

Ideality – A Missing Link Between the Philosophies of the Arts of Ernst Cassirer and Edmund Husserl?

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Abstract: The philosophies of Ernst Cassirer and Edmund Husserl are examined with particular respect to the philosophy of the arts. While Cassirer's critical idealism of the arts, in *Freiheit und Form* from 1918 and most notably in his two late books *The Logic of the Humanities* and *An Essay on Man*, depends on a concept of ideality that evolves from a concept of the ideal world with application of Moses Mendelssohn's distinction of the two kinds of the natural and the arbitrary signs of arts, Husserl's transcendental idealism of the arts, in *Formale und transzendente Logik* and its short but crucial § 2, departs from the fact that the ideality of the 'linguistic' encompasses the ideality of textual signs as well as the reproduction of non-textual visual or primarily audible signs. These two philosophical, *au fond* semiotic positions of earlier 20th century are shown as enriched by their philosophies of art in general and by their exemplary contexts drawing on further writings of both of them which revolve around the ideal and the ideality. Taking account of the fundamental role of language both in Cassirer and Husserl a quick glance is taken at Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art*. For the final, instead of a systematic comparison or conclusion, a possible common root of Cassirer's and Husserl's critical and transcendental idealisms of the arts is suggested with a hint at Kant's philosophy, its historical followers and its focus on a treatment of ideality that sheds a ray on the arts of the novel and of the sketch flashing in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Keywords: Arts, Ideality, Semiotics, Cassirer, Husserl, Kant

Edmund Husserl and Ernst Cassirer, half a generation apart, are the most important exponents of phenomenology and neo-Kantianism still read today. Yet phenomenology and neo-Kantianism are among the most important currents in philosophy of the (late 19th and) 20th century, which have diverged and to this day openly, or sometimes more tacitly, relate to each other. In doing so, they broadly measure through the fields of philosophy, which also include the field of philosophy of art as well as the philosophy of the arts. What do their philosophies of the arts look like? And are there connections in this field between their idealism, which is critical on the one hand and transcendental on the other?

1 Cassirer's Philosophy of the Arts and its Position on Ideality

Compelled to face the challenges of forced emigration in the last decade of his life, Ernst Cassirer was nonetheless able to write two monographs. They constitute the sum of his philosophy and for the first time in his work contain outlines of his own philosophy of art. We are talking about *The Logic of the Humanities: Five Studies* from 1942 and *An Essay on Man* from 1944.

1.1 The Ideality of Art and the Ideal World

An important topic of these two books is ideality.¹ Cassirer refers to it in the *Five Studies* vis-à-vis imitation theories of art. His argument goes as follows: If art

¹ By ideality I understand idea-ness or idea-adequacy, one could also introduce the term 'idea-ity.' It is true that one would have to speak more precisely of the 'being-of-that-which-is-ideal.' This would require ontological investigations. For the moment it is sufficient to lean on Kant. Unlike categories or concepts of understanding, ideas or concepts of reason transcend the area of (natural) scientific knowledge. But it makes sense to speak of a similarity of ideas, in Kant's case, of space and time, both of which forms of intuition lie outside the area of reason and are even prior to the area of understanding and its phenomena. Thus, Kant calls his philosophical doctrine in view of that "ideality of outer appearances [...] *idealism*" (Kant 1998, A367). In this variety of

merely repeated an “external fact or an inner event,” one would have to “deny it any measure of ‘ideal significance’” (Cassirer 1961, 83). Yet, true ideality, the ideality of “theoretical concepts [of the sciences, P. M.]” as well as that of the “intuitive formation [of the arts, P. M.]” always “entails a productive, rather than a merely receptive or imitative” behavior (ibid.). That is, as in “any other [...] species of art” (ibid., 84), it is a matter of “that kind of ‘ideality’ which Johann Wolfgang Goethe described with his words as “the original, the ideal mode of thought, the eternal within the ephemeral” (ibid.).²

This marks the topos ‘ideality.’ Again, Cassirer refers, in the *Essay on Man*, chapter “X. History,” to “the ideality of art. Art gives us an ideal description of human life by a sort of alchemistic process; it turns our life into the dynamic of pure forms.” (Cassirer 2006, 221) To this he appends a footnote linking to chapter “IX. Art.” Here, the subject is the “change in the human soul” (ibid., 160) towards a “world of pure sensuous forms,” in which “all our feelings undergo a transsubstantiation” (ibid., 161; cf. Danto 1964, 580).

