image is more important, and this is the question with which Wollheim is concerned (Sonesson 1989a, 272). In like manner, John Brough thinks that there are two senses of seeing-in, and this is why we should speak of three-foldness instead of two-foldness in image consciousness. That is, 1) we are aware of the surface of the physical support; 2) we see something in it (that gives us the image); and 3) we see the subject in the image (Brough 2012, 552). Brough adds:

Seeing-in is more complicated than might initially appear. Husserl's remarks about imaging suggest that it is possible to distinguish two levels of seeing-in (Husserl 2005:21, 30). Wollheim does not seem to make this distinction, instead focusing exclusively on what I take to be the first of the two levels. In this first kind of seeing-in I see something in the images physical support [...] The second level of seeing-in involves seeing something in the image rather than in its physical substratum. Here the subject of the image comes into play: I see the subject in the image. (Brough 2012, 551)

Brough thinks that the subject we see in a picture of Cartier-Bresson's photograph, for instance, is Simone de Beauvoir. This means that the subject is a specific person and not, as we might want to claim, a small grey figure of a woman. In my view, the fact that the image subject is a specific person or a thing plays an important role in understanding the three-foldness of the seeing-in experience. It becomes evident when we compare Husserl's earlier texts from 1904/05, in which he defends the three-fold theory of image consciousness with his later texts from 1918, in which he starts to doubt whether image consciousness must always occur in the mode of depiction and claims that, in some cases, the subject as a depicted object is not involved in image consciousness. He thinks that in a theatrical performance an actor (in most cases) creates an

*image of* [Bild von] a character in the play or some tragic event but not a *depiction of* [Abbild von] the character or the tragic event. In this sense, the image subject is absent.<sup>47</sup> To quote Husserl:

The actor's presentation is not a presentation in the sense in which we say of an image object that an image subject is presented in it. Neither the actor nor the image that is his performance for us is an image object in which another object, an actual or even fictive image subject, is depicted. (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515)

In Brough's view, we have the same kind of experience when we look at nonfigurative art: the images do not represent any particular subject or a subject of a particular kind (Brough 2010, 45). Accordingly, abstract painting is a two-fold image consciousness (Brough 2010, 30).

Now, if we agree with Brough that leaving out the image subject as *depicted object* makes Husserl's theory of image consciousness a two-fold experience of seeing-in, then Wollheim's distinction between the representational content and the figurative content (that is more than just representational content) could be taken as a way of adding a third *fold* to the seeing-in experience. According to Wollheim, figuration is a specific form of representation: if we see in a marked surface things that are three-dimensionally related, then we have representation; if we can correctly identify those things, we have figuration (Wollheim 1998, 21). To quote Wollheim:

The idea of representational content is much broader than that of figurative content. The representational content of a painting derives from what can be seen in it. The figurative content derives from what can be seen in it *and* can be brought under non-abstract concepts, such as table, map, window, woman. (Wollheim 2001, 131)

Accordingly, abstract paintings have representational content but no figurative content. Abstract paintings are representations since the minimal requirement of representation is that we experience *depth* or "that we see in the marked surface things three-dimensionally related"

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<sup>47</sup> In Brough's view, this does not mean that theatrical presentations do not have subjects in a more general sense. A theatre play is definitely *about* something, although not *depicting* any particular person or place or event. (Brough 2010, 44)

(Wollheim 1998, 21). Very few abstract paintings lack representational content, like Barnett Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*.<sup>48</sup> Thus, Hans Hofmann's *Cathedral* has representational content but Vermeer's *Officer and Laughing Girl* has representational and figurative content (Wollheim 2001, 131).

As an aside, we may observe that Wollheim also thinks that representations can be divided according to the particular or kind of object they represent. That is, representation can either be of a particular object or event, or it can be of an object or event that are merely of some particular kind. For instance, a painting can represent a particular person, say Madame Moitessier in Ingre's painting of the same name, or it can represent *a* woman, like in Manet's *La Prune* (Wollheim 1998, 67–68). Hence, it is interesting to ask whether the particularity of the object depicted adds a further, fourth level or *fold* to the experience of seeing-in though. This is not a line we will pursue here.

At this point, I only want to emphasise that Wollheim's view implies two different kinds of experience: seeing non-figurative and figurative pictures, where the first can be explained as two-fold and the second as three-fold seeing-in. In the case of the non-figurative picture we experience the configuration of lines and strokes on the picture's surface and the representation. In the case of the figurative picture, we also see figuration. Thus, the three *folds* of the seeing-in of a figurative picture are: 1) configuration, 2) representation, and 3) figuration.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> (Wollheim 2001, 131) It has been pointed out that the requirement of depth is not always fulfilled even in the cases of figurative pictures. For example, the stick figure drawing has no background. Paolo Spinicci shows, however, that the requirement of *apparent depth* is nevertheless fulfilled, since the figurative content constitutes a figurative space of its own. (Spinicci 2012, 99)

<sup>49</sup> Now, one could argue that the “missing” third fold in Wollheim's theory of seeing-in is another experience that connects the experience of seeing the picture and that of seeing something or someone in the picture. This criticism is presented by Flint Schier: “So what we really require is (as it were) a three-fold experience: an experience as of seeing the canvas, an experience as of seeing you, and an experience as of there being certain features of the canvas which make it 'appropriate' that I should be seeing you as having certain features” (Schier 1986, 201).

Schier thinks that Wollheim's theory of seeing-in does not adequately describe pictorial experience. He believes that Wollheim's double-experience model of the seeing-in only gives us two simultaneous experiences: an experience as of seeing the picture canvas (seeing S) and an experience as of seeing what is depicted on it (seeing O). However, in Schier's view, this does not explain how the experience of S is related to the experience of O, for the simple coincidence of the two experiences “cannot amount necessarily to an experience as of their being related in a certain way” (Schier 1986, 204). In other words, what is missing is the picture-relation: “The brute fact of a double experience of S and of O [...] does not add up to seeing S as a picture of O” (Schier 1986, 201).

In my view, there are at least two reasons to discredit Schier's account of Wollheim's theory. First, Schier does not make a proper distinction between seeing-as and seeing-in theories. Although he refers to the second

In sum, I have not tried to claim that Wollheim's theory is identical to Husserl's theory of seeing-in. Their theories differentiate in many respects. For example, in Wollheim's view representation requires the awareness of depth but, as Brough has shown, seeing depth is not a necessary condition for having an image, according to Husserl (Brough 1996, 49–50). In addition, Wollheim would not say that we see a photographic image of a child in miniature in a black and white photograph. Instead, he would say that we see the real child. I have tried to show that there is a similarity between Wollheim and Husserl's theory in the sense in which they differentiate the experience of figurative and non-figurative pictures. Our experience of seeing-in a picture depends upon whether the picture has the figurative content: only in the case of figurative picture is seeing-in a three-fold experience.

#### **2.1.2.2. Seeing-in is involuntary act**

I also want to point out that seeing-in is an involuntary act. We cannot keep ourselves from seeing what the picture depicts. As Javier Enrique Carreño Cobos puts it: “Just as I am not free to see in an image whatever I please but only what it depicts, so also I am not at liberty to stop seeing in an image what it depicts” (Cobos 2013, 149). This so-called “more or less automatic transition” from the picture to the depicted original, in Karl Schuhmann's words, requires no

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edition of *Art and its Objects*, in which Wollheim makes the distinction, he is willing to admit that he does not see any real change in Wollheim's account, instead claiming that all Wollheim does in the second edition is to make the account of seeing-as more nuanced. Given this, it becomes clearer why Schier tries to find the connection between an experience as of seeing the canvas and an experience as of seeing the (depicted) object. But in Wollheim's words, seeing-in is marked by the duality of simply seeing the marked surface and seeing something in the surface (Wollheim 1998a, 21).

Secondly, for Schier the main question seems to be how these separate (although simultaneous) experiences of seeing-in can be united into one pictorial experience. He does not take the seeing-in experience to be one single experience with different aspects in it. But this is not in accordance with Wollheim's theory, especially with his later specifications of the twofoldness thesis. In the text “On Pictorial Representation,” Wollheim writes that originally he identified *twofoldness* with “two simultaneous perceptions: one of the pictorial surface, the other of what it represents” and that he has recently reconceived the theory and now understands it in terms of a *single experience* with two aspects, which he calls, in this text, configurational and recognitional (Wollheim 1998b, 221). (It is another question, of course, whether Schier should be blamed for misunderstanding Wollheim's theory since the article “On Pictorial Representation” (1998) was published many years after Schier's book “Deeper into Pictures: An Essay on Pictorial Representation” (1986).)

In my view, there is nothing “missing” in Wollheim's theory of seeing-in, and the three-foldness thesis emerges naturally from his theory. It is coherent with Wollheim's theory to claim that the three folds of the single experience of seeing-in are configuration, representation, and figuration.

spontaneous or well-considered decision to be reinstated (Schuhmann 2005, 274). Husserl defends the same view and believes that *not* to see what is depicted is possible only with a special effort:

Indeed, even if I wanted to, I could by no means just push aside the appearance belonging to the image object and then see only the lines and shadows on the card. At most I could do this with respect to particular spots that I pick out. [...] Only when I pick out a single detail – a single line, say – and abstract it from the rest, do I “see” it on the paper. (*Phantasy*, 583; Hua XXIII, 488)

However, not everyone shares the view. Christian Lotz, for instance, criticises Husserl’s theory of image consciousness and claims that seeing-in is not a simple act of “seeing-in” but a process of forming pictures. To quote Lotz: “I maintain the thesis that pictures are socially and materially constituted manifestations of plastic formations [*Bildungen*] and that Husserl fails to consider the fact that pictures are ultimately *made* by human beings, and that what we “see” in pictures is ultimately our own shaping power [*Bildungskraft*]” (Lotz 2007, 172). Lotz believes that seeing pictures is foremost an *interpretive activity* and not a static analysis of pictures (like Husserl’s analysis is). To understand pictures is not something natural because “the consciousness of pictures is not an ability with which we are born; rather, it is *developed* within the first two to four years of life” (Lotz 2007, 180).

To answer this criticism I want to point out two considerations. Firstly, there are two ways to analyse image consciousness: within the framework of genetic phenomenology or that of static phenomenology. When it comes to genetic analysis, the understanding of images is *active* according to Husserl. Our experience of objects is an active *synthesis* that involves present, past and possible future seeings of the object. Also, the social and cultural world plays a part here in forming the meaning of the object.<sup>50</sup> As Brough explains, “The image in art, after all, is a cultural phenomenon, created within a distinct historical horizon and capable of embodying meanings flowing from the religious, philosophical, artistic, and social consciousness of the age”

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<sup>50</sup> See Husserl’s “The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology”. See also Chapter 4.2.3., “Artworks appearing in a “cultural horizon” (the artworld)“.

(Brough 2012, 561). Now, it is true that Husserl is not concerned with how the experience of pictures changes from childhood to adulthood but it does not mean that, thereby, Husserl does not take into account social and cultural influences on our experiences.

Secondly, I want to point out that there is a difference between seeing something in a picture and recognising what the picture depicts. I believe that only the first (the seeing something in a picture) is *involuntary* and automatic. For example, when someone says “This is a picture of Bismarck” it means that the person knows who Bismarck was and he has seen pictures of Bismarck before. But it does not mean that he can avoid seeing a (male) figure in the picture. To draw the borderline between seeing-in and the correct understanding of what is depicted in a picture is, of course, difficult and needs a thorough examination which I will not undertake here.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> One way would be to say that in these cases we have different grades of intuitive fulfilment. As Nicolas de Warren puts it, “[...] the recognition of the depicted subject admits different grades of intuitive fulfilment. Even if I just recognize that an image is painted on the wall, these mysterious images are still given in the consciousness of an image, albeit as an image that I fail to identify in particular. And yet, I still see something depicted in the image, if only the indeterminacy of a visual question mark – is it a shaman or a strange animal? By contrast, if I recognize the image of Napoleon, I clearly apprehend the image subject *in* the image object: I see Napoleon *in* the painting” (Warren 2010, 322).

## 2.2. Three objects in the image consciousness

As stated previously, in the lecture course from 1904/05, Husserl differentiates three objects in the depictive image consciousness: 1) the physical image [*das physische Bild*] or the physical thing [*das physische Ding*], 2) the image object [*Bildobjekt*], also the representing or depicting object, and 3) the image subject [*Bildsujet*], also the represented or depicted object (*Phantasy*, 21; Hua XXIII, 19; Hua XXXVIII, 350). Their respective roles in image consciousness are described by Husserl in the following way:

For example, if I contemplate the picture of Raphael's theological subject hanging above my desk, the picture appears to me as a physical thing, as a thing hanging on the wall; I focus my attention on that. Then I change the direction of my contemplation and focus my attention on the image object: there then appears to me an achromatic little figure of a woman, about a foot and a half high, tinted only in black and white and surrounded by two little cherubs, considerably smaller and tinted in the same way, and so on. In normal contemplation of the picture, I live in the image consciousness. In that case, I focus my attention on something entirely different: I see the form of a sublime woman, of superhuman size, two powerful and large young angels, and so on. I also say of these that they "appear," but obviously this does not occur in the proper sense. I see the subject in the image object; the latter is what directly and genuinely appears. (*Phantasy*, 47-48; Hua XXIII, 44)

This is a standard example of depiction. Husserl also refers to some exceptional cases. For instance, when a picture depicts another picture. Husserl calls this kind of pictures the *physical images of a higher degree* [*Physische Bilder höherer Stufe*] and says that an example of these *images of images* [*Bilder von Bildern*] is a painting of a room in which a picture hangs on the wall that depicts something else (*Phantasy*, 249; Hua XXIII, 205-206). This case will be discussed in Chapter 2.4., "Depiction and theatrical performance." Before that, I will explain in more detail how Husserl describes the three objects in image consciousness and how they are related to each other.

### 2.2.1. The physical image

The physical image is a physical thing that we perceive like any other perceptual object. In the image consciousness, this is the only object that we *perceive* [*wahrgenommen*] in the strict sense. The physical thing can be the piece of canvas “with its determinate distribution of color pigments” (*Phantasy*, 23; Hua XXIII, 22), the imprinted paper of the photograph (*Phantasy*, 20; Hua XXIII, 18), or something else. When we say that “the image is warped, torn, or hangs on the wall” (*ibid*) then we can only mean the physical image. It is a part of the real world and *in itself*, that is, considered simply as physical thing, does not represent or have depictive function (Brough 1992, 243). Nevertheless, without the physical image no image consciousness can occur.<sup>52</sup>

According to Husserl, the physical image exercises the function of *awakening* the image object: “The physical image awakens [*weckt*] the mental image and this in turn presents something else, the subject” (*Phantasy*, 30; Hua XXIII, 29). He also writes that the physical image is the *substrate* or “the *image substrate* [*Bildsubstrat*] for an image in the specific sense” (*Phantasy*, 587; Hua XXIII, 492). It means that the physical image is the appropriate *instigator* of the appearance of image object. To quote Husserl:

In the case of the physical image presentation, a real object belonging to perception’s field of regard – namely, the physical image – functions as the *instigator* [*Erreger*] of the pictorial apprehension; its perception is the starting point and transit point for the development of the pictorial presentation. (*Phantasy*, 135; Hua XXIII, 123)

If we compare Husserl’s theory of image consciousness with Eugen Fink’s theory of image consciousness in *Representation and Image*, we find that Fink uses the metaphor of a “window” to describe the phenomenon of the image. Fink’s definition of the physical support or the real bearer [*der Träger*] is slightly different from Husserl. According to Fink, the real bearer is not a physical thing – the canvas, the frame of a picture, etc – but the *simple reality* [*das Schlichtwirkliche*] that *coincides* [*deckt*] with the image world [*Bildwelt*] (Fink 1966, 76). For

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<sup>52</sup> It could be phantasy then.



example, the red colour on the canvas is the “same” red colour in the image world (the red of the evening sky, for instance) (Fink 1966, 77). Although Fink makes the distinction between the real bearer and the image world, he nevertheless claims that the *entire* picture [*das ganze Bild*] is a “window” to the image world [*Bildwelt*] and that the “window” has at the same time real and unreal sides that constitute the noematic correlate of the medial act of the “image consciousness.”<sup>53</sup> It shows that Fink’s account of the image consciousness cannot be equated with Husserl’s account. In Hans Reiner Sepp’s words, it is because Fink does not speak of a modification of the act but the modification of the contents of the act and thus Fink “characterizes “perceiving a picture” (*Bildwahrnehmung*) as a “medial act,” i.e., an act whose real medium (e.g., a real piece of paper) contains an unreality (*Unwirklichkeit*), namely, the world of the image drawn on the paper” (Sepp 2010, 119).

It must be noted that Husserl also uses the term “window.” He writes: “We look through the frame, as if through a window, into the space of the image, into the image’s reality” (*Phantasy*, 50; Hua XXIII, 46). However, Husserl’s understanding of the notion of “window” deviates from that of Fink in, at least, two respects. Firstly, the frame or “window” is in the visual field, that is, belongs to the physical thing, and it does not produce a perceptual coherent whole together with the *image’s reality*, that is, with the image object (*Phantasy*, 50; Hua XXIII, 46). Secondly, the “window” or frame exercises no re-presentational function. Thus, he prefers not to use the metaphor of the “window” in describing pictorial representation:

If we apprehend the pictorially presented objects as emerging from the frame or if the frame appears to us as a window through which we see into their space (into the painted landscape, and the like), then, within this unitary connection between reality and pictoriality, there obviously is no place for the physical image thing, but only for its frame. [...] the pictorial re-presentation nevertheless finds no support in that apprehension of the frame. The frame exercises no re-presentational function. (*Phantasy*, 134; Hua XXIII, 122)

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<sup>53</sup> “Das „Fenster“ mit seiner realen und unwirklichen Seite ist das eigentliche noematische Korrelat des medialen Aktes „Bildbewußtsein“, ist also nichts anderes als das reine Bildphänomen selbst” (Fink 1966, 78).

### 2.2.2. The image object

The image object has a special status in the image consciousness since it is the only object that *appears* in the strict sense. Of course, both the physical image and the image object appear phenomenally in the sense that we are able to focus on either of these two objects and “mean either one of them objectivatively” (Phantasy, 47; Hua XXIII, 43). But, as Husserl says, in *normal* contemplation of the picture, we focus our attention on the image object and it is the image object that *directly and genuinely appears* then (Phantasy, 48; Hua XXIII, 44). Accordingly, “[t]he image object *does triumph [siegt]*, insofar as it comes to appearance” (Phantasy, 50; Hua XXIII, 46). As Brough explains, for the image object to *appear* its physical basis must *disappear*, even though we are still *emptily conscious* of the physical image (Brough 2001, 9–10). To be aware of the physical support in its “invisible presence” is needed, otherwise we would succumb to hallucination (*ibid*). Thus, there is a continuous tension and even conflict between the image object and the physical image.<sup>54</sup>

The *image subject* also remains “invisible” in image consciousness. The subject is re-presented by the image object, and is not present itself. As Husserl puts it, the relation between the image object and the subject is given through the “specific consciousness belonging to the re-presentation of what does not appear in what does appear, according to which what does appear, by virtue of certain of its intuitive properties, gives itself as if it were the other” (Phantasy, 32: Hua XXIII, 31). Accordingly, the *non-appearing* subject appears in *appearing* image object.<sup>55</sup>

Now, how does exactly the image object appear? Husserl writes: “The drawing is *flat*; the plastic form is three-dimensional” (Phantasy, 156; Hua XXIII, 138). In other words, the picture as a physical image is a two-dimensional object in which a three-dimensional object appears to us: “A three-dimensional body, with colors spread over it, does indeed appear to us in the engraving – let us say, the Emperor Maximilian on his horse, a figure appearing three-dimensionally but built up visually from shades of grey and from enclosing boundaries” (Phantasy, 21; Hua XXIII, 20). In addition, the appearance of the image object deviates from that of the depicted object;

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<sup>54</sup> About this conflict see Chapter 2.3.1.1., “Conflict between the physical image and the image object”.

<sup>55</sup> At the same time, Husserl claims that we can attend to the appearance of the *image subject* in aesthetic consciousness. See Chapter 3.2.2., “Image object appearance or the appearance of the subject”.

most often in size and colour: “In the image I do not become conscious of what the subject is with respect to color” (*Phantasy*, 156; Hua XXIII, 138). Also, in a black and white photograph, “the miniature child appearing here in disagreeably grayish-violet coloring is not the child that is meant, not the represented child” (*Phantasy*, 20; Hua XXIII, 19).

Since the image object’s appearance is grounded on the *physical* thing, it shares some of the characteristics with our experience of the physical world. Accordingly, the image object has stability, identity and public character (Brough 2005, xlv). In this way, the image object’s appearance is *intersubjectively* available; unlike phantasised images. To quote Husserl: “But in the case of a “picture,” of course, we have a physical thing present that has the function of awakening intersubjectively the same image again and again” (*Phantasy*, 578; Hua XXIII, 484). However, the experience of the image object is not identical to that of the physical image. We do not *perceive* the image object in the strict sense: it appears as *present* [*gegenwärtig*] but we do not take it to be *actual* [*wirklich*] (*Phantasy*, 43; Hua XXIII, 40). It lacks *belief* in empirical reality.

The image-object appearance is perceptual [*perzeptiv*]: insofar as it has the sensation’s sensuousness, which undergoes apprehension. It is not, however, a perceptual appearance [*wahrnehmungerscheinung*]: It lacks “belief”; it lacks the characteristic of reality. Hence there is no conflict between claimed reality and reality that is firmly established, or between two claims to reality, as in the case of an illusion; and there cannot be, since the image-object appearance is not a “normal” thing-appearance. (*Phantasy*, 584; Hua XXIII, 489-490)

Accordingly, Husserl calls the experience of the physical thing *Wahrnehmung* and that of the image object *Perzeption*. The first is an ordinary perceptual experience that involves belief in empirical reality and the latter is a unique kind of perception that occurs in the experience of an image.<sup>56</sup> Our experience of the image object lacks belief because the object does not exist. As

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<sup>56</sup> It should be noted that both terms are often translated into English as “perception” (Brough 1992, 247). See also translator’s note on page 556 in *Phantasy*. As Brough says, Husserl starts to use the term *Perzeption* after about 1912 (Brough 2005, xlvii).

Husserl says, it is *a nothing*: “It is therefore merely an “image”; however much it appears, it is *a nothing* [*ein Nichts*] (*Phantasy*, 50: Hua XXIII, 46). To quote Husserl:

[T]he images (understood as the appearing, analogically representing objects) are truly nothing. To speak of them as objects carries an obviously modified sense that refers to existences entirely different from those that the images give themselves out to be. The image object truly does not exist, which means not only that it has no existence outside my consciousness, but also that it has no existence inside my consciousness; it has no existence at all. (*Phantasy*, 23: Hua XXIII, 22)

To characterise this unique status of the image object, Husserl also calls it the “figment” [*Fiktum*] (*Phantasy*, 646: Hua XXIII, 537), “semblance” [*Schein*] (*Phantasy*, 692: Hua XXIII, 574), “phantom” [*Phantom*] (*Phantasy*, 645: Hua XXIII, 536), etc. Karl Schuhmann has rightly emphasised, in analysing Husserl’s theory, that since the image object is a mere fiction it can be called an “object” only in a modified sense. He refers to Appendix I in *Phantasy* in which Husserl writes that “the image objects are truly nothing, and to speak of them [as objects] has a modified sense that refers to existences entirely different from the existences that they present themselves as being” (*Phantasy*, 119: Hua XXIII, 110). Husserl adds that what *really* exist are only “the determinate distribution of colors on the paper” *and* a corresponding *complex of sensations* that we apprehend as the image; and also the subject if it is an existing thing (*ibid*). Thus, Schuhmann is right in saying that the image object is, *properly speaking*, not an object at all (Schuhmann 2005, 271).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> He also thinks that we should not, therefore, speak of three objects in the case of image consciousness: “In sum, it is more correct to speak, in the case of mere imagination, of just one object, namely the subject-matter this imagination is about, and correspondingly in the case of picture-consciousness of no more than two objects, each time leaving out the immediate and internal object of the act, the “immanent” or “internal” image-character, as Husserl sometimes calls it. For it is not an object at all [...]” (Schuhmann 2005, 272).

### 2.2.3. The image subject

The image subject is characterised as not appearing itself in addition to the image object's appearance in image consciousness. Nevertheless, we "see" the subject in the image.<sup>58</sup> As Husserl says, we have a new apprehending: "one lives totally in the new apprehending that grounds itself on the appearance: *in the image* one sees the *subject* (*Phantasy*, 27; Hua XXIII, 26). As noted by Warren, the image subject "saturates" or "penetrates" the apprehension of the image object (Warren 2010, 321). It is because the subject (and not the image object) is that which is *meant* when we look at a picture: "The subject is the object meant by the presentation" (*Phantasy*, 19; Hua XXIII, 18). At the same time, the subject is *absent*. It means that the depicted object does not stand in front of us perceptual objects do – the subject does not appear "itself" (*Phantasy*, 151; Hua XXIII, 136).<sup>59</sup>

It is very often claimed that, in his later manuscripts where Husserl examines the experience of non-depictive image consciousness, he abandons or reduces the subject to an optional element in image consciousness. To quote Sonesson: "First [...] Husserl took the picture subject to be an integral part of pictorial consciousness; then, it came to be seen as something added, though yet constitutive of pictoriality proper; but then, finally, it was reduced to an optional element (Sonesson 1989b, 277). But there is another interpretation of Husserl's later manuscripts. John Brough, for example, thinks that the *subject* is involved even in our experience of theatrical performances. He suggests that we should distinguish between the narrow and the broader sense of the subject. When we say that the portrait depicts a specific person, a thing or an event, then we talk about the subject in a narrow sense. And in this narrow sense, the subject is not involved in theatrical presentation. But Brough claims that the "subject matter" in a broader sense has its place in a theatrical work. Thus, "a drama may have as its theme ambition or family conflict, but one would not say that the drama "depicts" such themes, although one might say that it is "about" them" (Brough 1992, 258).

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<sup>58</sup> „In gewisser Weise können wir ja sagen, „in“ dem perzeptiven Bildobjekt, durch dasselbe hindurch, „sehen“ wir gleichsam das Bildsujet, darin stellt es sich dar“ (Hua XXXVIII, 350-351).

<sup>59</sup> However, when an actor plays himself/herself on the stage, and if we say that he/she depicts himself/herself, then the subject must appear itself and is presented "in the flesh" as any other perceptual object. I will elaborate on this case in Chapter 2.4., "Depiction and theatrical performance".

Interestingly, Brough also thinks that the distinction between the narrow sense and the broader sense of the subject can also be applied to depictions:

A play (and this is equally true of a painting or sculpture) does not have to have a subject in the narrow sense of the term, that is to say, does not have to depict a particular person, event, place, or thing that actually exists or once did exist. The work can have a "subject matter" in a broader sense. (Brough 2001, 11)

In the context of the specification of the *image subject*, it is important to understand in what respect Sartre's theory of depiction differs from Husserl's theory. Sartre's aim in *L'Imaginaire* is to describe the consciousness, and to answer to the question whether imagination is essential to consciousness or not. In the Conclusion in *L'Imaginaire*, he states, "Thus imagination, far from appearing as an accidental characteristic of consciousness, is disclosed as an essential and transcendental condition of consciousness" (Sartre 2004, 188). Sartre does not have a separate theory of image consciousness as depictive consciousness like Husserl does. However, one familiar with Husserl's theory cannot help but recognise some similarities between Husserl's and Sartre's texts. For example, Sartre writes that the photo taken in itself is a simply perceived *thing* that "appears to me as a paper rectangle of a special quality and colour, with shades and clear spots distributed in a certain way" (Sartre 2004, 19) and if it is a picture of Pierre, then Pierre appears to me as *absent* (Sartre 2004, 24), and he even uses the same example, that of Dürer's engraving "The Knight, Death and the Devil" (Sartre 2004, 20).

But there are also dissimilarities. The main aim of Sartre's theory is to clarify the relationship between the material thing and the appearing image, that is, between reality and irreality.<sup>60</sup> And if we borrow Husserl's terminology, the "image object" and the "image subject" are merged in Sartre's account of depiction. Sartre writes:

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<sup>60</sup> It is true that Sartre distinguishes *three apprehensions* in the case of depiction, but it does not necessarily follow that the last two should be understood as the examples of the apprehension of the "image object" and that of the "image subject". To quote Sartre: "We can imagine three successive stages of apprehension: photo, photo of a man standing on steps, photo of Pierre. But it also happens that the three stages occur so closely to one another as to make just one; it happens that the photo does not function as an object but gives itself immediately as an image" (Sartre 2004, 19).

I look, for example, at a portrait of Charles VIII at the Uffizi in Florence. I know that it is Charles VIII, who is dead. It is this that gives my present attitude its sense. But, on the other hand, those sinuous and sensual lips, that narrow, stubborn forehead, directly provoke in me a certain affective impression, and that impression directs itself to these lips, as they are in the picture. So these lips simultaneously have a double function: on the one hand they refer to the real lips, long since turned to dust, and derive their meaning only from them; but, on the other hand, they act directly on my sensibility, because they are a trompe-l'oeil, because the coloured spots on the picture give themselves to the eyes as a forehead, as lips. Finally *the two functions merge, and we have the imaged state*: the dead Charles VIII is there, present before us. (It is he that we see, not the picture, and yet we posit him as not being there: we have only reached him 'as imaged', 'by the intermediary' of the picture.) [My italics] (Sartre 2004, 23)

I do not want to claim that this fusion is a shortcoming of Sartre's philosophy. I only want to point out that Sartre's theory of depiction should not be read within the framework of Husserl's terminology.

In the same vein, I believe that it is not incorrect to impose Sartre's terminology of imagination and depiction upon Husserl's theory of image consciousness. In my view, Lambert Wiesing has the Sartrean reading of Husserl in this respect. In *Artificial Presence*, Wiesing gives an overview of Husserl's terminology of depiction. In the chapter "The approach based on perception," he rightly points out that there are three objects in Husserl's theory of depiction: 1) the depicting material "image carrier" [*Bildträger*], the "image object" [*Bildobjekt*] and "image subject" [*Bildsujet*] or the real object to which an image can refer to (Wiesing 2010, 18–19). Also, in the chapter "The enigmatic relation between image carrier and image object" he cites Husserl from the *Phantasy*, where Husserl writes that the physical image awakens the mental image which in turn presents the Subject (Wiesing 2010, 37). But when Wiesing starts to define Husserl's notion of the "image object" he attributes to the image object characteristics that, according to Husserl, belong to the image subject. For example, in the chapter "The approach based on perception," Wiesing claims that "The image object is what is meant by the viewer of the image; that is, it is an intentional object" (Wiesing 2010, 19). This is not correct. According to Husserl, it is the

*image subject* that is meant: “The subject is the object *meant* by the presentation” [my italics] (*Phantasy*, 19; Hua XXIII, 18). Wiesing’s claim is somehow surprising too since in the same chapter he refers to the Appendix to §11 and §20 in *Logical Investigations* in which Husserl states clearly that: “in a representation by images the represented object (the original) [*Bildsujet*] is meant, and meant by way of its image as an apparent object [*Bildobjekt*].”<sup>61</sup> Probably the lack of clear distinction between the image object and the image subject is due to Wiesing’s main aim to describe the various functions of the image object and to discuss the relationship between the physical image (image carrier) and the image object; which is the Sartrean approach to depiction.

### 2.2.3.1. The subject in image consciousness and in symbolic consciousness

The subject is definitely not optional in depictive consciousness according to Husserl. In fact, *how* we experience the subject distinguishes our experience of *images (pictures)* from that of *symbols*.<sup>62</sup> The main difference is in the way the image *functions*. As Husserl says, we have *symbolising function* and *imaging function*. The symbolising function represents the subject externally, whereas the imaging function represents it internally – we are seeing the subject *in* the image.<sup>63</sup> It follows that we do not have an experience of *seeing-in* in case of symbols. Both image consciousness and symbolic consciousness have the same three-fold structure (involving physical image, image object and image subject) and, in a certain sense, *both* point beyond themselves (*Phantasy*, 37; Hua XXIII, 34), but the *pointing beyond* is different in character. As Husserl says, the symbol points beyond to an object *foreign* to what appears internally but the image points to a *similarly* formed object, to an *analogous* object presenting itself in the image (*ibid*). More importantly, the image (and not the symbol) points to another object *through itself* [*durch sich selbst hindurch*]. As Warren summarises this, image is a presentation in a mode of *Hineinweisen* (referring-into itself) and symbol in the mode of *Hinwegweisen* (referring-beyond) (Warren 2010, 323). What follows from this is that the subject in symbolic presentation is given in a new *appearance*. Since the symbol points away from the symbol object (that is, the “image

<sup>61</sup> „Hiergegen ist zu bemerken, daß diese Auffassung den wichtigsten Punkt völlig übersieht, nämlich daß wir im bildlichen Vorstellen auf Grund des erscheinenden “Bildobjekts” das abgebildete Objekt (das “Bildsujet”) meinen” (LI, V, 125; Hua XIX/1, 436).

<sup>62</sup> The notions “sign” and “symbol” are equivalent here.

<sup>63</sup> “Die symbolisierende Funktion ist eine äusserlich vorstellende, die bildliche eine innerlich darstellende, ins Bild die Sache hineinschauende” (*Phantasy*, 89; Hua XXIII, 82)



object” in symbolic consciousness) to what is symbolised, there is a new intention involved. This symbolic intention aims at a second something, that is, “at a new appearance, with genuine representation of what is meant” (*Phantasy*, 39; Hua XXIII, 36).

Husserl also says that the symbol is supposed “to remind me of something else” (*Phantasy*, 184; Hua XXIII, 155) and, thereby, it is related to memory. In Chapter 3 in text no. 1 in *Phantasy*, Husserl talks about representations by means of *analogy* and distinguishes two cases in it: 1) images that function in an *internally representative* manner (immanent imaging) and 2) images that function in an *externally representative* manner (symbolic representation) (*Phantasy*, 38; Hua XXIII, 35).<sup>64</sup> An example of the latter case is an image of an artwork in some museum catalogues. In this case, the main aim of the image is not to awaken the internal imaging but only to *remind us of the original* [*uns erinnern an das Original*] (*ibid*). Of course, it means that we must have seen these pictures before, otherwise we would not be able to use them as *aids to memory* [*Hilfen der Erinnerung*] (*ibid*). To quote Husserl: “They do still operate pictorially, of course, but they also function as memories: They are supposed to function *associatively* and to reproduce more complete image presentation in memory” (*Phantasy*, 38; Hua XXIII, 35).<sup>65</sup>

In Appendix IX in *Phantasy*, Husserl talks about the same example, that is, an image being the image of another image. In this text, Husserl calls these images *inauthentic representations* [*uneigentliche Vorstellungen*] or imperfect depictions [*unvollkommene Abbildungen*] (*Phantasy*, 183; Hua XXIII, 154) and says that here we have external representation *in addition* to internal representation, which means that we produce for ourselves additionally another representation (another intuition) of what is properly meant. Husserl explains it in the following way:

The imaging consciousness is connected with intentions that refer to an object that is different from the object appearing in the image object and stands to it in certain characteristic relations, which, in addition, can serve to establish another representation, more direct and more authentic. (*Phantasy*, 183; Hua XXIII, 154)

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<sup>64</sup> Notice also that “Only the consciousness belonging to immanent imaging plays a role in the *aesthetic contemplation of the image*” (*Phantasy*, 39; Hua XXIII, 36).

<sup>65</sup> Lotz thinks that in this case we do not *see* anything in the pictures, but instead take them to *stand for* something else (Lotz 2007, 174).

However, in this text, Husserl is emphasising that the external representation is only optional. For example, when we look at a small advertising image of Titian's "Sacred Love" printed in a museum catalogue we can have *only* internal representation of it, that is, we immerse ourselves visually in sacred love "and do not "think" at all of Titian's picture (the original)" (*Phantasy*, 183; Hua XXIII, 154). In this case, the *subject* is the sacred love (this glorious, superterrestrial female figure, etc.). But we can also have external representation in addition to the internal one, and then the *subject* is the original Titian's painting, which is another physical image with image object and the subject.<sup>66</sup> Again, the difference is in the way the image *functions* for us.

However, the distinction between the pictorial image consciousness and symbolic consciousness is not as clear-cut as it may seem. Husserl also refers to some intermediary cases between the pictorial and symbolic consciousness, in which images function as signs. For example, only some moments in image can function symbolically, and we can steer our attention exclusively to these moments (*Phantasy*, 39; Hua XXIII, 36). Unfortunately, Husserl does not give any example of this case. In Appendix V in *Phantasy*, Husserl also examines some impure cases of image consciousness and there he even claims that image consciousness and symbolic consciousness are continuously mediated with one another (*Phantasy*, 163; Hua XXIII, 142).<sup>67</sup>

### 2.3.3.2. The subject and/or the referent

It has also been claimed that the image subject is not the *referent* and these should not be equated. In his book "Pictorial Concepts", Göran Sonesson elaborates on the question of whether we can assume that the image subject is the referent in the sense of the concrete object of the world (Sonesson 1989b, 277). In his view, Husserl is suggesting that the image subject *is* an extrapictorial referent or "the potential real-world equivalent of that which is "seen in" the picture thing, that is, of the picture object" (Sonesson 1989b, 278). Sonesson questions this view

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<sup>66</sup> A picture can have internal and external functions, as also is the case with an (ordinary) photograph.

"A photograph, when it is particularly good, re-presents a person to us. We immerse ourselves visually in the photograph. A photograph, however, can also bring to mind a person in a manner similar to that in which a sign brings to mind something signified" (*Phantasy*, 56; Hua XXIII, 52).

<sup>67</sup> More about this in the last part of Chapter 2.3.2., "Resemblance".

and claims that the extrapictorial referent must be differentiated from the image subject. Since he believes that Husserl's (pictorial) image consciousness has definitely a sign function,<sup>68</sup> he tries to compare Husserl's theory of the *three-fold* image consciousness with Peirce's theory of the sign that involves expression, content and referent. In his view, it seems that both the physical image and the image object are on the *expression* side of the sign; the image subject is similar to the *content*; and the referent is still the *referent*, and, strictly speaking, falls outside the sign (Sonesson 1989b, 281). The extrapictorial referent may be a *motive* or a *model* (if these are separate) (Sonesson 1989b, 279). In another text (from 2008), Sonesson gives a more elaborated explanation of why we need to distinguish the image subject from the referent. He claims that since the real object (in the real world) can change or stop existing but the image subject does not change accordingly, it follows that the subject of the picture has to be distinguished from the referent. He also claims that the image subject can only be characterised as a *type*:

To separate the picture object and the picture subject Husserl also offers the distinction between the palace that is seen into the picture and the real palace which is in Berlin. However, the fact that there may no longer be any palace in Berlin does not deter us from noting the difference between a palace in black and white and a real palace. Thus, the referent must be separated from the picture subject, which remains at the level of types, since it is different from the picture object simply by adding our knowledge of the nature of things in the world. (Sonesson 2008, 59)

This kind of criticism of the need to distinction between the image subject and the referent is not only made by a semiotician like Gören Sonesson. Javier Enrique Carreño Cobos also refers to the same distinction:

That the image-subject is irreducible to the image-object does not mean, however, that the image subject is something altogether separable from the image. The wife of Giocondo is an *other* encountered in actual life, but the *Sujet* of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* is a moment of image-consciousness. (Cobos 2013, 148)

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<sup>68</sup> Sonesson claims that, for Husserl, signs are always conventional, even if they are analogous, and this conventionality is extended to embrace pictorial consciousness as well (Sonesson 1989b, 279).

It seems to me that the question whether the referent should be distinguished from the subject is more relevant in the case of symbolic consciousness than in (pure) image consciousness. It is because the symbol *points away* to some other object that has its own appearance in a new presentation. In other words, in image consciousness no reference to the real world is needed (positing the depicted object is only optional). Thus, for the *seeing-in* to occur, no *referent* needs to be involved.

## 2.3. Conflicts and resemblance

### 2.3.1. Conflicts within image consciousness

In image consciousness, the *consciousness of conflict* [*Widerstreitbewusstsein*] emerges (*Phantasy*, 55; Hua XXIII, 51).<sup>69</sup> In fact, there are multiple conflicts and these are inherent in the image consciousness. In his lecture course, “Phantasy and Image Consciousness” from 1904/05, Husserl presents the idea of conflict in order to explain how the consciousness of the image object arises. In other words, it is the image object that has the *characteristic of conflict* [*Widerstreitcharakter*] (*ibid*). The image object must be in conflict with the physical image and with the image subject:

The image object as image object must be the bearer of conflict in a double sense. In one sense (a), it is in conflict with the actual perceptual present. This is the conflict between the image as image-object appearance and the image as physical image thing; (b) in the other sense, there is the conflict between the image-object appearance and the presentation of the subject entwined with it or, rather, partially coinciding with it. (*Phantasy*, 55; Hua XXIII, 51)

Thus, we have two conflicts in depictive consciousness. However, there is also a conflict involved in case of non-depictive image consciousness, and this can be called the conflict between two apperceptions. The way I understand Husserl’s theory, conflicts are necessary since image consciousness involves perceptual experience (we perceive the physical image) and in order to explain how perceptual and imaginary awareness can exist simultaneously, he needs to introduce the idea of *conflict*. Moreover, in this way he can explain why image consciousness is not illusion.

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<sup>69</sup> Husserl’s term “*Widerstreit*” has been translated differently. John Brough translates it “conflict” (Brough 1992, 244). Paolo Volonté also uses the word “conflict” (Volonté 1998, 483). But Göran Sonesson translates it “contradiction” (Sonesson 1989a, 273) and Frederik Stjernfelt prefers “contradiction” (Stjernfelt 2007, 289) or “contrast” (Stjernfelt 2007, 293).

### 2.3.1.1. Conflict between the physical image and the image object

As Brough puts it, “There is no depiction without an image-object, and an image-object is constituted only in conflict with a physical image” (Brough 1992, 245). This first kind of conflict in image consciousness can be divided into two parts: 1) the conflict between the apprehension of the physical thing and that of the image object; and 2) the conflict between the image object and the actual surrounding of the physical image (Brough 1992, 246).<sup>70</sup> The latter means simply that the image object has no unity with the things outside the picture’s frame (*Phantasy*, 486: Hua XXIII, 413). When we look at a painting of landscape hanging on the wall of a living room, for example, then the landscape appears to us in its own time and space, and does not include any things from the living room surrounding the painting: the chairs, tables, tapestry, etc. The appearance of the image object has the characteristic of unreality and this conflicts with the actual present, that is, with the perception of the surroundings (*Phantasy*, 51; Hua XXIII, 47). I will not go into further details on this aspect of the first kind of conflict. Instead, I will focus on the appearances and the conflicting *apprehensions* of the physical thing and the image object; which brings us back to the content-apprehension-schema (see Chapter 1.1.3.).