The ideality of art in the experience of pure, sensuous forms also finds expression in an ideal world. Thus, Cassirer states in the last paragraph of “XII. Summary and Conclusion” that “man discovers and proves a new power – the power to build up a world of his own, an ‘ideal’ world.” (Cassirer 2006, 244)³ This “‘ideal world’ [...] is opened from different sides by religion, art, philosophy, science” (ibid., 47). And when Cassirer translates the saying “To live in the idea is to treat the impossible as if it were possible” (Goethe 1998c, 382) as “To live in the ideal world [...] is to treat the impossible as if it were possible” (Cassirer 2006, 68), he does so because of this world “art [...] gives [...] the intuition of the form of things” (ibid., 156). Cassirer therefore extends Plato’s numerical “ideal world” (ibid., 6 and 234) under the auspices of an anthropology of art: “Schiller [...] did not hesitate to connect the ‘ideal’

ideality as possibility of ideas, ontological account would have to be taken of the normative prescription of the ideal in the root word ‘*idealīs*,’ but also of ‘*idealiter*,’ further of “*Ideengemäßheit*” (Kainz 1948, 537–551), of “*Ideität*” and “*Ideellität*” (Spiegelberg 1930, §§ 16ff.), but also of a historical topos like “empty ideality” in romanticism and modernism, as for instance in Baudelaire (Friedrich 1956, 35f.).

² Cassirer indirectly quotes: “*die ideelle Denkweise das Ewige im Vorübergehenden schauen läßt*” (Goethe 1930, 323).

³ Kaufmann (1949, 835) has hinted at this passage in the following way: “Cassirer emphasizes that he deals with the world of man above all in order to pass through it to the being of man.”

world of art with the play of a child because [...] the world of the child had undergone a process of idealization and sublimation.” (Ibid., 179) But the playful-illusive images of a child (ibid., 177) later transform into the artist’s “pure forms”:

The artist plays with *forms*, with lines and designs, rhythms and melodies [...] [for the sake of a] metamorphosis of objects into forms. [...] [T]he artist dissolves the hard stuff of things in the crucible of his imagination, and the result of this process is the discovery of a new world of poetic, musical, or plastic forms. (Ibid., 177f.)

Cassirer was already interested in such a specific ideality of the ideal world thirty years earlier in his programmatic treatise in philosophy of science *Substance and Function*. Here Cassirer (1953, 297) aimed at an ideality of possible symbolic forms by means of abstraction of the “ideality [...] of certain axioms and norms of scientific knowledge.” Via abstracted “images” a “transformation of the content of mere perception into the world of empirical-physical masses and movements” takes place (ibid., 299). Such a “transformation of the concretely sensuous reality” into a new “sensuous multiplicity” corresponds here to “certain theoretical conditions” (ibid., 14). As this already indicates, the transformation of symbolic forms could also correspond to other, for instance artistic conditions. There is no mention of art yet. But the basic idealistic motive becomes clear.

1.2 Mendelssohn’s Characterization: Actuality of the 18th in the 20th Century

For his undoubtedly idealistic-classicist conception of art, Cassirer takes up not only Goethe and Schiller, but also aesthetic theories of the German pre- or early classical period. For the theory of art still dominant in the 18th century the aim was to regulate art as a creative-subjective activity and to commit it to the imitation of objective, beautiful nature. Thus, performing arts and music would have to comply with the demand *ut pictura poesis*: “Poetry is differentiated from painting by the mode and means, but not by the general function of imitation.” (Cassirer 2006, 150) But poetry does not merely imitate. It does not merely describe. Theorists from the mid-18th century onward confront this problem. Jean-Jacques Rousseau,

in his programmatic novel *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* from 1761, replaces the value of imitation with the value of feeling, and with this “new ideal” revives a corresponding “ideal of ‘characteristic art’” (ibid., 152). Goethe struck the same note in 1772, as Cassirer informs us (ibid., 152f):

Art is formative long before it is beautiful, and yet it is then true and great art, very often truer and greater than beautiful art itself. For man has in him a formative nature, [...] this characteristic art is the only true art. (Goethe 1998b, 13; trans. by Bosanquet 1923, 114)

And Moses Mendelssohn emphasizes the power of characterization in a general theory of the arts, as Cassirer (Cassirer 2001, 86–97) elaborates in the chapter “*Die Entstehung der ästhetischen Formwelt*,” section “4. *Das Problem des ‘Zeichens’ und seine ästhetische Bedeutung*” of *Freiheit und Form. Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte*. The only philosophy of the arts that features in *Freiheit und Form*, this book on the 18th century, is Mendelssohn’s account of the characterizing or signifying powers of the arts (ibid., 93). According to it, the expressively passionate bodily movements result in two kinds of artistic signs: the natural signs of the fine arts of painting, sculpture, music, and dance, and the arbitrary signs of what were then called the fine ‘sciences’ of poetry and eloquence. It is the specificity of these various ‘signs’ of art and not the imitable nature outside of us that determines the formations of these arts. Mendelssohn writes in 1757:

[T]he poet has [...] set before himself an ideal beauty as a model, and sought out in nature the traits that together form such a perfect character. He has beautified nature. With regard to the art of sound, this truth shines far more clearly into the eyes. The sounds of nature are expressive, but rarely melodic, and the artist must embellish them if he wishes to please. This is also what the dancer does, for example, when he imitates the casual movements of a shepherd, but combines them with propriety and art. [...] The signs by means of which an object is expressed can be either natural or arbitrary. They are natural if the connection of the sign with the thing signified is founded in the properties of the signified itself. The passions are, by their nature, connected with certain movements in the limbs of our body, as well as with certain sounds and gestures. Whoever, therefore, expresses an

affective movement [sentiment, *Gemütsbewegung*] by means of the sounds, gestures and movements that belong to it, makes use of natural signs. On the other hand, those signs are called arbitrary which, by virtue of their nature, have nothing in common with the thing signified, but have nevertheless been arbitrarily adopted for it. Of this kind are the articulated sounds of all languages, the letters, the hieroglyphic signs of the ancients, and some allegorical images. (Mendelssohn 1997, 177f.)

One can claim that Cassirer makes Mendelssohn's semiotic aesthetics *qua* philosophy of the arts his project.⁴ It might have changed only insignificantly for Cassirer, through transformations in the 19th (Hegel) and 20th centuries. Even if Cassirer did not return to Mendelssohn's philosophy of the arts later, neither in *Philosophy of the Enlightenment* from 1932, nor in *Five Studies*, nor in *Essay on Man*, the continuing relevance of his intervention remains undiminished. After all, he confirms the "insight into the characteristic law of form of every art [...] through its characteristic means of expression" (Cassirer 2001, 94) and extends it to the principle of all symbolic forms in his article for the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*:

[T]he law of style, and thus the law of inner truth, under which each individual art stands, [...] [t]he conformity to this inner norm, which is a norm of forming, is what gives the formation its stability in the first place. In this sense, the aesthetics of [...] Mendelssohn [...] has already pronounced the thought that, in order to arrive at a secure delimitation of the object area and the representational [objectual, *gegenständliche*] possibilities of every art, we must begin with the kind of signs it uses. The determination of an art lies in what it can do by virtue of its specific signs, not in what other arts can do just as well, if not better. [...] If we turn this basic idea into a general one, then it immediately contains the demand to question all areas of the spirit in general, as well as the individual arts, according to the law of

⁴ I also feel encouraged to this view by Guido Kreis (2010), who understands the "system schema: expression, representation, meaning" (392–401) in Cassirer's "System of Symbolic Forms" (388) as "semiotics" (500).

their formation and to understand the objectual structures, which become visible in them, from this law. (Cassirer 2013b, 270f.)

This approach of a task-specific theory of the arts is also applied to more current concepts of cultural theory in Cassirer's *Five Studies*. What is said of the concepts of epochal styles or the will to art vis-à-vis scientific approaches of aesthetics? "Such expressions do indeed characterize, but they do not determine." (Cassirer 1961, 140) Thus, "the nineteenth-century naturalism of Hippolyte Taine" (ibid., 146) in his *Philosophie de l'art* as an attempted "reduction of cultural science to natural science" (ibid.) cannot avoid to acknowledge the characterization of a "dominant idea (*idée principale*)" in artistic giving (ibid., 154) beyond any nature: The "salient character [...] is unable to impress itself upon the object in a perfectly clear and visible imprint. Man fills this gap – and in filling it he discovers art." (Ibid., 155f.) A sentence like this one by Taine, Cassirer says, "could appear in any 'idealist' aesthetic" (ibid., 156). Indeed, it undermines naturalism. Taine "is determined to explain not only poetry, painting and sculpture, but even architecture and music as 'imitating arts,' with the result, of course, that he is forced to resort to an extremely artificial and forced construction" (ibid., 156 fn.).⁵