The image object and the physical image have the same apprehension contents. As Husserl says, “The same visual sensations are interpreted as points and lines on paper *and* as appearing plastic form” (*Phantasy*, 48; Hua XXIII, 44). Husserl also says that the image object apprehension displaces the physical object apprehension but it only means that the two apprehensions cannot make two *appearances* [*Erscheinungen*] stand out simultaneously (*Phantasy*, 49; Hua XXIII, 45). The two objectivities cannot appear at the same time (only the image object appears in image consciousness). However, two apprehensions are still there and are in conflict.

A second apprehension – the paper apprehension – is also there in a certain way, connected with the continuously united *apprehension pertaining to our field of regard*; it is excited by it. However, while the rest of the field of regard enters into appearance, the paper apprehension itself is not an appearance, since it has been deprived of apprehension

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<sup>70</sup> In the “Translator’s Introduction” to *Phantasy*, Brough separates these aspects into two kinds of conflicts in image consciousness (Brough 1992, xlviii).

contents. Its apprehension contents now function as the apprehension contents of the image object. And yet it *belongs* to these apprehension contents: in short, there is *conflict*. (*Phantasy*, 49-50: Hua XXIII, 46)

Now, as Brough explains it, the two apprehensions can both still be there because they are different kind of apprehensions: “two competing *perceptual* apprehensions cannot exist simultaneously, but two apprehensions, each of a different kind, could” (Brough 1992, 250). In depictive consciousness, the two apprehensions are not both perceptual apprehensions, at least not in the same way (*ibid*). The image object apprehension is not a normal perceptual apprehension since it lacks belief.<sup>71</sup> If both apprehensions were (normal) perceptual apprehensions, they could not stay in conflict and one of them would have to be cancelled. This is exactly what takes place in the case of illusion.<sup>72</sup>

Husserl’s favourite example of illusion is about the mannequin waxwork. Here two apprehensions are involved: we take it either as a human being or a mannequin. But we cannot have both apprehensions at the same time, since we have two *positing* apprehensions that “quarrel”:

A wax figure in the waxworks is an illusion (perfection of execution presupposed, of course). Here two *perceptions*, or, correlatively, two perceptual objects, quarrel, each of which is posited or, respectively, has its positing quality, the one the quality of being convincing, the other the quality of striking one as strange. (*Phantasy*, 582: Hua XXIII, 487)

In this case, *positing disagrees with positing* (*Phantasy*, 576: Hua XXIII, 483). Only if one of the apprehensions is not positing – it is empty semblance (“but not one that is illusory in the customary sense”) – then it does not provide a *counterpossibility* [*Gegenmöglichkeit*] and is not

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<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 2.2.2., “The image object”.

<sup>72</sup> In Cobos’s view, “Husserl does not give equal consideration to the many different kinds of images, but mainly focuses on realistic depictions, since such images arguably push image consciousness to the boundary it shares with illusory perception” (Cobos 2013, 147).

annulled (*ibid*).<sup>73</sup> In depictive consciousness, the conflict is inherent and, as Brough says, plays a *constructive* constitutive role (Brough 1992, 251). The conflict in sensory illusion is, however, *destructive* conflict for the outcome is destruction or nullification of one of the positing perceptions (Brough 1992, 249). Sensory illusion is not depiction – it is *deception (ibid)*.

In the case of sensory illusion, when apprehensions enter into conflict with one another, we eliminate the apprehension that is not consistent with the world around us. Thus, our motivation to choose one of the apprehensions follows, as Paolo Volonté writes, the *principle of consistency* (Volonté 1998, 478). Also, Nicolas de Warren writes that: “perceptual illusions are embedded in the motivational nexus of perceptual experience and situated within the coherence or “normality” of the world” (Warren 2010, 328).<sup>74</sup> We apprehend the wax figure to be a human being because it seems to situate perfectly with its (perceptual) surroundings, and we change the apprehension if discrepancies occur. To quote Husserl:

The other perception coincides with the original perception through the partial identity of [some] perceptual moments, though conflicting with it with respect to others, in such a way that the intermingling of two incompatible perceptual objects that are perceptible <only> alternately results. In this situation, one object preserves its experiential thesis by means of confirmation from actual experiences of its surroundings. The other object, the illusory object, has modified its original thesis in the mode of cancellation, and had to modify it (the cancellation [was] originally motivated). (*Phantasy*, 617; Hua XXIII, 516)

Now, the appearing image object in image consciousness has no *consistency* with the perceptual world since it appears in its own space and time: “the genuine figment (the wax figure) directly appears in the unity of reality, while the image does not genuinely “appear” in that unity but in its own space, which in itself has no direct relation to real space (*Phantasy*, 570; Hua XXIII,

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<sup>73</sup> “We must separate the apprehension of an image object and the consciousness of a perceptual illusion. The former is nonpositing, the latter positing.” (*Phantasy*, 563; Hua XXIII, 474)

<sup>74</sup> Warren adds that hallucinations are continuous with perceptual consciousness (Warren 2010, 327).



480). It follows that the conflict in image consciousness is not similar to the conflict in illusion, and image consciousness is not sensory illusion (or illusion in the ordinary sense).<sup>75</sup>

### 2.3.1.2. Conflict between the image object and the image subject

Image consciousness occurs when image object is in conflict with the physical image but also with the image subject. This conflict is best explained in the Appendix VII in *Phantasy*, in which Husserl writes that there are two sorts of *empirical* conflicts: 1) between appearing image object and the physical object, and 2) what appears and what is demanded empirically (*Phantasy*, 171; Hua XXIII, 146).<sup>76</sup> The latter conflict is best illustrated by a black and white photograph of some people: the human beings appear as grey (in the image object) but there are no such human beings in reality (*ibid*). However, the conflict need not be so radical. The appearing image may look very similar to real life objects but differ only in size, for example. What is important is that some discrepancy must occur and the conflict must be there, otherwise no depictive consciousness would take place and we would have perception:

If the image-object appearance were really to be completely like the subject, not only as momentary appearance but as temporally continuous appearance, we would have normal perception and no consciousness of conflict, no image-object appearance. (*Phantasy*, 155; Hua XXIII, 138)

In Appendix VII in *Phantasy*, Husserl also mentions a situation in which the object appears but “shows properties that conflict with what we know and with our knowledge of what holds

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<sup>75</sup> It is another question, of course, whether the appearance “in its own space” does not lead to the cancellation of image apprehension altogether. This criticism is pointed out by Paolo Volonté:

“According to Husserl, the distinction between illusion and image-consciousness is that “the genuine figment makes its appearance within the unity of reality itself (the wax-model) whereas an image does not properly ‘appear’ in it, but rather in a space of its own”, i.e., in the space of neutrality. This is not sufficient explanation, however. In itself, “appearing in a space of its own” is a good reason for cancelling out the imaginative apprehension, not for accepting it. The imaginative apprehension can impose itself only insofar as the neutrality-modification can resolve the conflict between imaginative space and perceptual space. From a functional point of view, image-consciousness as neutrality-modification acts as a guarantee of the uniformity of experience. The picture-object, with its own space, would stand in the way of this uniformity” (Volonté 1998, 481).

<sup>76</sup> Some commentators call only the second one, that is, the conflict between the image object and the image subject, *empirical* conflict. Cf (Brough 1992, 252) (Bernet, Kern, and Marbach 1993, 152)

universally, with our empirical laws” (*Phantasy*, 172; Hua XXIII, 147). Since he emphasises here our *knowledge* that defines expectations (that are not fulfilled), he calls it a *logically (intellectually) mediated semblance* or appearance [*ein logisch (intellektuell) vermittelter Schein*] and not a (merely) sensuous semblance (*ibid*). Frederik Stjernfelt thinks that Husserl here probably refers to fallacious perceptions and that by introducing this option Husserl refines the second kind of conflict, that is, the conflict between the image object and the image subject<sup>77</sup>. However, if we take that our knowledge about the depicted subject introduces the *referent* to our pictorial experience, we could call the latter conflict a conflict “between a subject as it appears in an image and the subject as it would or does appear in an actual perception” (Brough 2005, xlviii). In any case, depictive image consciousness must contain conflicts and these are inherent in it. Whether *non-depictive* image consciousness involves conflicts as well is the topic of the next chapter.

### 2.3.1.3. Conflict between two apperceptions

Around the same time that Husserl starts to have doubts whether image consciousness must necessarily be depictive, he redefines the role of conflicts in image consciousness too. In 1912, he wrote: “I must be on guard against generalizing improperly: as if image and conflict were necessarily connected” (*Phantasy*, 589; Hua XXIII, 494). In this text, however, he still holds the view that conflict is involved when image consciousness is grounded on pictures as physical objects, that is, when we look at paintings, drawings, photographs, etc.:

Hence, only when an image consciousness is grounded in a perceptual nexus (when a perception stands precisely in a perceptual nexus but is not inserted into it harmoniously), or likewise when an image consciousness is inserted into a memorial nexus, do we have image consciousness connected with conflict: all of which would have to be grasped with more precision (*Phantasy*, 588; Hua XXIII, 494).

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<sup>77</sup> “[...] and a third contrast with our knowledge about the type of object depicted so that the object depicted becomes self-contradictory, a so-called logically mediated skin. Husserl does not provide examples on the latter, but it must be taken to refer to fallacious perceptions like the well-known ‘impossible objects’ in psychology of perception. Husserl’s idea here seems to be to refine the second contrast, that between pictorial object and sujet, be pointing out different possibilities of the structure of this contrast” (Stjernfelt 2007, 464).

A more radical change takes place some years later. In 1918, Husserl writes that we have only *potential* conflict in the case of pictures and *actual* conflict in the case of theatrical performances:

One will have to distinguish between *cases of actual conflict* [*wirkliche Widerstreits*], as in theatrical presentations, and cases of *potential conflict* [*potentielle Widerstreits*] that depend on intentions aimed at one's surroundings, intentions that belong to the intuitive object but that must first be "unfolded" in order to lead to actual conflicts (*Phantasy*, 612; Hua XXIII, 510).

It means that when we look at a picture on the wall we experience the conflict only if our intentions first aim at the (physical) surroundings and then to the image space which is, thereby, intended mediately *in* the intentions aimed at the (physical) surroundings (*Phantasy*, 612; Hua XXIII, 510). In Stjernfelt's view, Husserl wants to say here that the conflict needs not be *explicit* and "may lie as a possibility in the relation of the picture to its context" (Stjernfelt 2007, 297). However, I agree with Christian Ferencz-Flatz that, even now, conflicts "remain essential for an image to be an image and not an illusion" (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 487). In the following, I want to focus on the conflict within non-depictive image consciousness that is different in character from the conflicts described previously in connection to depictive image consciousness.

As Husserl writes, we experience *actual* conflict in the case of theatrical performance (*Phantasy*, 612; Hua XXIII, 510) but the conflict is nevertheless only *passive* and *not actively* carried out (*Phantasy*, 618; Hua XXIII, 516). It is because we "know" from the moment we start to see a theatrical performance that this is only a play. In Husserl's words, we do not begin with a normal perception. Rather, "we have from the beginning only the artistic "image"" (*Phantasy*, 618; Hua XXIII, 516), and what is *real* is continuously *concealed* [*verdeckt*] (*ibid*). However, the "concealment" here is in a specific sense for there is still consciousness of reality, although in a nonintuitive manner. It means that the actors and objects we see on the stage are still given to us as actual [*wirklich*]. Husserl explains this with an example of the pieces of furniture that we see on the stage during the play. He says that these are "just as much actual [*wirkliche*] pieces of

furniture as they are figments in the image world [*Fikta in der Bildwelt*]” (*Phantasy*, 619; Hua XXIII, 518). Accordingly, there is a conflict:

Hence even they [pieces of phantasy furniture] are “semblance” and have their conflict with actual reality, to which the actual pieces of furniture belong. For pieces of furniture are objects of use and, standing in the room, have their express function as objects of use. The room, however, is a figment presented by means of conflict; the use to which the furnishings are subject and for which they are there is annulled by conflict. (*Phantasy*, 619; Hua XXIII, 518)

Thus, we might say, following Brough’s interpretation, that the conflict is between the appearing *image*<sup>78</sup> and perceptual background in the case of theatrical performance (Brough 1992, 259). In other words, we are aware of the real pieces of furniture but only as background. In Brough’s words, image objects “are in conflict with the physical things that present them” (*ibid*).

In another text (written in 1912), Husserl writes that the individual image objects in the case of the theatre play (“king,” “villain,” “hero,” and so on) exist harmoniously in themselves. Consequently, they are “annulled intrinsically and not only by being in conflict with the space of the theatre” (*Phantasy*, 585; Hua XXIII, 490). In fact, Husserl believes that this intrinsic annulment brings conflict into the image object itself [*in das Bildobjekt selbst einen Widerstreit hineinzubringen*] (*ibid*). Göran Sonesson criticises Husserl’s view and claims that there is no image object cancelled either by itself or by the environment in theatrical performance. He believes that if we stand by Husserl’s own criteria, there cannot be any image object in the experience of theatrical performance because it is “the actor who is both most directly perceived, and who is consistent with the most large-scale environment” (Sonesson 1989b, 275). In addition, Sonesson thinks that we cannot say that the king is “seen-in” the actor *in terms of perceptual experience* (*ibid*). I think this is probably one of the reasons why he has difficulties understanding the occurrence of image object – he does not understand that the *perceptual* experience of the image object is not a normal perceptual experience (it is “perceptive”

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<sup>78</sup> Husserl also calls it the “artistic “image”” [*das künstlerische "Bild"*], “pure perceptual figment” [*ein reines perzeptives Fiktum*] or “semblance” [*Schein*] (*Phantasy*, 617-620; Hua XXIII, 515-518).

experience). At the same time, I admit that it is difficult to understand what exactly is meant by the idea that “intrinsic annulment brings conflict into the image object itself” (for what are the poles *in between* which the conflict takes place?).

At this juncture, I want to refer to Javier Enrique Carreño Cobos’s article in which he claims that the conflict in theatrical performance is not on the level of what is genuinely and directly intuited (as in depiction) but on the level of what is *apperceived* (Cobos 2013, 156). He quotes Husserl’s text no. 18 in *Phantasy* in which Husserl states that in theatrical performance: “certain things show themselves to be suited to excite a double apperception [*eine doppelte Apperzeption*]; specifically, a double perceptual apperception” (*Phantasy*, 619; Hua XXIII, 517). Husserl explains it by saying that we have two perceptual modes of appearances that are in conflict but in such a way that the stock of what is genuinely perceived is common for both perceptions but the stock of what is not genuinely perceived is the ground for the conflict relationship (*ibid*). I agree with Cobos that we can understand it in this way: that in theatrical performance we “see” something more than what is given to us in genuine perception. Hence the term “apperception” by Husserl, that is, “the perceptually co-intended but not intuitively given, unseen sides of things” (Cobos 2013, 156).<sup>79</sup> We may say that theatrical performance requires us to *imagine* what is not seen (Cobos 2013, 158) or we may think that some other kind of experience is involved. In any case, the conflict is involved even in the experience of theatrical performances, and is essential to all experiences in which *images* (or imagination) are involved. To quote Cobos:

For Husserl, it is only natural that the starting point in our engagement with images should be one of slight disorientation: not only depictions but in fact all artistic images are interlaced with conflict. What the image presents is in conflict with the actual perceptual presentation of things in actual space. What happens in an artwork *is not really happening at all*, and this can be disquieting. (Cobos 2013, 155)

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<sup>79</sup>But I do not agree with Cobos that, thereby, phantasy objects in the experience of theatrical performance are given *nonintuitively*. What we could say at most is that only some parts of the phantasy object are nonintuitively given (in the same way as we say that the experience of perceptual object involves nonintuitive sides), and these parts enter into conflict with (nonintuitively given) actual reality. (See also Chapter 1.2.3., “Immanent imagination”).

### 2.3.2. Resemblance

As said previously, there are many kinds of conflicts in image consciousness, and when it comes to depictive consciousness Husserl is mostly interested in how the image object is in conflict with the physical image and with the image subject. However, the image must also bear *resemblance* to what is depicted otherwise it would be hard to *see* something *in* the picture. If we take the three-fold structure of image consciousness as our basis, the first thing we have to specify is that the resemblance can only occur between the image object and the image subject, and *not* between the physical image and the image subject. To quote Husserl:

If we speak of the image in this way, and if we say in criticism that the image fails, that it resembles the original only in this or that respect, or if we say that it resembles it perfectly, then naturally we do not mean the physical image, the thing that lies there on the table or hangs on the wall. (Phantasy, 20; Hua XXIII, 19)

As Christian Lotz shows, the fact that Husserl does not take the physical image as grounds for the resemblance of what is depicted differentiates Husserl's theory remarkably from other theories of depiction, especially from the linguistic theories of pictures. Lotz thinks that Nelson Goodman, for instance, conceives pictures as if they were *only* material signs, and if we follow this idea then we, of course, conclude that the word "table" has no similarity with real tables. But, as Lotz points out, "Goodman's thesis is not convincing, insofar as – spoken in Husserlian language – he reduces pictures to what Husserl calls "picture things," and in so doing Goodman overlooks the phenomenon of "seeing-in" and therefore cannot account for the visuality in its own terms" (Lotz 2007, 177).

The second important characteristic of resemblance in Husserl's theory is that the image object and the image subject cannot have complete likeness or overlap. To quote Husserl: "If the image-object appearance were really to be completely like the subject, not only as momentary appearance but as temporally continuous appearance, we would have normal perception and no consciousness of conflict, no image-object appearance" (Phantasy, 155; Hua XXIII, 138). Therefore it is not complete likeness but resemblance that belongs to the image consciousness

(Phantasy, 156; Hua XXIII, 138). I agree with Nicolas de Warren that it is only as an ideal that we can speak of a complete overlap between the image object and the image subject, and that this ideal is, in fact, a necessary *impossibility* (Warren 2010, 324). It means that in order to have image consciousness, both *resemblance* and *conflict* or difference must be involved. As Warren puts it, “If we could behold a perfect image, we would paradoxically no longer be conscious of a difference between image object and image-subject, and consequently, we could no longer behold an image of something” (Warren 2010, 324).<sup>80</sup>

The appearing image object must not and cannot resemble the image subject in every aspect but, in order for depiction to take place, some features of the image object’s appearance and the image subject must be in common. According to Husserl, the *colour* and *size* of the image object do not necessarily have to resemble the depicted subject but the *plastic form* must. Husserl explains this in the following way:

Although I *see* the image (the photograph) as grey, the subject does not appear as colored. In the image I do not become conscious of what the subject is with respect to color. On the other hand, I do “see” the plastic form in the image. What constitutes the difference? I see the shades of grey in their different levels of brightness as well as the differences in the “flat surface.” I sense grey and something flat and interpret the plastic appearance in them. (*Phantasy*, 156; Hua XXIII, 138-139)

For the plastic form to come forward, it is sometimes enough to draw the outline. For example, the outline of someone’s profile in a drawing might be the minimal requirement for the drawing to *depict* the person (Brough 1992, 254). To quote Husserl: “A drawing that suggests only outlines can give them in perfect resemblance, and thus with respect to this one moment furnish a perfect consciousness of internal imaging” (*Phantasy*, 61; Hua XXIII, 56).

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<sup>80</sup> Complete likeness or resemblance is impossible not only in paintings and drawings but also in photographs: “All images, photographs included, replicate and at the same time distort the appearances of things they depict and therefore resemblance never amounts to “complete likeness” (PICM 156). One sees in the image object only some of the determinations of the image subject” (Biceaga 2010, 88).

Husserl also discusses the *degree* of resemblance in Appendix V in *Phantasy*. He starts with a distinction between two cases of image presentation [*Bildvorstellung*]: 1) the subject is represented internally in the image with respect to *analogical* moments, or 2) the image presentation is pointing beyond the image by means of *nonanalogical* moments (*Phantasy*, 161; Hua XXIII, 141). When we talk about *resemblance*, we mean the analogical moments. Husserl claims that in genuine or pure image consciousness, “the subject intentions and the image-object intentions *coincide* [*decken*] with respect to the analogizing aspects” (*Phantasy*, 162; Hua XXIII, 142). In the “impure” [“*unreine*”] image consciousness, the exhibiting [*Darstellung*] of the subject in the image object is impure for there is only a partial coinciding of the two intentions (*Phantasy*, 164; Hua XXIII, 143). Thus, Husserl concludes that the more impure the exhibiting of the subject is, the more the image consciousness changes into symbolic consciousness in which “what appears “recalls to mind” something else resembling it in this and that respect” (*Phantasy*, 163; Hua XXIII, 142). He even thinks that image consciousness and symbolic consciousness are therefore continuously mediated with one another (*ibid*). An example of the “impure” image consciousness is a child’s drawing of a human being:

A rough silhouette can still be sensed as an image, and indeed quite purely if we concentrate our interest precisely on what comes to presentation there. If our interest goes further than that, then “memory” no doubt predominates. If, however, the silhouette deviates greatly, as it might in a child’s drawing of a human being, then the image *means* a human being – we know this, we are reminded of a human being and know that the image is *supposed* to represent a human being – but for all that we no longer see a human being in the drawing. Or perhaps just a little. (*Phantasy*, 163; Hua XXIII, 142)

Sonesson thinks that in Appendix V Husserl is making the distinction between genuine pictorial consciousness (picture) and *analogous signs*, and that the examples of silhouettes and children’s drawings are intermediary cases between the two (between picture and sign) (Sonesson 1989b, 276). He finds it difficult to understand the *intermediary cases* because the problem with these drawings seems to be that they do not adequately render three-dimensional space, which is necessary for the image object to occur, and, thus, it seems that they are having and not having an image object (*ibid*). In my view, what is problematic in Appendix V is, however, the



description of the genuine or *pure* image consciousness. Here, Husserl claims that in pure image consciousness we have representation of the subject in the image in traits that are *perfectly like* the traits of the subject (*Phantasy*, 163; Hua XXIII, 142). This contradicts Husserl's claim that there cannot be perfect overlap between the image object and the image subject. In my view, there are two ways to answer this appearance contradiction. First, Husserl seems to suggest that only these moments of the image that deviate from and do not fit the subject are in conflict with the subject (*Phantasy*, 32; Hua XXIII, 30-31). In other words, the perfect likeness is only in analogous moments and the difference or conflict is in non-analogical moments. However, Husserl also understands that this view is not quite satisfactory. For example, it remains unclear how the subject exhibits itself in these non-determining moments of the image object. Also, he believes that only these moments that do fit the subject produce an *image consciousness* (*Phantasy*, 32; Hua XXIII, 31). Thus, non-analogical moments have no depictive function, and it remains unclear how their role, that is, being in conflict with the subject, can be essential to image consciousness.

Another way to understand the *perfect likeness*, would be to say that the "likeness" means not "identity" and that the image object and the image subject still remains different *objects*:

In the case of a perfect portrait that perfectly presents the person with respect to all of his moments (all that can possibly be distinctive traits), indeed, even in a portrait that does this in a most unsatisfactory way, it feels to us as if the person were there himself. The person himself, however, belongs to a nexus different from that of the image object. The actual person moves, speaks, and so on; the picture person is a motionless, mute figure. (*Phantasy*, 33; Hua XXIII, 32)

Perhaps the case of perfect-likeness-image should just be categorised under the ideal and, at the same time, *impossibility* case (as Warren calls it).

## 2.4. Depiction and theatrical performance

As stated in Chapter 2.3.3., “The image subject”, the depicted subject in depiction must be absent and not perceived the same way we perceive physical objects around us. In text no. 18/b in *Phantasy*, Husserl claims that *depiction* might also be involved in the case of theatrical play; and he gives an example of an actor playing a real-life person on the stage (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515). I want show in the following that there is one case which challenges the view that depiction is involved when a real-life person is played by an actor. When an actor creates an image of himself/herself on the stage, it is hard to see the difference between perception and depiction, for in this case, what is depicted is perceived: the depicted person stands in front of us and he or she is posited as actual and presented “in person”, “in the flesh”. I will also show that Husserl’s example of imagining the appearing image to be the appearance of a perceptual object will not answer the question of how to prevent depiction from collapsing into perception.

### 2.4.1. The depicted actor

Image consciousness is depiction when an image object *depicts* another object, the image subject. The image object and the image subject must be different but also in conflict because if no conflict occurred, we would have perception – what we see would not be an image of the object but the object itself. Moreover, the image subject does not appear in the proper sense – it remains *absent*. As explained by John Brough: “I may be conscious of the subject in the image, but it remains absent” (Brough 2005, xlvi). Husserl believes that actors also create *images*. Thus we can say that we have image consciousness when we are watching a play. To understand how the actor creates an image in a theatre play, I will first examine the image consciousness of seeing actors in movies.

John Brough, in his article “Showing and Seeing: Film as Phenomenology”, uses Husserl’s theory of image consciousness to analyse movies (Brough 2011). One of his examples is of Woody Allen’s movie, “The Purple Rose of Cairo”, which, according to Brough, reveals the essential structures of our experience of images. The three moments of Husserl’s theory of image consciousness are described by Brough as follows: *the physical object* is the image’s physical

support, such as the projector and film stock; the characters we see on the screen are *the image object* and the subject of the image, what it is about, is *the image subject* (Brough 2011, 198).

The same description can easily be applied to explain the cinematographic experience of an actor playing himself/herself. For example, in the movie “Ocean’s Twelve” (2004) one of the characters in the movie, called Tess, who is played by the actress Julia Roberts, starts to play Julia Roberts in one of the scenes in the movie. According to Husserl’s theory of image consciousness, when Julia Roberts plays Tess then an image of a woman appears to us and we take this to be an image of Tess. The *image object* is the appearing image of a woman and the *image subject* is Tess. Now, when Tess starts to play Julia Roberts, the pictorial presentation becomes more complex. In this case, Tess *depicts* Julia Roberts. I believe that this situation is identical to the case in which an image depicts another image. Husserl calls this kind of pictures the physical images of a *higher* degree [*Physische Bilder höherer Stufe*] (*Phantasy*, 249; Hua XXIII, 205) and says that an example of these *images of images* [Bilder von Bildern] is a painting of a room in which a picture hangs on the wall that depicts something else.<sup>81</sup> Cornelis de Baellieur’s painting, “Interior of a Collector’s Gallery of Paintings” (1637) is an excellent example of this. It must be noted that this *pictorial presentation of a pictorial presentation*, what we can also call the second degree depiction, does not always occur when an actor plays himself/herself. In the same scene from the “Ocean’s Twelve” Tess meets Bruce Willis who is played by the real actor, Bruce Willis. His role in the movie is to play himself *only*, and therefore the depiction in this case is of the *first* degree.

The scenes in which an actor plays himself/herself, in the first or second degree depiction, raise the question of whether we are compelled to say that, in these cases, we *perceive* the image subject (the actor). I want to claim that the image subject is not perceived in the cinematographic images even though we can posit the depicted person as actual. But we do perceive him/her in theatrical presentations in which the actor plays himself/herself. The reason is that, in this case, the person himself/herself appears “in person” or “in the flesh” [*Leibhaftigkeit*]. In order to show

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<sup>81</sup> Robert Hopkins, for example, calls it the nested seeing-in – Rubens’ painting, “Henry IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de Medici”, depicts another picture which is the portrait of Marie de Medici. Hopkins believes that nested seeing-in is a special case of tiered seeing-in because in this case we see in a picture a representation that is itself depiction (Hopkins 2008, 150).

this, I will first explain how the depicted person can be posited as actual or existing in a non-positing (fictional) play; and then what is needed for the person to fully appear in perception.

#### **2.4.2. The posited image subject in non-positional depiction**

In a text written in 1921-1924 in *Phantasy*, Husserl explains the difference between perception and phantasy in respect to positionality. He says that perception is a positional experience and phantasy is not, since positional experience is an experience of consciousness “in which the Ego accepts something, in which a belief is involved” (*Phantasy*, 696; Hua XIII, 578). But the belief in phantasy experience is not actual belief: it is *as if* one were believing. It follows that perceptual objects are given positionally but purely imagining acts as *pure phantasy* “are free from all positionality with respect to what is phantasised” (*Phantasy*, 696; Hua XIII, 578).<sup>82</sup>

Depiction, however, is not *pure phantasy* and it can be either positing or non-positing (*Phantasy*, 564; Hua XXIII, 475). It is clear that the *physical object* in the image consciousness is definitely posited because it is the only “object” in the image consciousness that we perceive in the strict sense. The physical object belongs to the real world and not to the image world; we perceive it the same way as we perceive any other (material) objects in our real world. The appearing image, on the other hand, is *not* posited because it belongs to the image world (the fictional world). More precisely, the image object is present to us neither as existing nor as not existing, nor in any other positional modality. Therefore, what can be either posited or non-positing is the *image subject*.<sup>83</sup>

Husserl says that a portrait can be of an imaginary person as well as of an actual person. The former is non-positing depiction, the latter positing depiction. The same applies to cinematographic images – documentaries are positing depictions but fictional movies (drama,

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<sup>82</sup> Note that positionality does not mean an actual positing act: “*Positionality* therefore does not signify the presence or the effecting of an actual position; it only expresses a certain potentiality for the effecting of actional positing doxic acts” (*Ideas I*, 272; Hua III/1, 261).

<sup>83</sup> I believe that the possibility of having either positing or non-positing depiction is an important aspect of pictorial experience. Unfortunately, it has not been presented in many texts that discuss Husserl’s theory of phantasy and image consciousness. For instance, Jitendranath Mohanty says that Husserl’s picture-consciousness is “non-positional founded on a positional perception of the picturetaking” (Mohanty 2008, 316).

road movies) are not. The movie “Ocean’s Twelve” is therefore *non-positing depiction*. We watch the movie “Ocean’s Twelve” as any ordinary fiction: we know that the movie is a fictional world, it has its own rules, its own storyline created by the scriptwriter, etc. It also means that we do not posit fictional characters like Tess (played by Julia Roberts) or Ocean (played by George Clooney). However, in the scene in which real-life actors are depicted, we *posit* the depicted subjects. Therefore, we can say that Julia Roberts and Bruce Willis as the image subjects in the movie are posited and we have an experience in which we posit the image subject in a non-positional movie.

Also, the depiction of Julia Roberts is a positional depiction, since we know that Julia Roberts exists.<sup>84</sup> As Husserl explains it, the image subject can be given as existing only by a shift into a nexus of (actual) experience [*Erfahrungszusammenhang*] (*Phantasy*, 564; Hua XIII, 475). Another way to explain it would be to say that the person depicted in an image is associated through a *synthesis of identification* with the real-life person. We posit the depicted subject because we identify the depicted object and the object of (our non-depictive) experience as one and the same object (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 490).

### 2.4.3. Theatrical performance

As explained previously, the movie “Ocean’s Twelve” is a non-positing depiction in which some of the depicted objects are posited. Now, if the movie were performed on a theatre stage, it would still be a fictional world that we did not posit, and the real-life persons depicted in the play would be posited. Husserl believes that, in most cases, when an actor plays somebody he creates an image – an image of some tragic event or an image of a character in the play – but the image here is only an *image of* [*Bild von*] and not a *depiction of* [*Abbild von*] something (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515). As Husserl puts it, “The actor’s presentation is not a presentation in the sense in which we say of an image object that an image subject is presented in it”; and he adds, “Neither the actor nor the image that is his performance for us is an image object in which

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<sup>84</sup> One could also say that this knowledge is a motivation for positing the depicted object. If we know that the depicted object does not exist, we do not even *potentially* have “the effecting of an actual position” (*Ideas* I, 272; Hua III/1, 261).

another object, an actual or even fictive image subject, is depicted” (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515). However, Husserl admits that depiction might be involved in the theatre play as well. It happens when the actor plays a real-life person:

If Wallenstein or Richard III is presented on stage, depictive presentations [*abbildliche Darstellungen*] are surely involved, although the extent to which this depictiveness has an aesthetic function itself is a question we will have to consider. Certainly depictiveness is not the primary concern; rather, it is a matter of imaging in the sense of perceptual phantasy understood as immediate imagination. In the case of a domestic comedy or drama, depiction is obviously omitted. (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 515)

Thus, Husserl introduces two ideas about theatrical performances which are necessary to understand depictions. On the one hand, Husserl says that when we see an actor playing somebody, we do not take this to be depiction anymore, although we can say that an actor creates an *image of* somebody. This image created by an actor is non-positional, it belongs to the fictional world and we do not take this to be real. On the other hand, an actor *can* depict someone from the real world which means that depiction is involved in theatrical performance as well. If we were to see the play “Ocean’s Twelve” on a theatre stage, we could say that Julia Roberts was creating an image of some fictional story of which Tess was part. At the same time, the image would depict Julia Roberts, and, one could argue that, the way the actress Julia Roberts appeared to us would be *exactly* the same manner as in perception.

The co-presence of the fictional and real world is already described by Husserl in his early theory of depictive consciousness. But here the conflict is of a different kind. When an actor who is playing a fictional character suddenly starts to play himself/herself, then we feel that the “real” person does not fit into the fictional world of the play and we experience a conflict between the fictional and the real world. It is usually an unexpected experience as well. There is definitely less surprise involved when we watch a movie or a theatre play of which we know that an actor is going to play himself/herself (although the conflict is no less present for that reason). Take for example the movie “Being John Malkovich” (1999). There are also theatre plays that are written for a particular actor with the purpose of him/her playing himself/herself in the play. For

example, “The Last Kiss of Peeter Volkonski” in which Peeter Volkonski plays himself.<sup>85</sup> Even in this case, we experience a conflict between the fictional and real world since the other actor in the play, Laura Peterson, is not playing herself. Now, despite the conflict one could argue that we do not have an experience of depiction when we watch “The Last Kiss of Peeter Volkonski.” According to Husserl, the depicted subject must be absent but Peeter Volkonski is not absent when he is played by himself.

It is very often the case that when actors play themselves on the stage the audience cannot fully get into the fictional world; and this could be one of the reasons why we are more inclined to have the experience of perception instead of depiction. The reference to the real (perceptual) world is always present in a dominant way. Take for instance the Tectonic Theater Project play “The Laramie Project”. The play is a collection of interviews with the citizens of Laramie in Wyoming where a gay student, Matthew Shepard, was murdered in November 1998. The actors were the interviewers of the people and thereby became some of the characters of the play. As a result, the actors played themselves.<sup>86</sup> The feeling of the *presence of reality* is even stronger when actors are telling the stories of what happened to them (by playing themselves onstage). For instance, when actor Tommy Taylor performs a story that happened to him at G20 Toronto, in the play “You Should Have Stayed Home”, or actor Ravi Jain and his mother tell true stories about themselves in “Brim Full of Asha” (Wheeler 2013). In some plays, there is nothing fictional left. Mike Tyson’s one-man show “Mike Tyson: Undisputed Truth” on Broadway (2013) is nothing but Mike Tyson being on-stage talking about his own life. It is hard to see how we could experience this as depiction. We do not only posit Mike Tyson as existing but we also actually intuit him as present and appearing “in person”.

#### **2.4.4. The image subject appearing “in person”**

According to Husserl, perception is an experience in which we are conscious of the perceived object in the originary mode [*Ursprungsmodus*], in the characteristic of being *actual*, and in the mode of primal actuality “in person” [*leibhaftigen Urwirklichkeit*] (Phantasy, 601; Hua XXIII,

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<sup>85</sup> The premiere of this play took place on 15th April, 2010 at Tartu Uus Teater ([www.uusteater.ee](http://www.uusteater.ee))

<sup>86</sup> <http://tectonictheaterproject.org>

500). In other words, the object *itself* appears, and does not merely appear “in a likeness” [“*im Bild*”] (LI, VI, 220; Hua XIX/2, 588). The image consciousness is an intuitive act that gives the individual reproductively (like phantasy and memory), but our consciousness of the individual can nevertheless be taken as something actual. In Husserl’s view, this is the situation with *iconic acts*, for instance. In this case, we have a picture of a person before our eyes that we take precisely as the re-presentation of the person depicted. Also, we make judgements about her character, about her way of dressing, and also judgments about liking her or not. In this way, to quote Husserl, “I take the picture precisely as the re-presentation of the person; I posit her as someone actual and judge about the actual person” (Phantasy, 460; Hua XXIII, 387). However, to posit the depicted person as actual does not make the experience *perception*. What is missing here is the depicted object being present “in person”.

Following Husserl’s description of three objects in image consciousness, it is easy to see that the *physical image* must be present “in person”: the appearance of the physical image is the appearance of a physical thing, and therefore we have a *perceptual appearance* [*wahrnehmungserscheinung*] (Phantasy, 584; Hua XXIII, 489). The image object’s appearance, however, is more complex. Husserl says that the image object functions as a representant for the image subject and although it is not itself presented, it appears immediately, “in person” [*leibhaft*] (Phantasy, 150; Hua XXIII, 136). It is important to see that the perceptual [*perzeptive*] appearance of the image object is only *as if* [*als ob*] perception which is why Husserl introduces the term *perzeptive*. So when he says that the image stands before us as present actuality “in person” he means that this present and actuality are *as if* actualities: “the image only hovers before us perceptually [*das Bild schwebt nur perzeptiv vor*]” (Phantasy, 607; Hua XXIII, 506). The image object does not exist in the same way as perceptual objects exist and does not give us the presented (or depicted) person itself “in person”.

When it comes to the image subject’s appearance, Husserl is very precise in saying that the depicted object that is represented by the image object does not appear “itself” (Phantasy, 151; Hua XXIII, 136); it is absent. I believe it should not cause any difficulties to understand this since, as Walter Hopp puts it, no matter how lost I am in viewing a movie, “the characters, objects, and scenes depicted therein don’t normally seem present in person” (Hopp 2011, 151), I



do not expect them to respond to me when I talk, and so on. Husserl believes that if we were able to perceive the depicted object in the same way as perceptual objects – standing before our eyes “in the flesh” – then we would not have image consciousness anymore but perception or some other mode of experience.

I sympathise with Husserl’s theory of depiction and I think it is a plausible way to describe our experience of pictures in general. But I have difficulties in understanding how a theatrical performance in which an actor plays himself/herself is depiction. In other words, if Husserl wants to maintain the idea that depiction is involved in theatrical presentations in which an actor plays a real-life person, then there are some problems in explaining how the depicted real-life person who happens to be the same person as the actor himself/herself can be called a *depicted* person since he/her appears to us “in person”.

One could say that Husserl’s example of the experience of stereoscopic images would be an answer to my criticism. In the same text written in 1921-1924 in *Phantasy*, in which Husserl explains the difference between positional experiences and phantasy experiences, he also discusses the possibility of having *mixed experiences*. These are, for example, positional experiences that include phantasies in themselves or experiences in which perceptual object is phantasised as otherwise (the object is red but I phantasy it as green). In addition, he discusses the experience in which what appears in depiction is phantasised as being the appearance of the perceptual object, as in the case of stereoscopic images:

Finally, it can even happen that a figment really appears in the manner of something given in person, in an appearance in person [*in einer Leibhaftigkeits-Erscheinung erscheint*], in precisely the sense in which a perceptual object appears, and yet is nevertheless a figment. This is the case when I contemplate a semblance object as if it were the object depicted in the semblance (a perceptual semblance such as a stereoscopic image or an image object belonging to a picture). (*Phantasy*, 697-698; Hua XXIII, 580)

What Husserl means is that we can consider something appearing as if it were existing even if my actual experience speaks against it. He thinks that it is not pure re-presentation [*reine*

*Vergegenwärtigung*] anymore since the phantasied object is in the mode of givenness in person [*das phantasierte Objekt habe ich im Modus der Leibhaftigkeit*] (Phantasy, 710; Hua XXIII, 592). On the other hand, it is not perception that is at stake here either. It seems that Husserl wants to say that in the experience of looking at the stereoscopic image what we see in it appears exactly in the manner of perception – we have a three-dimensional appearance of the object that we would not have in monoscopic image. Therefore we phantasise that we are actually seeing the perceptual object itself.

I can see how this example could be used in explaining a theatrical presentation in which an actor plays himself/herself: when an image appears to the beholder, and it really appears the same way as the real-life person (the perceptual object) appears, then we might say that we phantasy or imagine that the depicted person is present “in the flesh”. In this way, depiction is “saved” because we only phantasy that the person is perceived. However, I am not convinced that this is the case because, in this way, the image subject becomes *as if* perceived. But my experience tells me otherwise – I can go on the stage and touch the actor or the actor can get off the stage and into the auditorium and I would perceive him in the same way as other people in the theatre.

It seems to me that when an actor plays himself/herself on the stage then what happens is that I identify the appearances of the depicted person as *identical* with the appearances of a real-life person and in my consciousness the first appearances are not taken as resembling or representing another object anymore. At this juncture, I want to refer to Husserl’s description of perception and imagination in one of his texts:

In this we at once recognize characteristic differences in *syntheses of fulfilment*. Imagination fulfils itself through the peculiar synthesis of image-resemblance, perception through the *synthesis of identical thinghood (sachlichen Identität)*. The thing establishes itself through its very self, in so far as it shows itself from varying sides while remaining one and the same. (LI, VI, 220; Hua XIX/2, 588)

The *identification* here is not the same as described earlier in connection to positing the depicted object through a synthesis of identification.<sup>87</sup> Because it is one thing to say that an object can appear in different modalities (perception, phantasy, image consciousness, memory) and still be taken as appearances of one and the same object, but another to say that different appearances or sides of an object are part of *one* modality. In this case, perception.

In sum, according to Husserl's theory of depiction, the image subject must remain absent and not be present "in the flesh". Only perceptual objects are characterised this way by Husserl. Thus, when an actor plays himself/herself on the stage, we are inclined to say that we have perception instead of depiction. On the other hand, since we are experiencing a fictional play and the actors playing themselves are part of the fictional play, it is not clear whether we can call this experience *pure* perception either. The real-life persons played by the actors are mediated by the play. In my view, this example of actors playing themselves shows that Husserl's theory of image consciousness as depiction needs some further specifications and is not easily applied to every kind of experience of theatrical performance.

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<sup>87</sup> See Chapter 2.4.2., "The posited image subject in non-positional depiction".

### Part III: Aesthetic consciousness

Husserl did not develop a coherent and well-structured theory of aesthetics. However, he emphasised the importance of aesthetic consciousness and even drew parallels between the phenomenological and aesthetic attitude. In his letter to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Husserl writes that: “Phenomenological intuiting is thus closely related to the aesthetic intuiting in “pure” art” (LH, 2). Husserl’s ideas about aesthetic consciousness can be summarised as follows: (1) aesthetic consciousness has interest in the *manner of appearing* of the object (*Phantasy*, 462; Hua XXIII, 389); it is (2) *turning toward* the manner of appearing, and has *thematic primacy* (*Phantasy*, 464; Hua XXIII, 392). Aesthetic interest is not theoretical nor practical interest but (3) purely “sensuous” interest (*Phantasy*, 168; Hua XXIII, 145) and has (4) *no interest in the existence or nonexistence* of the presented object (*Phantasy*, 459; Hua XXIII, 387). The aesthetic object has (5) *restricted synthetic unity* compared to the synthetic unity of a perceptual object (*Phantasy*, 705; Hua XXIII, 588).<sup>88</sup>

Husserl mentions aesthetic experience in many of his texts. For example, in the *Logical Investigations* he refers to the possibility of the consideration of a painting which “we allow to influence us purely artistically [*ästhetisch*], without in anyway responding to the existence or non-existence of what is represented” (LI, V inv, p 164). According to Gabriele Scaramuzza and Karl Schuhmann, the most important texts about aesthetics are written by Husserl between 1906-1918 (Scaramuzza and Schuhmann 1990, 165). Among them, three should be emphasised:

- “Aesthetics” [*Ästhetik*] in the Appendix VI (1906) in *Phantasy*,
- Husserl’s “Letter to Hofmannstahl” (1907),
- “On the aesthetic (art)” [*Zur Ästhetik (Kunst)*] in Appendix LIX (1916/1918) in *Phantasy*

These texts are definitely the most well-known writings on aesthetics by Husserl. However, there are few more texts in *Phantasy* that elaborate on the aesthetics consciousness and are crucial to understanding Husserl’s theory. I also refer to them in my dissertation. The texts are:

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<sup>88</sup> It has been claimed that the idea of indifference to existence or nonexistence and the restriction to the mode of appearance of an object is Husserlian in origin (whereas the claim of disinterestedness towards the object goes back at least to Kant) (Mohanty 2008, 313–314).