1.3 Poetry and the Arts in Cassirer's Engagement with Croce⁶

The insurmountable "stumbling block" (Cassirer 2006, 152) for imitation theories of art, Cassirer argues, is that lyric poetry does not imitate but invent worlds. By

⁵ Architecture is delineated by Cassirer in this way: "This beauty, which originates from the perfect solution to a static problem [the construction of the Eiffel Tower, P. M.], is, however, not of the same type and origin as the beauty that confronts us in the work of poets, sculptors, and musicians: for the latter beauty is not based on 'being bound' by the forces of nature but exhibits a new and unique synthesis of I and world. If we can denote the world of *expression* and the world of pure *signification* as the two extremes between which all cultural development moves, then the ideal balance between them is, as it were, achieved in art." (Cassirer 2013c, 312f.) This passage has been recalled by Orth (2004a, 314).

⁶ I am aware that Croce's account of the arts would deserve a much more detailed presentation and discussion both of which I do not give in what follows.

making us see the ideality of the eternal in the transitory, lyric poetry also serves an important function in the philosophy of the arts.

Cassirer addresses this function on the occasion of his discussion of Benedetto Croce's philosophy of art. Croce (2007, 15) had believed that "intuition means, precisely, the lack of distinction between reality and unreality, [...] the pure ideality of the image". Intuition according to Croce is already art in itself because of its emotional representation and emotional tension. "[A]rt is always lyric of feeling or, if one prefers, epic and dramatic." (Ibid., 24) Also "all the arts are music" (ibid., 25). The arts merge into a single genre due to their basic lyrical-musical character. "Between the universal and the particular no intermediate element is interposed [...], no series of genres or of species, of *generalia* [of art, P. M.]." (Ibid., 40) Thus, "single works of art are then infinite: all original, each untranslatable into the other". (Ibid.) In contrast, Cassirer (1961, 84) holds that

[...] if the lyric poem were to do nothing else than to fix in words the momentary and individual feelings of poets, it would not be different from any other verbal expression. All lyricism would be merely verbal expression, all speech would be lyricism.

Cassirer accuses Croce that he "thinks it sheer rhetoric to speak of a beautiful river or tree" (Cassirer 2006, 164). Yet, in addition to the *genus proximum* of expression, there is also "the specific difference of lyric expression" (Cassirer 1961, 84):

[...] the context of a poem cannot be separated from its form – from the verse, the melody, the rhythm. These formal elements are not merely external or technical means to reproduce a given intuition; they are part and parcel of the artistic intuition itself. (Cassirer 2006, 168)

Cassirer sees precisely these formal elements of artistic intuition at work in the approximate genre unity of poetic and prosaic spheres in 19th century literary realism (ibid., 170). Poetry, however, unlike language in general and the other arts, cannot be merely a heightened enunciation of a sentiment or mood. "If the lyric poet succeeds," Cassirer says with Goethe's *Torquato Tasso*, "in giving 'melody and speech' to pain, he has thereby not only thrown a new shell around it; he has thereby transformed it inwardly." (Ibid., 168) It is worth quoting Goethe

(2016, 247f.), who at the end of his 1790 play has the poet Tasso summarize his fate thus:

Nature endowed us with the gift of tears,
The agonized outcry when at last a man
Can bear no more – and me above all others –
In pain she left me euphony and speech
To voice the deepest amplitude of my grief:
When in their anguish other men fall silent
A god gave me the power to tell my pain.⁷

According to Cassirer, Croce, on the other hand, is “interested only in the fact of expression, not in the mode” and in the “material factor” of embodiment (Cassirer 2006, 153). The material constraint of the external reproduction of intuition, however, is indispensable for the communication of works. “For a great painter, a great musician, or a great poet, the colors, the lines, rhythms, and words are not merely a part of his technical apparatus; they are necessary moments of the productive process itself.” (Ibid., 154) This is as true of “the representative arts” (ibid., 138) as of “the objective and the subjective, the representative and the expressive arts” (ibid., 146).