- “On the Aesthetic Contemplation of an Image” [*Zur ästhetischen Bildbetrachtung*] in Chapter 3 in text no 1 (1904/05).
- “Aesthetic consciousness” [*Ästhetisches Bewusstsein*] in text no. 15/h (1912) in *Phantasy*.
- “Limited synthetic unity in the case of the aesthetic object, its horizon different from the horizon of the thing pure and simple” [*Beschränkte synthetische Einheit beim ästhetischen Objekt, der Horizont ein anderer als für das Ding schlechthin*] in text no. 20/d (1921/1924) in *Phantasy*.

### 3.1. The aesthetic object and the work of art

Before I explain how the aesthetic consciousness is related to the image consciousness, I will point out one shortcoming of Husserl’s aesthetic theory. Namely, Husserl does not distinguish properly the work of art from the aesthetic object. According to him, “all art is “aesthetic”” [*“Ästhetisch” ist alle Kunst*] (*Phantasy*, 654; Hua XXIII, 542). This view is definitely not prevalent in post-Husserlian phenomenological aesthetics. Mikael Dufrenne, for instance, makes a clear distinction between the aesthetic object [*objet esthétique*] and the work of art [*l’œuvre d’art*] (Dufrenne 1953, 31f). Also, Roman Ingarden writes that: “The work of art and the aesthetic object seem to be identical; the conviction arises that it is the work itself which possesses the aesthetic values contained in a harmony of qualities [...] From there the erroneous theories originate” (Ingarden 1961, 302).

It must be noted, however, that although Husserl does not distinguish the aesthetic object from the work of art, aesthetic consciousness is not restricted to objects of art. If we say that aesthetic consciousness is first and foremost concerned with the object’s *appearance*, then, in principle, every object can be experienced aesthetically. The only thing we need to find out is from which side the object appears aesthetically:

Depending on the circumstances, however, one is conscious of the same objects in different manners of appearing, different manners of presentation. [...] Aesthetic valuation is essentially connected with the distinction between the consciousness of an

object as such and the object's *manner of appearing* [*Erscheinungsweise des Gegenstandes*]. Every object, in being given in a consciousness, is given in a manner of appearing; and it can then be the manner of appearing that determines aesthetic comportment, one appearance inducing aesthetic pleasure, another inducing aesthetic displeasure, and so on. The question in the particular case, then, is which manner of appearing is at stake [...] (*Phantasy*, 461; Hua XXIII, 388).

For example, when we look at a beautiful landscape our aesthetic interest aims at the landscape “presenting itself from here, from this entrance to the valley, just as it presents itself” (*Phantasy*, 704; Hua XXIII, 586).<sup>89</sup>

Husserl also mentions *beauty* and *aesthetic feeling* in his writings. For instance, in Appendix LX in *Phantasy*, he refers to the “beautiful appearance” [*schöne Erscheinung*] and “the objectivity of the beauty [*die Objektivität der Schönheit*] of an artistic formation” (*Phantasy*, 564-655; Hua XXIII, 543). In text no. 16 in *Phantasy*, he writes about the exhibiting of feelings in the image as *moods*. Accordingly, a picture of a landscape can present a landscape in a mood (although in looking at the image, “I do not need actually to get into the mood” (*Phantasy*, 565; Hua XXIII, 476)). In addition, the notion of *aesthetic pleasure* [*ästhetische Genuss*] is mentioned by Husserl many times (*Phantasy*, 38; Hua XXIII, 35; also in Hua XXXVIII, 176). Yet, these are not the ideas I want to pursue in my dissertation.<sup>90</sup> I will rather focus on the manner of appearance and the synthetic unity of the aesthetic object.

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<sup>89</sup> Brough is right in pointing out that our capacity to contemplate the appearance of an object aesthetically does not make the appearance necessarily into an “image object” (Brough 2010, 37). Read more about the “image object” in aesthetic consciousness in the next chapter, 3.2., “Aesthetic consciousness and image consciousness”.

<sup>90</sup> I will mention the notion of *beautiful* in Chapter 4.2.1., “Realistic and idealistic art”. About Husserl and the *beautiful* see for instance (Neuber 2010, 34).

## 3.2. Aesthetic consciousness and image consciousness

As stated in the last chapter, Husserl believes that it is not only works of art that can be experienced aesthetically. Nevertheless, in his texts he is mostly interested in the aesthetic consciousness of images. Thus, how the aesthetic consciousness is related to the image consciousness becomes an important question. First of all, it has to be noted that aesthetic consciousness of images are not restricted to depicting images. We can go to the theatre and have aesthetic enjoyment (*Phantasy*, 619; Hua XXIII, 518). But where depiction is concerned, aesthetic consciousness has the same threefold structure as image consciousness; which does not mean that the experience of image consciousness is identical to that of aesthetic consciousness.<sup>91</sup> Husserl believes that in the normal image consciousness, that is, without any aesthetic attitude, our interest is directed exclusively toward the *image subject*. But in the case of aesthetic contemplation, our interest is in the *How of the image object's depicting* [*Wie der Verbildlichung des Bildobjekts*] (*Phantasy*, 39; Hua XXIII, 36). What role the image subject plays in aesthetic consciousness is an interesting question and I will examine it in Chapter 3.2.2., “Image object appearance or the appearance of the subject”. Before that, I want to discuss another issue that is characteristic of aesthetic consciousness, namely neutrality modification.

### 3.2.1. Neutrality modification

In text no. 15/h in *Phantasy*, Husserl writes that “We are living in an aesthetic consciousness. In it we ask no questions about the being and nonbeing of what directly appears or appears in an image” (*Phantasy*, 459; Hua XXIII, 386-387). The same idea is present in text no. 20 in *Phantasy*, in which Husserl compares the experience of depictive consciousness with that of aesthetic consciousness. He emphasises that aesthetically we are not focused on the depicted reality, that is, in the existence or nonexistence of the depicted object. In the case of normal pictorial experience, this possibility might occur, and hence the difference between the two experiences:

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<sup>91</sup> Christian Ferencz-Flatz, for instance, criticises Husserl’s commentators who deal with the problems of image consciousness within the framework of aesthetic attitude (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 477).

My depicting act is then either a thematizing act directed toward what is depicted, or I am focused aesthetically. And however much I may be convinced that what is depicted exists and has such and such properties perhaps known to me in other ways, in the aesthetic attitude this occurs outside thematizing, positional performance. (*Phantasy*, 703; Hua XXIII, 585-586)

The suspension of belief in the existence or nonexistence of the world and its objects is called by Husserl the *epoché*<sup>92</sup> or neutralisation of belief; the latter being the result of *neutrality modification*. The neutralisation of belief, however, is not characteristic of aesthetic consciousness only but of *phenomenology* in general. Husserl points this out in his letter to Hugo von Hofmannstahl (LH). There he draws the parallel between phenomenological and aesthetical attitude by saying that in both cases the world becomes phenomena for the beholder in which “a strict suspension of all existential attitudes” (LH, 2) occurs:

The intuition of a purely aesthetic work of art is enacted under a strict suspension of all existential attitudes of the intellect and of all attitudes relating to emotions and the will which presuppose such an existential attitude. Or more precisely: the work of art places us in (almost forces us into) a state of aesthetic intuition that excludes these attitudes. [...] the phenomenological method too demands a strict suspension of all existential attitudes. (LH, 2)<sup>93</sup>

Given this, one could argue that, according to Husserl, phenomenology is aesthetics. Or, at least, argue that aesthetic experience does not differentiate from other experiences (that we have in the phenomenological attitude as opposed to the natural attitude). Although this kind of interpretation is definitely appropriate, I believe that one should also take into account the various meanings of *neutrality modification* in Husserl’s philosophy. Hence, there is the phenomenological reduction or “bracketing” of the natural world-belief which is universal in scope but there is also the neutralising suspension of belief found in aesthetic awareness (Drummond 2008, 143). In addition, neutrality modification can also mean the modification of

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<sup>92</sup> See also Chapter 4.1.1., “*Epoché*”.

<sup>93</sup> “Husserl an von Hofmannsthal, 12.1.1907” in *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl Dokumente: 3. Briefwechsel*. Band VII, “Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz”, 135.



perception (or memory). Husserl had the view that phantasy is the neutrality modification of perception and memory (Brough 2005, xxxviii).<sup>94</sup> He also defines depictive consciousness as *neutrality modification of normal perception* in the *Ideas I* (§ 111). It means that the neutral image (object) consciousness [*das neutrale Bildobjektbewußtsein*] involves both normal perception – we perceive the “physical thing” in *positing* modality – and the perceptive [*perzeptive*] consciousness in which the depicting image object [*abbildende Bildobjekt*] is present to us “*neither as existing nor as not existing, nor in any other positional modality*” (*Ideas I*, 262; Hua III/1, 252).

In §111 in the *Ideas I*, Husserl claims that both the image object and the image subject are neutralized; and the latter is neutralised “when we comport ourselves *purely aesthetically*” (*Ideas I*, 262; Hua III/1, 252). This seems to fit well with the claim described above that the depicted object in the aesthetic consciousness “occurs outside thematizing, positional performance” (*Phantasy*, 703; Hua XXIII, 586). However, if Christian Ferencz-Flatz is right, then Husserl’s description of aesthetic neutralisation in the *Ideas I* does not fit with Husserl’s general definition of perception and depicting image consciousness, for the depicted image (the image subject) is not actually *present* due to the primary neutralisation of the image object, and therefore the image subject is “already neutralized in its imagistic occurrence, by the very fact that we have an image consciousness of it and not a regular perception” (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 484). It also follows that the *aesthetic* neutralisation of the image subject is superfluous or unnecessary since the subject is already neutralised in image consciousness. Ferencz-Flatz suggests that the “aesthetic disinterest” in this context can only concern “the matter of its “reality as such” (that is, its “reality outside the picture”)” (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 485). I agree with Ferencz-Flatz that the image subject is not *perceived* but I do not agree that the neutralisation of the image object affects the neutralisation of the image subject. As Ferencz-Flatz himself mentions a few pages later, image consciousness *can* imply positing of the depicted object, as in the case of

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<sup>94</sup> This was Husserl’s view until the mid-twenties. He later changed his view for he understood that phantasy does not require any prior positing act that would go through the process of neutralisation. Instead, phantasy “is a nonpositional act from the beginning” (Brough 2005, xxxix). Therefore, in his later text, he claims that “The expression “neutrality modification” is suitable for the change in thematizing interest but not for phantasy.” (*Phantasy*, 709; Hua XXIII, 591)

documentaries and reportage. And there is no doubt that in this case the image subject is neutralised.<sup>95</sup>

### 3.2.2. Image object appearance or the appearance of the subject

As said above, aesthetic consciousness is not confined to the experience of works of art only: any physical object we perceive appears to us in various manners of appearing and can evoke aesthetic feeling in us. We can also contemplate nature aesthetically (*Phantasy*, 463; Hua XXIII, 391). However, Husserl believes that aesthetic experience of objects of art that represent something (are about something) differ from the aesthetic experience of the perceptual object in that, in the first case, we do not contemplate aesthetically the appearing of the *physical object* but the appearing of the presented subject in the image. For example, when we take Vincent van Gogh's painting, "Van Gogh's Bedroom in Arles", we contemplate aesthetically how the bedroom appears to us and not how the painting (as a physical object) appears to us. The subject of the painting is the room (Van Gogh's bedroom) that appears in the image.

Now, if we say that aesthetic interest is directed toward appearance, then are there different appearances that can be contemplated aesthetically? In Husserl's view, image consciousness can be performed in two ways: our interest is directed toward what is presented (the subject) or we are focused aesthetically (*Phantasy*, 703; Hua XXIII, 585). Looking at a photo of a person in order to find out about his character is not to contemplate it aesthetically (*Phantasy*, 704; Hua XXIII, 586). Aesthetic interest is directed on how the person presents himself in the image: "The aesthetic delight is directed toward what *presents itself as it presents itself* in such a depictive image, giving itself in a definite mode of appearance" (*Phantasy*, 647; Hua XXIII, 537-538). It is only the appearance that comes into question aesthetically and since Husserl calls the image object *the appearing image* (*Phantasy*, 22; Hua XXIII, 20), it is easy to conclude that in aesthetic consciousness we are thematically directed to the *image object*. According to my understanding of Husserl's texts, this is only one possible view; it does not take account of all the possible

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<sup>95</sup> According to Ferencz-Flatz, in the case of "documentary" interest we have a *modalised form of positional interest* and in pure aesthetic attitude, we have *pure positional disinterest* (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 490).

appearances exhibiting in image consciousness.<sup>96</sup> Although Husserl does not think that the appearance of the *physical thing* [*das physische Bild*] would come into question aesthetically (since it leads to the cancellation of image consciousness), he does mention *image object appearance* and *appearance of the subject*. I believe that the distinction is relevant and leads to important results.

In the text from 1904/05, Husserl writes that physical image presentation (e.g. the experience of a painting) and phantasy presentation are both examples of imagination [*Imagination*]. The only difference is that in physical imaging there are three objects whereas in phantasy there are only two – the *physical image* is absent in phantasy (*Phantasy*, 30; Hua XXIII, 29). Husserl believes that we do not normally contemplate aesthetically our phantasy and memory presentations because in these cases our interest is directed exclusively toward the image subject. However, when we do experience these aesthetically, our interest turns toward how the subject presents itself in image:

On exceptional occasions, one can also enjoy one's phantasies aesthetically and contemplate them in an aesthetic manner. Then we do not merely look at the subject in the image consciousness; rather, what interests us is *how* the subject presents itself there, what manner of appearing in image it displays [*welche bildliche Erscheinungsweise es zeigt*], and perhaps how aesthetically pleasing the manner of appearing is. (*Phantasy*, 40; Hua XXIII, 37)

In this context he introduces the notions of *image object appearance* and *appearance of the subject* [*Bildobjekterscheinung und Erscheinung des Sujets*]. He says, in the footnote, that in phantasy we live in the consciousness of the subject [*Sujetbewusstsein*], thus contemplating aesthetically the appearance of the phantasy *subject* (which “side” gives the best effect

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<sup>96</sup> I am referring here to the possibility of focusing on the appearance of each of the “objects” in the image consciousness. But there is another way to talk about *many* appearances in depiction. Frederik Stjernfelt refers to Appendix IX in *Phantasy* where Husserl gives an example of multiple images, e.g., the reproductions of a painting. In this case we have multiple image consciousness: there is the reproduction as a picture of the original painting and the reproduction as a picture of the object of the original painting. Stjernfelt believes that since in this case we have two nested objects, we also have two nested appearances, and “[a]esthetic interest may then be directed towards each of them” (Stjernfelt 2007, 300).

aesthetically), and not the *image object appearance*. He wants to make a clear distinction between the two:

In aiming at the object, the intention necessarily aims at the object in some “appearance” (aspect) or other. Hence we have to distinguish: 1) the phenomenon of the primary appearance (image-object appearance); 2) the consciousness that is directed toward the subject, specifically in one of the subject’s appearances taken from the synthesis. It will be absolutely necessary to differentiate the concepts of appearance and to introduce different names. (*Phantasy*, 41; Hua XXIII, 38)

This seems to be in contradiction to another of Husserl’s statements that “We have only *one appearance*, the appearance belonging to *the image object*” (*Phantasy*, 31; Hua XXIII, 30). For example, we have a photograph of a landscape; in it the landscape appears in the colors of photograph and in a small size; the landscape itself (the subject) is not meant in these diminutive dimension or the colors of the photograph; nevertheless “this landscape does not appear as a second thing in addition to the image landscape” (*Phantasy*, 30; Hua XXIII, 29). One way to understand the seeming contradiction in Husserl’s texts is to think that *image object appearance* and *appearance of the subject* are actually the same appearance, only expressed in different ways. This does not, of course, mean that the image object and the image subject are therefore the same “object”. The fact that Husserl *objectifies* both the image object and the image subject<sup>97</sup> and he sometimes uses the word “object” to speak of *the subject* should not lead to the misunderstanding that these are the same “object.” Husserl writes, for instance, “We distinguish between image [*Bild*] and subject [*Sujet*]. But is the “subject” an object [*Gegenstand*] that is represented by the image understood as a depictive image [...]” (*Phantasy*, 183; Hua XXIII, 154). In my view, there is only one way to see the sameness of the two appearances: since the image subject appears *in* the image object, the appearance of the subject is the same as the image object appearance. As Husserl says, “In the case of aesthetic image contemplation, however, my interest is directed toward the image object itself just as it exhibits the image subject” (*Phantasy*, 193; Hua XXIII, 161).

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<sup>97</sup> 1) He calls the appearing image the “image *object*”. 2) Our meaning-intention [*meinende Intention*] is always directed to an ‘object’, and we can mean the image object or the image subject, or even *the image object as the image of the subject* (*Phantasy*, 41; Hua XXIII, 38).

Another way is to say that the idea of the two appearances introduced by Husserl in his early text is confusing and we should prefer talking about the *image object appearance* only. This is the most common interpretation of Husserl's texts on aesthetic consciousness. I believe that the main reason why the reference to the *subject* is usually avoided is that it can help to keep a clear distinction between the interest in the existence or non-existence of the subject and the interest in the appearing. Many texts about Husserl's ideas on aesthetics and art particularly emphasise this very distinction. Take, for instance, Milan Uzelac: "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 [...]" (Uzelac 1998, 13). However, having interest in the appearance of the subject is completely different from focusing on the subject as such. Therefore, it is not irrelevant whether we consider the *appearance* from the perspective of the image object or from the subject. Also, to emphasise the *appearance of the subject* can lead to different interpretations of aesthetic consciousness.

To begin with, Husserl believes that the *consciousness of the image subject* always accompanies the aesthetic consciousness: "[...] an interest in the form of aesthetic feeling, fastens on to the image object [...] The consciousness of the image subject is present there too and is in no way inessential, for without it there is no aesthetic image" (*Phantasy*, 55; Hua XXIII, 52).<sup>98</sup> Secondly, for Husserl, it is not only the *appearing* of a thing but the *manner of appearing* of a thing that comes into question aesthetically. Objects appear to us in various ways, but not every appearance evokes aesthetic feeling in us. To quote Husserl: "Surely I can ask myself in the case of the perceptual object: From which side does the object work best aesthetically?" (*Phantasy*, 41; Hua XXIII, 38) Now, in the case of pictures, we surely do not ask: From which side does the *image object* work best aesthetically? It only makes sense to ask about the *side* of the subject. Probably this is why Husserl writes in the *Ideas I* that we do not advert our aesthetic contemplation to the appearing image, that is, to the image object, but to the *depicted* realities ["*abgebildeten*"]

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<sup>98</sup> Husserl also mentions that the "content of the object itself" is not aesthetically insignificant: "Whether or not it is an emperor, whether it is an important destiny or one that is commonplace, and so on, is not a matter of indifference" (*Phantasy*, 462; Hua XXIII, 390).

*Realitäten*] (*Ideas* I, 262; Hua III/1, 252).<sup>99</sup> Given this, it seems that Husserl advocates the view that our aesthetic interest is directed towards *the appearance of the subject* in the case of looking at pictures.

However, there is one consideration that speaks against this view. In the 1904/05 lectures, Husserl claims that our aesthetic feeling “fastens on to the image object, and fastens on to it even with regard to its *nonanalogizing moments*” [my italics] (*Phantasy*, 55; Hua XXIII, 52). It means that our aesthetic interest extends even to those features of the image object that have no depictive function, that is, do not depict the subject in the strict sense. These are the bold brushwork, the aesthetic effect of marble, and so on (*Phantasy*, 55; Hua XXIII, 52). One could ask, of course, whether these features are part of *image object* at all, for it seems more appropriate to classify the material aspects of a picture to the *physical thing* (of the image consciousness) (Ferencz-Flatz 2009, 489). But even so, the emphasis on the non-analogising moments of a picture changes the view that the aesthetic interest is directed solely at the manner of appearance of the depicted subject. Moreover, it “saves” the role of the artist. For if all that we are directed at is the *subject*, then it would not make any difference how it is depicted: in the bold brushwork or in stone or in marble, etc. Thus, the role of the artist would be minimised or erased completely.

How to answer, then, the question whether our aesthetic interest is directed towards the *image object appearance* of the *appearance of the image subject*? The way I understand it, the question is not about the *appearance* as such, but the real issue is about what kind of object the appearance belongs to? Is it the appearance of the “image object” or that of the “image subject”? Based on Husserl’s texts, a plausible answer could be: to neither of them. Husserl writes in *Phantasy*: “To mean the image object, to mean the image subject, and again to mean the image object as the image of the subject are different objectivating states” (*Phantasy*, 41; Hua XXIII, 38). Since Husserl writes this in the context of explaining the aesthetic experience, I think it can be taken as an answer to the question of which “object” grounds the aesthetic *appearance*: it is

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<sup>99</sup> “In the second place, we distinguish the perceptive consciousness in which, within the black, colorless lines, there appear to us the figures of the “knight on his horse,” “death,” and the “devil”. We do not advert to these in aesthetic contemplation as Objects; we rather advert to the realities presented “in the picture” – more precisely stated, to the “depicted” realities, to the flesh and blood knight, etc” (*Ideas* I, 262; Hua III/1, 252).

the “image object as the image of the subject.” How this fits with his general theory of the threefold image consciousness is another question, of course, and one which I will not pursue here.