Cassirer sees Croce (2007) operating with mere nomenclature of arts. In this way, however, arts can be classified neither factually nor representationally (Cassirer 1961, 204f.). If no epicists, dramatists, painters, or musicians existed, works of art would disintegrate into mere properties and intuitions. There is, however, unifying artistic conception that accompanies artistic technique. (Ibid.) According to Cassirer, artists achieve the particularity of singular works through the acquisition and mastery of techniques. Color, line, rhythm, and verse are not merely parts of the technical apparatus (Cassirer 2006, 168, 154). The artistic “*technique* of the construction of the work” goes hand in hand with the “*conception* of the work of art” (Cassirer 1961, 206). Also, intuition is either musical or plastic or,

⁷ “Die Träne hat uns die Natur verliehen, / Den Schrei des Schmerzens [sic!], wenn der Mann zuletzt / Es nicht mehr trägt – Und mir noch über alles –/ Sie ließ im Schmerz mir Melodie und Rede, / Die tiefste Fülle meiner Not zu klagen: / Und wenn der Mensch in seiner Qual verstummt, / Gab mir ein Gott, zu sagen, wie ich leide.” (Goethe 1998a, 166)

indeed, lyrical. To be sure, Cassirer, like Croce ostensibly, is against a canon of the arts and especially against the primacy of one art (ibid., 206) as in Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and still in the later 19th century. Nevertheless, following Cassirer, “true differences of style, divergent directions of artistic intention” remain “in every type of artistic composition,” in both lyric poetry and any other “specific form [*Gestalt*]” (ibid., 208f.).

The fact that lyric poetry comes into play for Cassirer in yet another way is shown by his remark about Giambattista Vico, who was brought back into the discussion by Croce at the time. According to Vico and Cassirer, historically for the first time in the divine age and its “logic of imagination,” (Cassirer 2006, 166) had been produced not yet concepts, but myths or poetic images. Myth and art would have their roots in this until today:

The poet and the maker of myth seem, indeed, to live in the same world. [...] it is one of the greatest privileges of art that it can never lose this “divine age.” [...] In every age and in every great artist the operation of the imagination reappears in new forms and in new force. In the lyrical poets, first and foremost, we feel this continuous rebirth and regeneration. (Ibid.)⁸

⁸ We cannot deal here with the proof of the proximity or partial identity of lyric poetry and myth, or with the extent to which Cassirer’s 1925 booklet *Sprache und Mythos. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Götternamen* (Cassirer 1946) and *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 2: Mythical Thinking* (Cassirer 2021b), also published in 1925, got in the way of an elaboration of a philosophy of art. A quotation from *Language and Myth* (Cassirer 1946), translated by Susanne Langer, should indicate the difficult situation: “[A]rt, like language, is originally bound up entirely with myth. Myth, language and art begin as a concrete, undivided unity, which is only gradually resolved into a triad of independent modes of spiritual creativity. Consequently, the same mythic animation and hypostatization which is bestowed upon the words of human speech is originally accorded to images, to every kind of artistic representation. Especially in the magical realm, word magic is everywhere accompanied by picture magic. The image, too, achieves its purely representative, specifically ‘aesthetic’ function only as the magic circle with which the mythical consciousness surrounds it is broken, and it is recognized not as a mythico-magical form, but as particular sort of *formulation*. But although language and art become emancipated, in this fashion, from their native soil of mythical thinking, the ideal, spiritual unity of the two is reasserted upon a higher level. [...] But there is one intellectual realm in which the word not only preserves its original creative power [in the original: *Bildkraft*], but is ever renewing it; [...]. This regeneration is achieved as

1.4 Syntax and Vocabulary, Idioms and Pathos Formulas

Artistic techniques contain “a determinate vocabulary,” the “reservoir of formal elements of the painter, the sculptor, the architect” or other artists; this vocabulary is joined by a “syntax’ [...], much as there is a syntax of language” (Cassirer 1961, 200). That is, one of the techniques – an art – is developed and tested on “the nature of the materials in which the artist works” (ibid., 201). Thus, artistic intuition is medially differentiated from the very beginning: “Beethoven’s intuition is musical, Phidias’s intuition is plastic, Milton’s intuition is epic, Goethe’s intuition is lyric.” (Ibid., 206) In addition, there is the “language of form” and with it “certain ‘pathos formulas’” (ibid., 202). This is how “artistic forms” gain “inner fixity and consistency” (ibid., 203f.) and “at the same time, they must, of necessity, be capable of modification” (ibid.). This polarity of form and material is in each case constitutive for the differentiation of the “various species of art” (ibid.). Artists externalize feelings by forming characteristic idioms, ways of speaking, even entire arts by means of form-elementary materiality and sensuous forms.

On the one hand, Cassirer borrows the *form-elementary materiality* of the finite from, of all things, the philosophy of German idealism:

Art is, indeed, symbolism, but the symbolism of art must be understood in an immanent, not in a transcendent sense. Beauty is “The Infinite finitely presented” according to Schelling. The real subject of art [...] is to be sought in certain fundamental structural elements of our sense experience

language becomes an avenue of artistic expression.” (Ibid., 98) Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson would have agreed with that proximity of lyrical poetry and myth when Lévi-Strauss (1971, 230) opines in 1955 that the “structure, at once historical and ahistorical, explains that myth belongs both to the domain of the spoken word [parole] [...] as well as in that of language [langue] [...] and thereby [...] has the same character of an absolute object,” and repeats with Roman Jakobson (1962): “We want [...] to give the poem the character of an absolute object” (Jakobson & Lévi-Strauss 2007, 276). This ‘absolute object’ must have inspired Jacques Derrida to submit the topic “L’idéali té de l’objet litt raire” for a *th se* to Jean Hyppolite in the late 1950s (Derrida 1990, 442f.), a suggestion that stands at the origin of poststructuralist philosophy where Derrida deals with Husserl’s concept of ideality in the *Introduction   Husserl. L’origine de la g ometrie* from 1962 and in *La voix et le ph nom ne: Introduction au probl me du signe dans la ph nom nologie de Husserl* from 1967.

itself – in lines, design, in architectural, musical forms. These elements are, so to speak, omnipresent. Free of all mystery, they are patent and unconcealed; they are visible, audible, tangible. [...] [A]rt [...] sticks to the surface of natural phenomena. (Cassirer 2006, 170f.)

On the other hand, Cassirer recognizes a *sensuous determinacy of form* in which the arts ‘speak’ and through which they aggregate to each other. That is, structural elements can be combined, if not immediately into arts, then at least into typical artistic ways of speaking:

The idioms of the various arts may be interconnected, as, for instance, when a lyric [poetry, P. M.] is set to music or a poem is illustrated; but they are not translatable into each other. Each idiom has a special task to fulfil in the “architectonic” of art. (Ibid., 167)

Cassirer connects these two aspects in the following way:

Externalization means visible or tangible embodiment not simply in a particular material medium – in clay, bronze, or marble – but in sensuous forms, in rhythms, in color pattern, in lines and design, in plastic shapes. It is the structure, the balance and order, of these forms which affects us in the work of art. Every art has its own characteristic idiom, which is unmistakable and unexchangeable. (Ibid.)

With this renewed commitment to the characterizing power of art, Cassirer emphasizes that in the arts, too, a formative spiritual energy impacts matter. The “formative process is carried out in a certain sensuous medium” (ibid., 153). There is a mediality specific to art. That is, between the subjective sensuous world and the objective everyday world there exists “the realm of plastic, musical, poetical forms; and these forms have a real universality” (ibid., 157f.).⁹

⁹ In a similar way, Stanley Cavell (1979) speaks of media and contends “that giving significance to and placing significance in specific possibilities and necessities [...] of the physical medium [...] are the fundamental acts” (ibid., xiii) of “artistic discoveries of form and genre and type and technique” (ibid., 105). Art is about the “*creation of a medium* by [...] giving significance to specific possibilities” (ibid., 32), so that “our

1.5 Summary Cassirer

The basic principle on which Cassirer constructs everything else with an idealistic Goethe reads: the ideality of the intuitive formation of the arts consists in the visualization of the eternal in the transitory. Describing in an ideal way, arts transform life into an ideal world of pure, sensuous forms. Cassirer aligns three circles of thought with this. They concern the signs, the lyric, and the linguistic of the arts.

First: The ideality of a characterizing art is abandoned from the 18th century, from Mendelssohn onwards in various kinds of specific signs, in plastic, musical, poetic forms. Intuition and style are bound to the inner norm of these signs.