### 3.3. Limited synthetic unity of the aesthetic object

In the following chapters, I focus on the idea of the *limited synthetic unity* of the aesthetic object that is introduced by Husserl in order to differentiate positional and aesthetic attitude towards the object. I will also examine the possibility to apply Husserl's theory to site-specific art. I claim that *strongly site-specific art*, which is a work of art *about* a place and *in* the place, challenges the view that the synthetic unity of the aesthetic object is limited. Moreover, following Husserl's theory, it becomes questionable whether strongly site-specific art is *art* at all. I try to answer these objections by explaining how the artist prescribes the appearances and boundaries of a strongly site-specific object of art, thereby satisfying the demand for the limitedness of the synthetic unity of the aesthetic object.

#### 3.3.1. Cutting off horizons

In a text written in 1921-1924, Husserl argues that the aesthetic object has limited synthetic unity [*beschränkte synthetische Einheit*] which means that its horizon is different from the horizon of the thing *pure and simple* (the perceptual object) (*Phantasy*, 699; Hua XXIII, 581). The notion of "horizon" has a specific meaning in Husserl's phenomenology. In *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl defines horizons as "predelineated" potentialities [*vorgezeichnete Potentialitäten*]<sup>100</sup> (CM, 45; Hua I, 82). In the process of perceiving a die, for example, we have the genuinely perceived [*eigentlich wahrgenommene*] sides of the object and the sides „also meant“ [*die mitgemeinten*]. The latter sides are not yet perceived, they are anticipated and in that sense potentialities: if we walk around the object, we can see it from another side or if we come closer to it, we see some aspects that we did not see from a distance; we focus on the color of the die at one moment and its shape at another moment, and, in addition to the manifold visual perspectives, a die can be touched or even heard (when we throw a die on the table). We expect an object to appear in certain ways in the future but we also expect it to have a "horizon of the past", that is, a potentiality of awakenable recollections (CM, 44; Hua I, 82).

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<sup>100</sup> As Smith and McIntyre understand Husserl's notion of horizon, there are two sorts of horizon – "object-horizon" and "act-horizon" (Smith and McIntyre 1982, 236–246). I present here the latter.



In Husserl's terms, these multiform and changeable *manners of appearing* of a die are combined into a unity in our consciousness – it is called a *synthesis*. The one identical die appears in various appearances, and it is only because of the synthesis that we experience it as one and the same die although experiencing it differently in the course of time (CM, 39-40; Hua I, 77-78). Therefore the synthesis is also called the *synthesis of identification* (CM, 101; Hua I, 131).

Husserl says that in a positional attitude we consider how a thing would appear “in the continuing course of possible experience” in the real life (*Phantasy*, 703; Hua XXIII, 585). In aesthetic attitude, the situation is different. We do not include other possible experiences or other possible appearances of an object into the synthetic unity of the object than those prescribed by the artist. In the same vein, we are not interested in how the *artistic fiction* fits with the *real* world; it is separated from it: “the extent to which what I see there [in an artistic fiction] accommodates itself harmoniously and synthetically to the universal synthesis of possible experience does not interest me” (*Phantasy*, 704-705; Hua XXIII, 587). Moreover, Husserl says that what serves us aesthetically would have the function of awakening only certain moments and horizons, and everything else, without exception, would be wholly excluded from the horizon of the theme (*Phantasy*, 704; Hua XXIII, 586). A beautiful landscape, for example, presents itself from a certain perspective; it has certain optical appearances that make up the synthesis of the aesthetic object. All other possible appearances of the landscape are *cut off*:

But my aesthetic belief, the belief pertaining to the aesthetic object, restricts me to the series of optical appearances that I obtain from this position, from the entrance to the valley, and to the unity optically constituted in the series as something identifiable and cognizable by itself. The infinite horizon beyond this, with all of its attendant syntheses accessible to me immediately and mediately (producible by me), is cut off [*ist abgeschnitten*], inasmuch as it is not the horizon of thematic acceptance that I am now carrying out. This restricted synthetic unity, in just the way in which it is intuited there, is my aesthetic object (*Phantasy*, 705; Hua XXIII, 587-588).

### 3.3.2. Aesthetic consciousness of strongly site-specific art

Kevin Melchionne suggests that we can understand *site-specificity* in three categories. A work of art is: i) *about* but *not for* place (*not* site-specific, for example, landscape painting); ii) *for* but *not about* place (weakly site-specific art); iii) *for* and *about* place (strongly site-specific art) (Melchionne 1998, 43). For Melchionne, the work of art is site-specific only when it is *in* and *for* the place (*ibid*). A landscape painting that is only *about* a specific place is not site-specific work of art because the (physical) painting can be moved from one (exhibition) place to another and not being linked to its location. Weakly site-specific works are, for instance, pedestal sculptures that have gained, mostly by tradition, a symbiotic relationship to the place they stand – a public sculpture can become a local landmark, a symbol of the city, or just familiar face for people who live in the neighbourhood (Melchionne 1998, 42–43). Strongly site-specific works of art, on the other hand, are *created* into a certain place to be a response to “the political, historical or *aesthetic quality* of a place through which the site itself becomes the content of the work” (my italics) (Melchionne 1998, 43).

One of the examples of strongly site-specific art is the installation “HA” by the Icelandic artist, Sara Björnsdóttir, at the Reykjavik Art Museum (2012). In the interview with the exhibition’s curator, she defines site-specific works of art as those that are “made in and about certain place” (Björnsdóttir 2012). Her installation comprises video screenings on the wall of the exhibition hall that shows images of the same room, so that the visitor is looking at the space where she is standing in. There are no other “objects” in the hall except for the moving images on the wall. The artist says that she wants to move people’s certainties about where they are and what they see, and to make them to think about *how the world appears to us* (Björnsdóttir 2012). This example of strongly site-specific art seems to fit well with Husserl’s understanding of aesthetic valuation which is “essentially connected with the distinction between the consciousness of an object as such and the object’s *manner of appearing* [*Erscheinungsweise*]” (*Phantasy*, 461; Hua XXIII, 388). However, it will be more difficult to understand how we can have limited synthetic unity of an aesthetic object of site-specific art.

Robert Irwin's site-specific installation *Scrim Veil – Black Rectangle – Natural Light* presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1977) is an example of a strongly site-specific work of art that shows clearly how the artist influences the way the space appears to the beholder.<sup>101</sup> Many visitors complained that it was just an empty room because they could not detect any object inside it. But the artist claimed otherwise. The aim of the artist was to draw people's attention to "looking at and seeing all of those things that have been going on all along but which previously have been too incidental or too meaningless to really seriously enter into our visual structure, our picture of the world" (Weschler 2008, 187). To accomplish that aim, he took great notice of how the room would appear to the visitor. He explained it as follows:

I did a very simple thing, which was just to paint the end wall the same color that the side walls had become, throwing the room out of order. It's not the kind of thing that a visitor would cogitate on, but you knew something was amiss in that room. [...] So when you walked into this room at the Whitney, it threw you – you had to stop for a moment because something was amiss. I then suspended with scrim a black line from the ceiling the length of the room [120 feet] at eye level. And then I placed a corresponding eye-level black line around the walls of the room. People would literally walk right into it, bump into it, because you couldn't place this black line in space. So in effect you were forced to become a firsthand perceiver. (Davies and Irwin 2008, 52–53)

Husserl finds that, in the case of works of art, it is the role of the artist to choose what will appear and how it appears (*Phantasy*, 706; *Hua XXIII*, 588). In my view, the emphasis on the selective process of choosing one of the object's appearances in the creation of art leads us to the understanding that it is possible to have many aesthetic appearances of one object (although Husserl does not explain it this way). The object as such does not change in that course. For instance, we do not experience different *sites* when we see a painting of the site or we see a site-specific work of art about it or we simply perceive it; however, we can have different *aesthetic objects* about the same place. When Husserl asks us to find out: "from which side does the object

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<sup>101</sup> One could object that Irwin's installation is a strongly site-specific art since, according to him, the installation was not *about* the space. He says: "The subject of art is aesthetic perception." (Davies and Irwin 2008, 162); and he prefers the term "site-generated art" instead of 'site-specific' (Weschler 2008, 198). However, I think that we can experience the installation as strongly site-specific art: we are in the room experiencing how the room appears to us.

work best aesthetically?” (*Phantasy*, 41; Hua XXIII, 37), it does not follow that there can be only *one* side that works aesthetically.

What appears to us in a picture of a specific landscape is restricted compared to the perceptual experience of the same landscape. I believe that, in the same way, we can compare the limitedness of the synthetic unities of various aesthetic objects of the same perceptual object. While standing in the exhibition room of Sara Björnsdóttir’s installation “HA”, we see more than just the pictorial presentation of the room, and therefore the room has for us more appearances than those presented by the video image. If Sara Björnsdóttir’s video screenings were presented somewhere else, in another museum, then, firstly, it would not be a site-specific work of art anymore and, secondly, the synthetic unity of the aesthetic object would be *more* limited than in the Reykjavik Art Museum. One could say that we are not even experiencing the same aesthetic object since the degree of limitedness is different.

Now, even if one agrees that the synthetic unity of a work of art *about* a place is limited compared to the synthetic unity of a work of art that is *about* and *in* the place, one does not have to agree, therefore, that the synthetic unity is limited in the latter case. Husserl believes that in the aesthetic attitude, the beholder should not go “beyond the “image”” [*nicht über das “Bild” hinaus*] that is defined by the artist (*Phantasy*, 705; Hua XXIII, 587). It means that if it is a depiction, then “what is depicted in the How of its being depicted determines the boundary of what appears insofar as it appears” (*Phantasy*, 706; Hua XXIII, 588). If it is a narrative or a novel, the reader should not go beyond the narrative and have further fictional invention about the persons or the landscape, because then he would not be living in the fictional work of the artist anymore (ibid).<sup>102</sup> As Husserl explains it:

Just as in a narrative, a novel, and the like. I can go beyond the narrative to the extent that I become more deeply engrossed, elucidating what is narrated as such, the landscape, the persons, and so on: But my phantasy is not free in this further development (obviously it is

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<sup>102</sup> According to my understanding of Husserl’s texts, every artistic fiction (every object of art) is contemplated aesthetically. One can experience aesthetically art and non-art, but if it is a work of art then one also (necessarily) has aesthetic consciousness. Therefore, wherever he describes the boundaries of artistic fiction without, explicitly, saying it in the context of aesthetic experience, I take it as a description of aesthetic object.

not free with respect to the style of agreement with the prefigurings). On the contrary, I am bound – the unity of the appearances as presented appearances must always be what is narrated as such and nothing else. (*Phantasy*, 706; Hua XXIII, 588)

However, it seems that, in the installation “HA”, the beholder is asked to go “beyond the image” and see also the place where the pictorial presentation of the place is exhibited. The visitor can walk around and see the place from different perspectives, and come to the conclusion that the experience of the space is free from the boundaries and restrictions given by the artist. The same happens in visiting Robert Irwin’s installation in which case we are asked to look at the room itself without any mediating pictorial presentations. In this way, it becomes questionable whether strongly site-specific art is art at all.

In my view, to answer these objections we have to reconsider how to define the “frame” or the “boundaries” of a work of art. As Robert Irwin puts it, the “marriage of figure and ground”, that is, the marriage of object and space/place, is a heritage from modern art that has led to the understanding of “nonobject art” in contemporary art (Davies and Irwin 2008, 161). Following this idea we may say that the installation “HA” encompasses the pictorial representations of the space and the space itself. The exhibition room is not the background for the video screenings but it has to be taken as part of the work of art. Therefore, when the beholder moves around in the exhibition space, he or she is still *inside* the boundaries of the work of art.

However, I do not believe that the “marriage of figure and ground” should lead us to the understanding that there are no limits for the works of art or that it expands endlessly in space. Strongly site-specific works of art have frames and these are prescribed by the artist. Robert Irwin’s and Sara Björnsdóttir’s installations, for example, are about a specific exhibition room and not about some other room in the same museum. And even if we say that the boundaries of the video screenings of Björnsdóttir’s installation *extend* to the exhibition room, it does not mean that they extend any further. The visitor may take into account the space around the museum or compare the appearances of this room with the appearances of some other room, but in that case he or she goes “beyond the image” and is not experiencing the work of art presented by the artist.

As mentioned earlier, in the positional attitude we consider all the possible appearances that we could have of an object. But this infinity of possible experiences is not part of aesthetic attitude: “Only what “appears as it appears,” which comes to harmonious unity in this presentation, interests me” (*Phantasy*, 705; Hua XXIII, 587). As Husserl says, when we are seeing a beautiful landscape our aesthetic interest aims at the landscape *just as it presents itself*. Moreover, it aims at the landscape “from here, from this entrance to the valley” (*Phantasy*, 704; Hua XXIII, 586). This restricted view is present in site-specific art as well. Our aesthetic experience pertains to a very specific place and is turned toward the appearing of the space visible to us under the conditions set by the artist. The artist prescribes the size of the work of art and also optical appearances: he or she sets the lighting conditions, the colours of the space, decides from which side the visitor enters the space and can also put some filters in order to create optical illusions, and so on. All these conditions created by the artist prescribe the manner of appearing of the space to the beholder.

In sum, I have examined the notion of *limited synthetic unity* of an aesthetic object in Husserl’s theory of aesthetic consciousness, and I have suggested that strongly site-specific art challenges the requirement for limitedness since the synthetic unity of an aesthetic object seems not to be restricted to the appearances prescribed by the artist. I claimed that the degree of limitedness of the synthetic unity of a *not* site-specific work of art is greater than that of strongly site-specific work of art. I also claimed that if we compare the positional and the aesthetic attitude, we see that the synthetic unity of an aesthetic object is restricted compared to the infinite or universal synthetic unity of perceptual objects, and that it is also true in the case of strongly site-specific art – the boundaries and the optical appearances of the specific space are prescribed by the artist. Accordingly, if the beholder wants to contemplate aesthetically the object of art created by the artist, he or she has to take these restrictions into account. Therefore, the artist has an important role to play in defining the limits of the appearances of a strongly site-specific work of art, and it is still possible to experience a *strongly site-specific* work as a work of art.

## Part IV: Art

The aim of Husserl's phenomenology is not to analyse works of art and he makes only few attempts to define art. There are some references to objects of art and these are mainly paintings and engravings from the Renaissance. In the *Phantasy*, he writes about the pictures of Paolo Veronese (*Phantasy*, 40; Hua XXIII, 37), Raphael's "Madonna" (*Phantasy*, 582; Hua XXIII, 487), Michelangelo's "Madonna" (*Phantasy*, 582; Hua XXIII, 487), Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love" [*Die himmlische und irdische Liebe*] (*Phantasy*, 177f; Hua XXIII, 149f), and he also mentions Albrecht Dürer. He refers to Dürer's "The Four Apostles" [*Apostelbilder*] from Munich Pinakothek in *Wahrnehmung und Aufmerksamkeit* (Hua XXXVIII, 353, 533). A detailed analysis of Dürer's engraving "Knight, Death and the Devil" [*Ritter, Tod und Teufel*] is given in the *Ideas I* (*Ideas I*, 261f; Hua III/1, 252f). Husserl constantly refers to the Dresden gallery where he must have seen most of these works of art.

However, Husserl's view on art and artworks has inspired many theorists to use his theory in art criticism. These can be divided into two broad approaches. Firstly, it can be shown how some works of art are *doing* phenomenology in the sense that artworks can illustrate the main ideas of Husserl's phenomenology or become analogues to it: what Husserl is describing in his philosophical texts is visualised by these artworks. Here the concept of *epoché* and free imagination plays a central role. The second approach uses Husserl's phenomenology to analyse our experience of artworks and defend (or criticise) Husserl's definition of art. In these theories, the definition of the "image" and the theory of image consciousness come to the fore again. Also, Husserl's notion of the *horizon* becomes relevant in these analyses.

### 4.1. Artworks as analogues of Husserl's phenomenology

Considering the fact that Husserl never mentioned his contemporary art, it is interesting how widely his phenomenology has been used to analyse modern and contemporary art, especially cubism. Since Husserl developed his ideas of transcendental phenomenology around the same time as some of the movements in modern art emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, many scholars take this fact as the grounds for their similarities. For instance, the year 1907 is

often referred to as an important date when a parallelism is drawn between cubism and phenomenology: Husserl introduced the concept of *epoché* in *Die Idee der Phänomenologie* in 1907 and Picasso painted the first cubist painting *Demoiselles d'Avignon* in the same year (Pinotti 2010, 65) (Escoubas 1991, 189) (Sepp 1995, 304–306). A similar parallelism is drawn between abstract art and the philosophical texts written in the 1910s. For example, Irvin L. Zupnick claims that the early abstract artists had similar aims in their paintings as their contemporary philosophers (Husserl, Russell and Whitehead) had in their publications. The shared ideas were eidetic intuiting, symbolic abstraction, suppression of details in order to develop universal classification, etc. Zupnick justifies these parallelisms by saying that “Artistic developments do not follow an independent organic process, but they are part of the history of ideas, helping to shape it and being shaped by it in turn” (Zupnick 1965, 473). In this parallelism the concept of *epoché* plays a central role.

#### 4.1.1. *Epoché*

Husserl takes the term *epoché* from the Greek Sceptics where it means a *cessation* or *suspension* (Moran 2002, 136). In Husserl’s texts, the phenomenological *epoché* means the suspension of the natural attitude. In other words, it inhibits the acceptance of the objective world as existent (CM, §11, 25; Hua I, 64). Husserl uses various notions for describing the process of *epoché* among which “bracketing” [*Einklammerung*], “abstention” [*Enthaltung*] and “suspension” are probably the best known.<sup>103</sup> The main idea behind all the notions is the change of attitude [*Einstellungänderung*] (*Ideas* I, § 54, 128; Hua III/1, 119). It is a free act of the mind that moves away from naturalistic assumptions about the world and *returns* to a transcendental standpoint<sup>104</sup>. In this sense *epoché* is part of the phenomenological *reduction*. Only through the reduction do we grasp the pure phenomena.<sup>105</sup> Thus, it is a *method* to gain “a specially purified way of

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<sup>103</sup> Other notions are, for example, “withholding” “disregarding,” “abandoning,” “putting out of action,” “putting out of play,” “unplugging” (Moran 2002, 147).

<sup>104</sup> In the “Paris Lectures” Husserl says, „Wenden wir uns nun dem uns Heutigen so befremdlichen Inhalt der Meditationen zu, so vollzieht sich darin alsbald ein Rückgang auf das philosophierende ego in einem zweiten und tieferen Sinne. Es ist der bekannte epoche machende Rückgang auf das ego der reinen *cogitationes*“ (Hua I, 4).

<sup>105</sup> In *The Idea of Phenomenology* Husserl describes the phenomenological reduction as follows: “If I place the ego and the world and the experience of the ego as such in question, then reflection upon what is given in the apperception of the relevant experience, upon my ego – a reflection that simply “sees” – yields the phenomenon of this apperception: the phenomenon, roughly, of “perception apprehended as my perception”” (IP, 34; Hua II, 44).



regarding” (Moran 2002, 132). This purified regarding or seeing is *eidetic seeing* [*Wesenserschauung*] for the aim of phenomenology is to see essences (*Ideas* I, § 3, 8; Hua III/1, 13).

In the process of seeing essences, phantasy or imagination plays an important role. According to Husserl, we can seize upon an essence in relying on our experiential data (the data of perception or memory) but the best way is to rely on “imaginative data” that we gain in free phantasy (*Ideas* I, § 4, 11; Hua III/1, 16). Imagination helps us to “stay in” the reduction. As Moran explains, “by staying within the realm of imagination and fantasy we avoid the pitfalls associated with naturalistic positing” (Moran 2002, 154). In free imagination we consider all possibilities related to an experience, which is why Husserl also calls it imaginative free variation [*freie Variation*] (CM, §34, 71; Hua I, 105). In this process we shift to the realm of *as-if*.

Abstaining from acceptance of its being, we change the fact of this perception into a pure possibility, one among other quite “optional” pure possibilities but possibilities that are possible perceptions. We, so to speak, shift the actual perception into the realm of non-actualities, the realm of the *as-if*, which supplies us with “pure” possibilities, pure of everything that restricts to this fact or to any fact whatever. (CM, § 34, 70; Hua I, 104)

In the text “Phantasy – Neutrality” (1921/1924) in *Phantasy*, Husserl explains how we can have a *double epoché* or neutrality. The first *epoché* belongs to the phantasy as phantasy or to the neutral consciousness as neutral. It is the situation in which we simply phantasy as phantasying Ego. The second *epoché* belongs to “the change in attitude brought about by the establishing of a positional Ego over the neutral Ego and to the grasping of the “images”” (*Phantasy*, 691; Hua XXIII, 573). Here, the positional Ego stands above the dreaming or phantasying Ego as a non-participating spectator who witnesses the dreaming and the dream itself (*ibid*). An example of the *double epoché*:

A stereoscopic, cinematographic semblance stands before me. 1) At first I lose myself in *as-if* contemplation; I contemplate the events as if they were actually happening. This is neutrality consciousness (phantasying). 2) Taking a position, I posit the semblance image

as reality, as “what is seen” in this *quasi*-seeing. I establish a second Ego, which does not take part in the *quasi*-believing, in the *quasi*-occurring, but contemplates it and the “noema,” the “image” in it, reflectively. (*Phantasy*, 692; Hua XXIII, 574)

In this example, the first *epoché* is the bracketing of the actual world and focusing on what appears to us. The second *epoché* is contemplating our seeing of what appears to us. As Husserl himself admits even more *epochés* can occur and this can continue *ad infinitum*: “The present positional acts of reflection in turn have their “intentional objects as intended”; to acquire them I would have to establish a new reflective Ego, which exercises a new *epoché*, and so on” (*Phantasy*, 692; Hua XXIII, 574).<sup>106</sup>

Now, one could say that if Husserl’s phenomenology is used in defining works of art, then it can be used only as the analysis of our *experience* of works of art. In other words, it would be a violent misapplication of Husserl’s phenomenology if one’s aim were to show that the artistic activity of creating works of art (including the work of art itself) is an example of phenomenological reduction. There is, however, one text by Husserl that justifies the parallelism. In his letter to Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1907), Husserl says that the artist and the philosopher observe the world in a similar way:

The artist, who “observes” the world in order to gain “knowledge” of nature and man for his own purposes, relates to it in a similar way as the phenomenologist. Thus: not as an observing natural scientist and psychologist, not as a practical observer of man, as if it were an issue of knowledge of man and nature. When he observes the world, it becomes a phenomenon for him, its existence is indifferent, just as it is to the philosopher (in the critique of reason). (LH, 2)<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> This example, of having neutrality consciousness in watching a film, is something that Husserl later revises with respect to whether this neutrality act is phantasy. If a neutrality act means that an a prior positional act is subsequently neutralises or inhibited then phantasy is not (necessarily) such an act. “Phantasy is not a two-step process involving first positing and then neutralizing, which would leave the original positing act, now neutralized, at its core.” Instead, “Phantasy is a nonpositional act from the beginning” (Brough 2005, xxxix).

<sup>107</sup> „Der Künstler, der die Welt „beobachtet“, um aus ihr für seine Zwecke Natur- und Menschen“kenntnis“ zu gewinnen, verhält sich zu ihr ähnlich wie der Phänomenologe. Also: nicht als beobachtender Naturforscher und Psychologe, nicht als praktischer Menschenbeobachter, als ob er auf Natur- u. Menschenkunde ausginge. Ihm wird die Welt, indem er sie betrachtet, zum Phänomen, ihre Existenz ist ihm gleichgiltig, genauso wie dem Philosophen

The only difference, according to Husserl, is in their ultimate aim. The artist, unlike the philosopher, “does not attempt to found the “meaning” of the world-phenomenon and grasp it in concepts, but appropriates it intuitively, in order to gather, out of its plenitude, materials for the creation of aesthetic forms” (LH, 2).<sup>108</sup> I believe this passage of Husserl’s texts provides justification for drawing the parallelism between the *doings* of the phenomenologist and the artistic works.

#### 4.1.2. The *epoché* of the artworks

There is no evidence that Husserl had mentioned any cubist painters or cubist artworks in his texts or that cubists had referred to Husserl’s ideas in their interviews or texts. Still, it is widely held view that cubist paintings illustrate the basic ideas of Husserl’s phenomenology. As Andreas Pinotti says, “the real point of these theories does not consist in a phenomenological interpretation of cubism [...] but rather in the hypothesis that cubism does the same as phenomenology.” And he adds, “Cubist painting is thus not an object of phenomenology among other objects, but is in itself phenomenological” (Pinotti 2010, 64). In Pinotti’s view, theories that draw similarities between cubism and phenomenology are mostly developed around three concepts of Husserl’s philosophy: essence [*Wesen*], adumbration [*Abschattung*] and *epoché* (Pinotti 2010, 65). Since these concepts are clearly interconnected in Husserl’s phenomenology, various theories of cubism and phenomenology have only different emphases. Accordingly, it has been claimed that cubism aims at the “vision of essences” that are independent of empirically existing objects. Also, cubist paintings are taken to be pictorial analogues of Husserl’s theory of perceptual adumbration and that of kinaesthesia. It means that all the perceptual adumbrations (different perspectives, aspects and shades) of an object that appear to us successively in perception are presented simultaneously in a cubist painting. Paul S. McDonald explains it as follows:

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(in der Vernunftkritik).“ (“Husserl an von Hofmannsthal, 12.1.1907” in *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl Dokumente: 3. Briefwechsel*. Band VII, “Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz”, 135)

<sup>108</sup> „Nur daß er nicht darauf ausgeht, wie dieser den „Sinn“ des Weltphänomens zu ergründen und in Begriffe zu fassen, sondern es sich intuitiv zuzueignen, um daraus <die> Fülle der Gebilde, Materialien für schöpferische ästhetische Gestaltungen zu sammeln“ (“Husserl an von Hofmannsthal, 12.1.1907” in *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl Dokumente: 3. Briefwechsel*. Band VII, “Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz”, 135).

The depicted “distance” between two (or more) points in the painting is meant to be an analogue to the objective interval between two (or more) perceptual events. The events which form an analogue to these depicted moments on the canvas plane are the harmonious perceptions of an object in space by a perceiver moving through that space. (McDonald 2005, 261)

The concept of phenomenological *epoché* is also prevalent in studies of phenomenology and cubism. Eliane Escoubas, for example, claims that cubism is the application of the phenomenological *epoché* (Escoubas 1991, 190).<sup>109</sup> The pictorial *epoché* of cubism is determined by the reduction of the transcendence of the object and that of the subject. As a result, there is nothing left than “pure seeing” [“*pure voir*”] itself (Escoubas 1991, 203). Also, cubism executes the reduction of the transcendence of the painting as a painting; it summarises [*résume*] the history of painting and “puts it into brackets” [“*met entre parenthèses*”] (Escoubas 1991, 198). Hans Reiner Sepp says that cubism undertakes twofold *epoché* (Sepp 1995, 297). The first is the reduction of perception, and this leads to the second reduction which is involved in the construction of the image itself. The main concern here is the picturing [*bildliche Wiedergabe*].<sup>110</sup> In other words, cubism aims to remove the contradiction between the way reality is depicted in the picture and the way reality is perceived: two-dimensional pictures can only indirectly or symbolically represent three-dimensional reality. The task of cubism is the de-symbolisation [*Entsymbolisierung*] of reality in the realm of art (Sepp 1995, 299f).

Husserl’s concept of *epoché* has also been used in phenomenological film studies. John Brough, for instance, claims that some films are *doing* phenomenology, in the sense that they describe phenomena in ways akin to phenomenology. According to Brough, to see a film is to enter into a cinematic *epoché* (Brough 2011, 195). It means that the film viewer becomes a disinterested spectator who can contemplate the world as phenomenon. Some movies, like Alfred Hitchcock’s

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<sup>109</sup> “[...] le cubism est la mise en œuvre de l’*epoché* phénoménologique. Non un simple exemple, mais l’essence meme de l’*epoché* picturale” (Escoubas 1991, 190)

<sup>110</sup> „Es wird sich zeigen, daß der Kubismus in der Radikalisierung jener Zäsur eine zweifache *Epoché* und Reduktion unternahm. [...] Die von ihm zunächst implizit durchgeführte Reduktion bezüglich der Wahrnehmung mündet in eine Reduktion im Aufbau des Bildes selbst, wobei beide Schritte im übergreifenden Ganzen einer Problematisierung der bildlichen Wiedergabe erfolgen.“ (Sepp 1995, 297–298)

*Rear Window* (1954), show us what perceiving is like. Since basically every scene in this movie is filmed from the perspective of the main character, Jeff, the movie shows how the perceiver is tied to a fixed spot at any given moment and how this limits what can be seen:

Jeff's broken leg, confining him to his apartment and limiting his visual field to what he can see from the perspective of his window, is the means through which the film becomes phenomenological. The broken leg carries with it a kind of forced phenomenological reduction. Jeff is "bracketed," "put out of action," and thus transformed into a spectator who can see what we ordinarily do not see in our active absorption in the world. (Brough 2011, 206)

In Brough's view, the phenomenological films also aim to show the essentials, that is, to grasp the essence of phenomena. The film's concrete images are the results of the filmmaker's *free imagination* and, accordingly, films are the products of the creative imagination (Brough 2011, 197–198). Thus, as was shown in this chapter, the concept of *epoché* has been widely used in studies of visual art.

## 4.2. Husserl's theory of art

### 4.2.1. Realistic and idealistic art

As said previously, Husserl does not develop a thorough theory of art and his attempts to define art are rare. In fact, there is only one text in which Husserl clearly tries to outline the theory of art: Appendix LIX in *Phantasy*. In this text, he writes that all art is moving between two extremes: realistic art and idealistic art [*realistische und idealistische Kunst*] (*Phantasy*, 652-654; Hua XXIII, 540-542). The aim of realistic art is to present landscapes, human beings, human communities, and so on, in the fullest possible concreteness that is necessary for the best characterisation of them. For instance, when Arthur Schnitzer creates a realistic fiction [*realistische Dichtung*] (*Phantasy*, 652; Hua XXIII, 540) about some events that take place in Vienna, then the fictional characters and the series of events in the fiction are clearly phantasised although the city Vienna belongs not to the phantasy but to the real world. What the author tries to do is to “capture in his images the characteristic flavour of time and place” (Brough 2005, li), in this case, that of Vienna at a particular period of time.

Realistic art is also a sort of biography of a time, of the strata of a time. It portrays through characteristic “images.” It constructs fictions in which characteristic types belonging to the time present themselves. (*Phantasy*, 653; Hua XXIII, 541)

The spectators feel *as-if* they were witnessing the events. Also, realistic art is accompanied by theoretical interest [*theoretische Interesse*] or delight in understanding of the characteristic types. This is why Husserl calls realistic art *artistic empiricism or positivism* [*Künstlerischer Empirismus oder Positivismus*] (*Phantasy*, 653; Hua XXIII, 541). Moreover, he says that realistic art is philocharacteristic [*philocharakteristischer*] or philopositivistic art [*philopositivistischer Kunst*] that is opposed to philocallistic art [*philokallistische Kunst*]. Only philocallistic art is concerned with the beautiful and not with what is characteristic as such. (*Phantasy*, 654; Hua XXIII, 542)

To describe idealistic art, Husserl gives an example of idealistic fiction [*idealistische Dichtung*]. He writes that the idealistic author does not have a positivistic but a normative focus [*ist*

*normative eingestellt*]. The author presents not only value types and the conflict between good and evil, “he wants to kindle the love of the good in our souls: without moralizing or preaching” (*Phantasy*, 654; Hua XXIII, 542). Moreover, the author transfigures the love in the medium of *beauty* [*ibid*]. But when art elevates one to the idea of the good or to the deity through beauty in uniting one with it, then it is already philosophical or metaphysical art that is at the higher stage of arts (*Phantasy*, 654; Hua XXIII, 542).

#### 4.2.2. Visual works of art as “images”

In the same appendix (Appendix LIX in *Phantasy*), Husserl gives another classification of art. Accordingly, all art moves between two extremes:

- A) Image art [*Bildkunst*]: presenting in an image, depicting [*abbilden*], mediating through image consciousness.
- B) Art that is purely a matter of phantasy [*Rein phantastische Kunst*], producing phantasy formations in the modification of pure neutrality. At least producing no concrete depictive image (*Phantasy*, 651; Hua XXIII, 540).

Under the second category belongs art that does not constitute a visible image object [*erschautes Bildobjekt*]. Music and playful phantasy [*spielende Phantasie*] would be examples of this. As Milan Uzelac suggests, all visual art is classified under the first category.<sup>111</sup> The view that all visual art (fine art) must be presented in an image is prevalent in Husserl’s texts. In his lecture course “Phantasy and Image Consciousness” from 1904/05, for instance, Husserl states that “Without an image, there is no fine art” (*Phantasy*, 44; Hua XXIII, 41). In fact, he never changed this view. The only correction he made, in his later texts in 1918, was that the “image” does not necessarily mean a “depiction”:

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<sup>111</sup> I agree with Uzelac, but it remains unclear to me how he can conclude from this that “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” (Uzelac 1998, 7).

Earlier I believed that it belonged to the essence of fine art to present in an image, and I understood this presenting to be depicting. Looked at more closely, however, this is not correct. (*Phantasy*, 616; Hua XXIII, 514)

An example of non-depictive images is an *image* created by an actor in a theatrical play.<sup>112</sup> Given this, John Brough is right in saying that the question whether works of art are images is different from the question whether works of art are depictive (given that they are images) (Brough 2005, L). I believe that it is easy to agree with Husserl that not all visual art is *depictive* but whether all visual works of art are necessarily *images* is more problematic. Even if we understand the “image” in a broad sense, that is, being *about* something (as Brough suggests), it is not so obvious that abstract art or (unaided) ready-mades are *images*. John Brough has analysed this definition of art in many of his articles. He does not defend Husserl’s view that every work of art is an *image* but he seems to defend the view that, for example, ready-mades nevertheless are. Brough claims that ready-mades “make sense and have value only with the image as background”(Brough 2010, 48).

Brough understands the notion of image in the way Husserl presents it in *Phantasy*. Accordingly, the question about being an image is the question about being an *image object*.<sup>113</sup> Ready-mades that are clearly physical, sensible and intersubjectively available objects have, in this respect, something in common with the *physical image* [*das physische Bild*] of the image consciousness. But this similarity alone is not enough for calling ready-mades *images*. In his article “Art and Non-Art: A Millennial Puzzle” (2001), Brough defines images as that which are *about* something and *embody* their meanings. It means that the image is not a symbol that points externally to something that is not present. Instead, the subject is seen *in* the image. In other words, an image’s depictive function is an internally representing one (Brough 2001, 11). In this way, Brough suggest that whenever *aboutness* and *embodiment* are involved, we may call the object an *image* and to take it to be a candidate for art. Of course, Brough is aware that being an image is not sufficient of something being a work of art (even if we agree that it is a necessary condition), because we find images that are not objects of art. What he wants to emphasise,

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<sup>112</sup> See also Chapter 2.4., “Depiction and theatrical performance”.

<sup>113</sup> Brough uses the notions interchangeably. For instance: “There can be no image or image-object without the physical image” (Brough 2010, 31).



however, is that the “external” definitions of art are insufficient and the focus must be on the internal structure of a work of art; and being an image is an internal dimension of art.

This claim – which amounts to saying that being an image is a necessary condition of being a work of art – may be controversial, but it is important in that it suggests the limits of a purely “externalist” attempt to define art. If moments of the external horizon alone determine what could be art, then we would be left with the sense that something is missing and even with the uneasy feeling that anything could be elevated, quite arbitrarily, to the status of art. (Brough 2001, 11)

I am sympathetic to Brough’s interpretation of Husserl’s notion of image (image object) according to which it is about something and embodies its meaning. But I do not agree that this *internal* approach provides a good definition of art, especially when unaided ready-mades are taken into consideration. I believe that in the case of ready-mades external horizons are determinative. In fact, it was suggested by Brough that art could be defined according to the external horizons of an object, in his article “Art and Artworld” (1988). Although Brough himself later abandoned the view, I think this approach is fruitful and is worth examining in more detail. This will be discussed in the following chapters.

### 4.2.3. Artworks appearing in a “cultural horizon” (the artworld)

Husserl refers many times to works of art as cultural objects. For instance, “Wherever we meet with animals and men and cultural objects [*Kulturobjekte*] (implements, works of art [*Kunstwerke*], or whatever), we no longer have mere nature but the expression of mental being-sense” (EJ, 55; EU, 55). Husserl also says that objects appear within horizons, and one of the horizons of perceptible physical objects is the *cultural world* [*Kulturwelt*]. The notion of the cultural world is best explained by Husserl in the *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*<sup>114</sup> in which he compares it with the scientific world.<sup>115</sup> As David Carr says, the cultural world can also be called the cultural community and is clearly dependent on the perceived world:

The cultural community is not something perceived, like a thing or a body, but neither is it given to us independently of perceived bodies; we know the community because we perceive other persons as members, representatives, or authorities of the community and because we perceive physical objects such as tools and books, factories and monuments, as its artifacts and documents. But the cultural world is precisely *dependent* for its sense upon the perceived world and is not *identical* with it. It represents a higher and distinct level of constitution [...]. (Carr 2004, 368)

Another way to talk about the cultural world is to say that there are many cultural worlds that can also be called *vocational worlds*. Every vocation is a practical world that has a purposeful activity and is focused on specific works and their horizons. For instance, “the scientists, like all who live communalized under a vocational end (“life-purpose”), have eyes for nothing but their ends and horizons of work [*Werkhorizonte*]” (*Crisis*, 383; Hua VI, 462). One could also say that being the object of a vocational world, the object appears within the vocational horizon. If we accept it, we can say that artworks appear within *art horizon*. John Brough has taken this step and says that artworks appear within a cultural horizon that can be called, borrowing Arthur Danto’s terminology, the *artworld*. I am sympathetic to this definition of artworks and I think it

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<sup>114</sup> See Beilage III in Hua VI. In the English translation, it is Appendix VI.

<sup>115</sup> Husserl has two different approaches: the cultural world is opposed to the scientific or natural world, and the cultural world includes the scientific world (of which science is a part) (Carr 2004).

is most useful in defining *unaided ready-mades* as works of art. I want to show in the following that the artworld is an *external co-determining* horizon that is sufficient for determining unaided ready-mades as artworks.

#### 4.2.3.1. The artworld

In 1964, Arthur Danto presented a paper, “The Artworld”. at the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association in which he introduced the notion of the *artworld*: “To see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld” (Danto 1964, 580). Since then, a profusion of texts have been published in reaction to Danto’s paper, among which the best known are George Dickie’s texts of the institutional theory of art.<sup>116</sup> However, one of the most outstanding analyses of the conception of the artworld from the perspective of Husserlian phenomenology is presented by John Brough in his article “Art and Artworld: Some Ideas for a Husserlian Aesthetics” (1988). In my view, it is regrettable that Brough’s article has received so little attention for it is an original and elucidating thesis. I want to defend Brough’s claim that an object of art appears within the artworld horizon but, contrary to Brough, I claim that in the case of unaided ready-mades, the artworld horizon is sufficient for determining these objects as artworks.

John Brough, in his article “Art and Artworld: Some Ideas for a Husserlian Aesthetics”, presents a phenomenological theory of art that is based on Edmund Husserl’s philosophy. He draws a parallel between Husserl’s notion of *horizon*, George Dickie’s notion of *institution* or *context*, and Arthur Danto’s idea of the *artworld* (Brough 1988, 35). His aim is to show that the institutional theory of art is best realised “if it is situated within a phenomenological setting” (Brough 1988, 29). Brough’s interpretation of the artworld as a horizon is derived from Husserl’s *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Although Husserl never used the notion of *artworld*,<sup>117</sup> Brough believes that since a work of art is a *cultural* object it can

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<sup>116</sup> The most recent version of Dickie’s theory states, for example, that “An artworld system is a framework for the presentation of a work of art by an artist to an artworld public” (Dickie 2001, 55).

<sup>117</sup> Husserl uses the notion of “image world” [*Bildwelt*] which describes the image object’s appearance and is opposed to the actual world (*Phantasy*, 359; Hua XXIII, 299). However, Husserl never used the concept of the “image world” to define visual art, at least not explicitly.

be said that the object appears against a particular cultural horizon – the artworld. This cultural framework is essential to something’s appearing as art. In Brough’s words, “It is when an artefact is made and presented within the horizon of the artworld that it can be intended as a work of art” (Brough 1988, 36).

According to Brough’s account, the artworld as a horizon has three dimensions: vocational, communal, and historical. The vocational artworld is made up of individual artists. What characterises artists’ activity is that they *intend* to create works of art and have an understanding of their vocation. The aim of the artist’s work – to create art – is different from that of the scientist’s work, and this is why vocational *worlds* differ from each other. As Husserl explains in the *Crisis*, we live for particular ends that can be momentary and changing or for an enduring goal that guides us for longer periods. If it is a goal that we have elected for ourselves as a life-vocation, to be the dominant one in our active life, then a self-enclosed *world-horizon* is constituted that also prescribes to us what is “correct” and “incorrect” within this world:

Thus as men with a vocation we may permit ourselves to be indifferent to everything else, and we have an eye only for this horizon as our world and for its own actualities and possibilities – those that exist in this “world” – i.e., we have an eye only to what is “reality” here (what is correct, true in relation to this goal) or “unreality” (the incorrect, the mistaken, the false). (*Crisis*, 379; Hua VI, 459)

The artworld is also communal. There are many co-subjects of the common cultural praxis that play their respective roles in the artworld. Artists, public, curators, collectors: they all form *an internally communalised conscious life* and possess a mutual understanding of their cultural praxis. This is why someone “totally ignorant of the concept of art could not make a work of art, or be aware of something as a work of art, because he or she would not know what the role of the artist or the role of the artworld public is” (Brough 1988, 38). Brough emphasises that the artworld as any cultural world is intersubjectively constituted. It must be added that, in Husserl’s view, an alteration of validity through reciprocal correction also constantly occurs in communalisation. In this sense, even what is straightforwardly perceptual is communalised and always in motion: each individual knows that he and his fellow have different sides or

perspectives of the same thing but in each case these are taken from the same total system of multiplicities “as the horizon of possible experience of this thing” (*Crisis*, 164; Hua VI, 167). On the other hand, through these reciprocal understandings, what is “normal” is established in the communalisation (*Crisis*, 163; Hua VI, 166). In this way, the *community* is open and able to change but also establishes the standards and norms.