Second: With the lyric, the ideality of an ideal way of thinking is present. The dramatic, the epic and other qualities are contained in the lyric. Along this, formal elements of intuition are shaped in the material mode of a unity of technique and conception.

Third: In the arts are contained a ‘syntax’ and an artistic vocabulary, a store of ‘linguistic’ formal elements. They yield units of form-elemental materiality and sensuous form-determinacy: idioms and pathos formulas that can be combined with each other yielding works.

2 Nelson Goodman, Combination of the Two Positions on Ideality?

“Whoever studies general linguistics, according to Croce, studies aesthetic problems – and vice versa.” (Cassirer 2006, 182) In light of the discussion above, it is understandable that Cassirer would distance himself from Croce’s *Aesthetics as a Science of Expression and General Linguistics* (1905). Yet, it is precisely this fusion of linguistics and aesthetics that is sought by a number of aestheticians: by Robin Collingwood, Susanne Langer, and by philosophical aesthetics based on the premises of analytic philosophy of language. Nelson Goodman, for example, recasts the

attention turns from the physical medium [...] in general to the specific forms or genres the medium has taken in the course of its history” (ibid., 29). Marion Lauschke (2007, 218) focuses the issue outlined by Cassirer in this way: “The genre, comparable to the material, is the medium and limit of expression.”

relationship between language and art in terms of a field of *Languages of Art*. But conversely, the symbolic form of the arts as a “symbolic system” (Cassirer 2006, 29), Cassirer’s critique of the imitation theory of art, and a theory of metaphor elaborated with reference to Cassirer, among other things, enter into Goodman’s (1976, chs. I and II) treatise of ideal language analytic philosophy under that very title, *Languages of Art*, which leads him to expand types of reference with respect to the arts.

On the other hand, *Languages of Art* connects to Husserl-like perspectives. This is done by Goodman primarily with semiotician Charles Peirce and a formal-structural illumination of the notation for the symbolic art system of music, but also for dance, architecture, and theater play (chs. IV and III). What Peirce calls the universe of discourse, occasionally mentioned by Cassirer (Cassirer 2006, 37, 164, 227), and extends in the *Studies in Logic* from 1883 by the universe of marks, probably including notation, surprisingly resembles Husserl’s semiotics of an ideality of the linguistic.

3 Husserl’s Philosophy of the Arts and its Position on Ideality

This ideality of the linguistic is one of the many small sprinklings of aesthetics that occur throughout Husserl’s writings, but nothing more, although Husserl had aesthetic experience and even occasional contact with contemporary artists of repute such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Oskar Kokoschka, and Arnold Zweig, the latter of them studied briefly with him. But what a sprinkling!

3.1 The Ideality of Language

As if pulled out of the sleeve, right on the first pages of Husserl’s *Formal and Transcendental Logic* from 1929 (Husserl 1969), there is a longer remark that contains nothing less than a systematic philosophy of art *in nuce*. Barely more than two pages long, it is entitled “§ 2. The ideality of the linguistic. Elimination of the problems pertaining to it” (ibid., 23–26).¹⁰

¹⁰ James Edie (1975) pointed out the differentiation given here with regard to Goodman’s *Languages of Art* which Gérard Genette followed up occasionally and finally did so

Located around the actual realm of the logical, speech has a general ideational quality. With a broadly conceived ‘logos’ can be determined the actual “word [...] as a sensuous [...] phenomenon” of speech on the one hand and the repeatable words “themselves” on the other (ibid., 24). Sensuous in speech is what we hear either through external voices or within us. Sensuous in speech is also what we read. All of this is language, usually understood in a narrower sense. Without dwelling further on the aesthetic, Husserl proceeds almost abruptly to the theory of text and the arts: “In a treatise, in a novel, every word, every sentence is a unique thing that does not multiply” and remains independent of the “multiplicities of illustrating [in the original: *erläuternden*] reproduction” (ibid.), that is, according to the handwritten first version of 1920/21, “the vocalizing [in the original: *lautierenden*] reproduction” (Husserl 1974, 358), as well as “the multiplicities of its permanent documentations by paper and print, parchment and handwriting, or the like” (Husserl 1969, 20) or respectively “ink writing or by cuneiform tablets etc.” (Husserl 1974, 358). However, ‘the one, single linguistic inventory is [...] reproduced,’ that is, ‘we speak [...] of the same book,’ even though we do not read or hear the same copy. According to Husserl, “this identity [in the original: *Selbigkeit*]” of the book, novel, treatise guarantees the “ideality of language [...]: *Language has the Objectivity proper to the objectivities making up the so-called spiritual [geistige] or cultural world, not the Objectivity proper to bare physical Nature. As an Objective product of minds, language has the same properties as other mental products [Gebilde].*” (Husserl 1969, 20)