The artworld community also possesses the dimension of history, which means that the artworld exists by means of its particular traditions. In the context of history, the communalisation of the artworld appears as traditionalisation: each cultural *present* implies the whole of the cultural *past*. However, the historicity of the artworld does not imply conservatism. On the contrary, as Brough explains it, “The historicity of the artworld is the condition of artistic innovation, not its obstacle” (Brough 1988, 39). History motivates the artist and shapes its activity; the artist consumes history and creates the work of art out of “the material of sedimented traditions” (Brough 1988, 40). Thus, Brough argues that a work of art is a cultural object that is presented within the horizons of its own social and historical worlds.

#### **4.2.3.2. Internal and external horizons**

The concept of horizon plays an important part in Husserl’s phenomenology.<sup>118</sup> According to him, any perception includes, for consciousness, a *horizon* belonging to its object (*Crisis*, 158; Hua VI, 161). Since objects are never perceived exhaustively through a single act of perception, there is always a certain *inadequacy* involved (*Ideas* I, 94; Hua III/1, 91). It means, for instance, that every perceptual appearance of an object includes some aspects of the object that are not visible at a moment; these are potentially there and are called *horizons*.

All possible further determinations of a perceptual object, such as the back-side of an object or some details hidden from the current view, compose the *internal horizon* of the object. The *external horizon*, on the other hand, includes other objects intended beyond the object and all the possible surroundings of the object. As Husserl notes, we never perceive a thing separated from

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<sup>118</sup> See also Chapter 3.3.1., “Cutting off horizons”.

the world around it, we perceive it “within a perceptual field” (*Crisis*, 162; Hua VI, 165). For example, the internal horizon of a painting lets us believe that the back-side of the painting is probably not painted. Or in the case of unaided ready-mades, such as *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, we would expect the object to be hard and not liquid if we were to touch it. Objects that are exhibited in an art museum are surrounded by physical objects – the ceiling, the floor, other objects of art, and also the visitors in the room – that all compose the external horizon of the object. Horizons may not be fulfilled and we may get disappointed versus what we initially expected to see, but this means only that our understanding of what we are experiencing will change and not that our experience does not include horizons.

The internal and external horizons are discussed by Husserl primarily in connection to our experience of perceptual objects. Perceptual field is definitely important since visual works of art are spatiotemporal objects that we can perceive. However, as Smith and McIntyre explain, Husserl’s notion of the horizon includes more than the perceptual. The so-called supra-perceptual parts of the horizon include possible judgments or beliefs about the object (Smith and McIntyre 1982, 243). As Walter Hopp puts it, horizons exercise a sense-giving function that also explains why the same sensations can be interpreted in different ways. For instance, whether a figure is perceived as a human being or a wax figure is determined by the horizon: “When the figure is perceived as a woman, the horizon prescribes [...] that it is capable of autonomous movement, that it will respond in various ways to the world around it, that it will be capable of communication, that it will be warm to the touch, and so forth” (Hopp 2008, 240).<sup>119</sup> In the same vein, if horizons were to prescribe only possible sensations of an object (colour, shape), we would not be able to differentiate unaided ready-mades from objects that are not art.

In “Art and Artworld” (1988), Brough argues that the artworld as a cultural horizon serves as the *necessary and sufficient* condition for the presentation of artifacts as works of art (Brough 1988, 36). He wants to defend the institutional (and phenomenological) theory of art against the traditional aesthetics that searches for a timeless essence in art, which is usually found in some prominent feature of the objects of art. According to Brough, the focus of the traditional theories

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<sup>119</sup> In Tze-Wan Kwan’s words, an external horizon “adds to the experience of a thing a meaning context relating this particular thing so to speak to an external world” (Kwan 2004, 311).

of art is on the individual object with the aim to define some property belonging to that object. But endless disputes arise because “no property or properties can be found which belong to all works of art without exception, and none can be found which might not also be shared by things which are not works of art” (Brough 1988, 31). Brough suggests that the emphasis must be on the attitude or *approach* towards the object. The phenomenologist, for example, is no longer focused on “the work of art as an object “in itself,” but on *how* the work of art presents itself *as* a work of art in experience” (Brough 1988, 30). The main reason for refuting the search for specific properties in works of art seems to derive from Brough’s concern over how to define works of art such as *unaided ready-mades*<sup>120</sup> that are visually indistinguishable from objects that are not presented as works of art, for example, an ordinary snow shovel and a snow shovel in Duchamp’s *In Advance of the Broken Arm* (1915). In Brough’s view, the answer is that a work of art must appear within a unique horizon – the artworld.

In his text “Who’s Afraid of Marcel Duchamp?” (1991), Brough starts to doubt, however, whether an artworld horizon provides sufficient conditions for something to be a work of art. He argues here that if all that distinguishes a work of art from an object that is not a work of art is, in Danto’s words, interpretation, then *anything* could become a work of art (Brough 1991, 138). He now proposes that the minimal requirements for something to be art are the artist’s intention and artifactuality: “What is required is that the artefact be made by the artist with the intention that it be art” (Brough 1991, 139–140). In my view, the only problem with this account is that it leaves ready-mades outside of the realm of art.<sup>121</sup>

Contrary to his statements in “Art and Artworld” (1988), Brough is claiming in “Art and Non-Art” (2001) that the *artworld* cannot alone determine what could be an object of art. In this article (“Art and Non-Art”), Brough calls the artworld an *external horizon* or an external cultural

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<sup>120</sup> Brough refers to Duchamp’s *Essential Writings* in which the distinction is made between “readymade unaided” and “readymade aided”. The first category involves ready-mades to which the artists do not do anything (except signing perhaps), that remain untouched by the artist. Examples of these are Duchamp’s *In Advance of the Broken Arm* (a snow shovel) and *Fountain* (a urinal). But if the artist “aids” or does something with the object, as with Duchamp’s *Bicycle Wheel* in which metal wheel is mounted on painted wood stool, then it is “readymade aided.” (Brough 1991, 120)

<sup>121</sup> Perhaps this is also the reason why Brough later suggests, in his article “Image and Artistic Value” (1997), that a work of art has to be an image: “One element, however, is conspicuously missing from the institutional account: the image (Brough 2010, 30). (First published in 1997 (Kluwer Academic Publishers).)

horizon and he thinks that the external approach must be accompanied by the internal approach. He wants to say that if the phenomenological account of perceptual objects includes both external and internal dimensions then, in the same vein, the phenomenology of the work of art “is not complete without a complementary phenomenological consideration of the internal structure of the culturally situated work itself” (Brough 2001, 9). He believes that the internal structure of the work of art has to do with the work’s form and content (Brough 2001, 4).

I agree with Brough that we are able to detect the external as well as internal dimensions in any work of art (given that the work can be perceived). I also think that it is definitely right to say that the artworld as a cultural horizon is the external horizon of the object of art and not an internal horizon. All the dimensions of the artworld presented by Brough, that it is vocational, communal and historical, define the object externally. Still, I want to defend the view that if we take unaided ready-mades to be works of art, we must be able to define art independently of any *properties* that the objects of art have, and only through the external horizon. As discussed above, this idea was defended by Brough in his article “Art and Artworld” (1988) but abandoned later in his text “Art and Non-Art” (2001) where he argues that the *internal structure* of the work of art – being about something and embodying its meaning – plays an important role in distinguishing art from non-art. Furthermore, in his later texts, he starts to doubt whether the artworld as external contextual condition is necessary at all for defining works of art (that are images). In his concluding remarks in the “Art and Non-Art” he says that being an image is a necessary condition for visual artworks. What is missing is another condition that can be either i) the external contextual conditions (the artworld), ii) aesthetic qualities, or iii) the internal meaning or content of the work; in other words, the *way* in which the work presents its content (Brough 2001, 14–15). Brough prefers the third option and thereby expresses doubts about whether the artworld is necessary at all. Thus, according to Brough, if the image “calls attention to itself as image,” (Brough 2001, 15) that is, if we are not interested in the subject apart from the way in which it is presented in the image object, if we let ourselves see what and how the artist intended to present the work of art, then we are experiencing an object of art. I want to argue, however, that we cannot do away with the external horizons of an object if we are to define unaided ready-mades as art.



#### 4.2.3.3. Decontextualisation

The artworld is an external horizon of the object of art and, in having a sense-giving function, it plays an essential role in defining objects as art. I want to propose that in the case of unaided ready-mades, it is only the external horizon that gives the object the meaning of *art*. In other words, internal horizons do not have the sense-giving function to define unaided ready-mades as artworks. Moreover, I claim that the artworld has a special status among other external horizons – it is an externally *co-determining* horizon. But before I explain the notion of a co-determining horizon, I want to examine the process of how a manufactured everyday life object becomes an object of art. Steven Crowell suggests that some minimalist artworks are deconstructions in the sense that they have been decontextualised from everyday life horizons (Crowell 2011, 40). The same idea is expressed by Brough. In his article “Image and Artistic Value”, he writes about ready-mades as objects taken out of the context of use and put into a context in which they simply appear, that is, into the context of the artworld (Brough 2010, 37). In his words, “The readymades, ordinary manufactured objects such as a snow shovel or urinal – selected by Duchamp, usually inscribed by him with some sort of title, and inserted into the context of the art world – are now widely taken to be works of art.”<sup>122</sup>

Now, one could argue that such decontextualisation is effected by the change of the physical surroundings of the object. To find examples of unaided ready-mades that are presented in a “new” environment is not difficult. This way to see the decontextualisation also supports the claim that some of the external horizons change but the internal horizons remain the same. As Husserl says:

This development of external determinations depends, therefore, on the cogiveness of other objects in the external horizon of the perception, in the present field, and on their addition or disappearance, whereas internal determinations remain unaffected by this change in the surroundings by the majority of the coaffecting objects. (EJ, 106; EU, 115-116)

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<sup>122</sup> (Brough 2010, 29) It should be noted, however, that Brough’s aim is not to defend decontextualisation but the idea that all works of art are images; and the shift in context is not sufficient “to account for the readymades’ transubstantiation into images” (Brough 2010, 35).

However, the change of the physical surroundings is not what makes an object a work of art. It is not that I take a tool into an art museum and then it becomes an object of art. I believe that it is more plausible to say that what takes place is the change of the status of horizons. Steven Crowell suggests that there are two possible ways for the horizontal field to change in the case of artworks: the everyday life horizon is 1) eliminated or 2) receded away (Crowell 2011, 50). The first case is illustrated by Crowell with the example of Donald Judd's work *Untitled (Large Stack)* (1991), that consists of ten boxes made out of orange anodized aluminium and plexiglass, and placed on the top of the other on the museum wall. According to Crowell, we could experience them as matchboxes but this presupposes that we experience them as ordinary everyday life objects. As a result of the *decontextualisation*, these boxes are deprived of the everyday world horizon and we do not experience them *as* something anymore:

Its placement against the bare white gallery wall performs an initial gesture of decontextualization: these boxes resist any interpretation that would construe them *as* something because they have been removed from the kind of horizon – the everyday world and my skillful coping within it – whose references support the narrative sort of meaning that normally enables us to experience them as a matchbox, for instance, or as a metaphor for transcendence: “Jacob’s Ladder.” (Crowell 2011, 40)

We do not experience them as everyday world boxes because of the way they are given. A perceptual object that is given as a matchbox has a meaning with a definite horizon – to grasp something as a matchbox demands that the object be related to many other things, such as cigarettes or a person who knows how to use matches and cigarettes – and therefore “in the absence of such horizontal references I could never experience something as a *matchbox*” (Crowell 2011, 39). At the same time, Judd's sculpture makes thematic various profiles in which a single box would be given if we were to have further visual experiences of the object. In other words, following Husserl's terminology, Judd's presentation of the boxes makes thematic the *internal* horizons of the box: each box represents different profile from different perspectives that we would have if we were to move around a single box. Crowell's standpoint seems to be that by the decontextualisation of the boxes, the everyday life horizon that could define these

boxes as matchboxes is eliminated, but by thematising or making visible the internal horizons of a box, Judd's sculpture uncovers *the visible thing as visible* and helps us to *gather the meaning of things*.<sup>123</sup> And in his view, this is how these objects become objects of art.

The second example by Crowell concerns Giorgio Morandi's painting *Natura Morta* (1943). Here, the objects depicted are barely recognisable as implements. Our inability to discern any material distinctions – how these objects were produced, how old they are – inhibits the horizon in which these objects could function as implements. Crowell thinks that Morandi's art leads us to an experience of the *thinghood* of the thing, which seems to be similar to the aim of Judd's sculptures. But, as Crowell puts it, while Judd *eliminates* the horizon, Morandi allows it to *pass* and *recede* (Crowell 2011, 50).

Despite the fact that Crowell's examples are not about unaided ready-mades, his analyses of horizons is fruitful here. In my view it seems plausible to claim that in the case of ready-mades, all horizontal connotations to everyday practical life in which these objects are to be taken as tools or implements are inhibited. The snow shovel in Duchamp's *In Advance of the Broken Arm* should not be taken as something to be used to shovel snow. Thus, I agree with Steven Crowell that through decontextualisation, some of the horizons that allow us to see the object as a tool in our everyday life practice are removed but this does not mean that, thereby, the horizons are *eliminated*: they are only moved to the background in which they do not function as co-determining the meaning of the artwork. Therefore I believe Crowell's analysis of Judd's sculpture is not plausible. When I look at *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, I still recognise it as a snow shovel that I use in my everyday life practice. But the knowledge of how to use snow shovels and all my previous experiences and emotions tied up with snow shovels remain in the

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<sup>123</sup> A similar idea is presented by Espen Dahl in (Dahl 2010) According to Dahl, in order to become aware of the *horizon*, some kind of reduction is needed, and Rothko's abstract paintings seem to undertake such reduction. Abstract paintings do not present particular objects but the past horizons of our previous experiences of some objects or situations, such as a particular atmosphere of a situation or some emotions (related to these objects). In other words, abstract paintings awaken in us the "sleeping" horizons or otherwise unnoticed horizons in our everyday life practices, and in this sense, Rothko's paintings "make the unseen horizon visible as such" ((Dahl 2010, 239). However, it remains unclear in Dahl's account how the horizons can be displayed *without* objects. If the past horizons are co-perceived or apperceived in the present, then why do the objects *to whom* the horizons are related remain absent or hidden?

*background* that no longer co-determines the meaning of the object of art. The artworld instead becomes the *external co-determining horizon*.

#### 4.2.3.4. External co-determining horizon

In the *Ideas I*, Husserl makes the distinction between the notion of *horizon* and the notions of *background* [*Hintergrund*] and *halo* [*Hof*]. In this text, he gives an example of contemplating pure numbers and their laws. By having an arithmetical attitude, we live in the arithmetical world in which our focus of regard is on single numbers or numerical formations “surrounded by a partly determinate, partly indeterminate arithmetical horizon” (*Ideas I*, 54; Hua III/1, 59). In this way, the *natural* world, the world of “real actuality”, will not be altered or undisturbed in any way and it will always remain “on hand”, but in the arithmetical attitude the natural world does not function as a horizon anymore. Instead, it remains in the background:

In that case the natural world *remains “on hand:”* [“*vorhandene*”] afterwards, as well as before, I am in the natural attitude, *undisturbed* in it *by the new attitudes*. If my cogito is moving *only* in the worlds pertaining to these new attitudes, the natural world remains outside consideration; it is a background for my act-consciousness, but it is *not a horizon within which an arithmetical world finds a place*. The two worlds simultaneously present are *not connected* [...]. (*Ideas I*, 55; Hua III/1, 59-60)

As Saulius Geniusas explains it, Husserl’s notion of horizon differs from that of background and halo in respect to the co-determination of the sense of what is intuitively given – whereas background only accompanies or co-presents the sense, the horizon also co-determines (Geniusas 2012, 191). Numbers can be contemplated in various surroundings or backgrounds – we can sit in the living room, walk in the street, etc. – but these surroundings “*do not form a horizon*, because even though they surround, *they do not determine mathematical objectivities*”(Geniusas 2012, 50). On the other hand, numerous numbers that remain non-thematic in the mathematical world, that surround the particular number I am being conscious of, function as a horizon. The mathematical or arithmetical world cannot be absent since that would make it impossible to have a mathematical thought. Therefore the horizon is necessarily *a horizon of the irreducible*

*dimensions of sense*. Geniusas says, “[...] even though the horizons can be, and in fact are, continuously modified, they cannot be lost”, and he adds, “Far from merely transforming the sense of the object, such a loss would simply nullify what makes an object into an object” (Geniusas 2012, 51). The background and halo, on the other hand, can be lost without thereby cancelling the being of objectivities. These can determine the sense of the objectivity in question but they do not need to, and they definitely do not change the sense so much as alter what kind of object our consciousness intends to.

Husserl later revised his theory and claimed that the *perceptual world* always functions as the *horizon*, even in the case of the arithmetical attitude, since it always determines any objectivities as *worldly*. But it has to be noted that this claim comes from the *genetic* and not from the *static* phenomenological perspective. The main idea here is that when the arithmetical world is “disrupted” by some event that takes place in the perceptual world, then the arithmetical world vanishes but the opposite will never take place – the perceptual world will never vanish. Only in this sense the perceptual world has the privilege of omnipresence. As Geniusas explains: “A genetic deepening of such a point of view brings to light the horizontal sense of the world's givenness: despite its non-objective, non-thematic, and non-intuitive givenness, the world nonetheless continues to determine objectivities as worldly” (Geniusas 2012, 192).

Now, despite the fact that Husserl later changed the difference in meaning between the notions of horizon, background and halo, he never abandoned the distinction between co-presence and co-determination (Geniusas 2012, 192), which is why this distinction can still be used in explaining our experience of objects of art. When we look at the *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, we *perceive* an object and it will not cease to be a *perceptual object*. The functionality horizon, that is, how to use snow shovels, is also there but when the artworld horizon predominates then the functionality horizon recedes away: it is co-present but not co-determining. Basically, there are infinite numbers of horizons a perceptual object can have but not all of them are taken into account when the object is experienced as art.

In sum, I have suggested that unaided ready-mades can be defined as objects of art only in terms of external horizons. There is no internal structure or (visual) properties that distinguish them

from objects that are not art. Following Edmund Husserl's notions of internal and external horizons, we can definitely describe the internal horizons of ready-mades since we can perceive them. But no matter how well we examine and go into the details of the object, this process will not reveal us whether the object is a work of art or not. I also intended to show that the artworld as one of the external horizons of an object of art is not only a co-present but also a co-determining external horizon. All the other external horizons, like a functionality horizon, will be left out. If we understand decontextualisation in this way, and not in the sense of changing the physical surroundings, or eliminating horizons (as suggested by Steven Crowell), then we can say that in the case of unaided ready-mades, some horizons are passed or receded away. We do not forget or delete the knowledge of how everyday life objects are to be handled or how they look like in everyday life but this does not play an essential role in defining these objects as artworks anymore.

## Conclusion

In my dissertation, I have tried to contribute to the understanding of Husserl's theory of image consciousness, aesthetic consciousness, and art. The central theme has been the experience of images. I aimed to point out the advantages and disadvantages of Husserl's theory that mostly came forward in the attempt to apply Husserl's theory to the experience of modern and contemporary art. I have shown that Husserl makes a clear distinction between depictive and non-depictive image consciousness, and between positing and non-positing depictive consciousness. He also distinguishes analogical moments from non-analogical moments in the appearing image that defines our experience of pictures. Moreover, in the light of Husserl's theory, Richard Wollheim's theory of seeing-in can be analysed as an example of three-fold experience of seeing-in.

I have also pointed out some of the difficulties and shortcomings of Husserl's theory. Firstly, the way Husserl describes the three objects or objectivities in image consciousness leaves room for doubts whether the image subject is also the referent. Secondly, Husserl retains the possibility of having depiction in the case of theatrical performance. However, if we understand Husserl's theory in this way, that depiction is always involved when an actor plays a real life person, then in the case of a theatre play in which actors are playing themselves, it is hard to see how Husserl's theory of depiction can be applied in full. Thirdly, Husserl's notes on the possibility of distinguishing the image object appearance from the appearance of the image subject leads to the difficulty of defining which *appearance* we are focused on in aesthetic consciousness. Finally, Husserl does not distinguish the "aesthetic object" from the "work of art."

In my dissertation, I also aimed to apply Husserl's theory to explain the experience of works of visual art. Although Husserl's philosophy has been used to define the experience of art, these analyses have mostly focused on the clear cut cases of pictorial art: film, photography, painting, etc. My aim was to apply his theory to some borderline cases of visual art, like strongly site-specific art, unaided ready-mades and theatre plays in which actors play themselves. As a result, I have shown that Husserl's idea on the limited synthetic unity of the aesthetic object holds true in the case of strongly site-specific art as well. But Husserl's idea that depiction is involved in the case of theatrical performance cannot be easily applied to situations in which actors are playing themselves. Finally, I have defended the view that Husserl's notion of the external co-

determining horizon can be used to define art and it is useful in defining unaided ready-mades as works of art.



## Abbreviations of Husserl's texts

<b>CM</b>	<i>Cartesian Meditations</i>
<b>Crises</b>	<i>The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology</i>
<b>EJ</b>	<i>Experience and Judgment</i>
<b>EU</b>	<i>Erfahrung und Urteil</i>
<b>Ideas I</b>	<i>Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book</i>
<b>IP</b>	<i>The Idea of Phenomenology</i>
<b>LH</b>	Husserl's letter to Hugo von Hofmannstahl (English translation, 2009)
<b>LI</b>	<i>Logical Investigations (Volume 2)</i>
<b>Phantasy</b>	<i>Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory</i>
<b>TS</b>	<i>Thing and Space</i>
<b>Time</b>	<i>On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time</i>

The abbreviations of the original texts in German from the *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke*

**Hua** (followed by the volume number)

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