The ideality of the linguistic, the ‘speech’ of all mental formations, now obviously appears in “other kinds of signs” (ibid.) as well. This semiotic, as one might say, to which Husserl endeavors in a tacitly executed *turn* here, is not

more extensively in *The Work of Art. Immanence and Transcendence* (Genette 1997, 100–107) with an elaboration in a Goodman-oriented philosophy of the arts with Husserlian leaning. On this, see Mahr (2018, 8f.). Husserl employed the concept of ideality already from the 1890s onwards. As ‘ideality of meaning’ it becomes a fixed topos in the *Logical Investigations* (see Husserl 2001a, 87; 1970, § 9; 2014, 148–151, cf. Möckel 1992, 1050f.; Husserl 2001a, 231; 2001b, 79; 1984, 779; 1979, 303ff.). But only after the confusing ambiguous “expression[s] idea and ideal” had been replaced by “the terminologically little used *Eidos*” in *Ideas I* (Husserl 2014, 7), the view of the ideality of language could open up, as Husserl’s writing down around his lectures on *Formal and Transcendental Logic* from 1920 onwards documents.

limited to natural and formal word-languages. It includes the literary and the non-literary arts:¹¹

[...] this engraving, the engraved picture itself, is visually abstracted from each reproduction, being given in each, in the same manner, as an identical ideal object. [...] only in the form of reproduction does it have factual existence in the real world. The situation is just the same when we speak of the Kreutzer Sonata, in contrast to its reproductions *ad libitum*. (Husserl 1969, 20f.)¹²

In the novel, the engraving, the sonata

[...] this ideality is not only one of what is expressed in them [...] as concrete units of linguistic body and expressed sense. [...] [These concrete unities] concern them [this ideality] already with respect to the linguistic corporeality itself, which is, so to speak, a *spiritual corporeality* [...] an ideal unity which does not multiply itself with its thousandfold reproductions. (Ibid., 25)

These units, according to Husserl, result in nothing less than

[...] a realm in and for itself. Here it is only to be noted that language comes into question for the logician primarily in its ideality [...]: quite similarly as the subject of the aesthete is the respective work of art, the respective sonata, the respective picture not as the temporary physical sound complex or as the physical picture thing, but precisely the picture itself, the sonata

¹¹ In *Experience and Judgment* (Husserl 1973, 265), religion is also considered, at least including the city, just as the *Logical Investigations* already used “the city of Berlin” as an example of an ideal object of logical representation (Husserl 2001a, 241).

¹² For Husserl neither scores play a role, the realizable ‘reproduction’ of a sonata on paper or reproducing copying of notes, nor that a picture could do without something ideal as for instance Kandinsky’s *First Abstract Water-Color* of 1910. Husserl runs the risk to efface the difference between the relation of musical notes to the ‘reproduction’ in performing on the one side and the relation of printed/handwritten musical notes to (re)print/transcript reproduction on the other. See for that and ‘picture’ of the sonata here below (3.3.) Adorno 2001, 1f., 148, 183 (!), 189f. and his all over reference [...] to the x-ray image.

itself – the actual aesthetic object, as in the parallel case the actual grammatical one. (Ibid.)¹³

And in the preliminary version of § 2 from 1920/21 it says immediately afterwards:

If an absolutely faithful reproduction of works of art of any kind were invented, which would repeat the ideal content of the work with absolute indubitability, then the originals would lose any preferential scientific value

¹³ This passage is not only a late response to Theodor Lipps’s psychological-philosophical lectures on aesthetics published in 1906 which do not take into account the objective linguistic nature of the arts (Lipps 1920, 36–43: chap.ch. “Die ‘ästhetische *Idealität*’ des ästhetischen *Objekts*”). It is also a commentary on Waldemar Conrad’s treatise “The Aesthetic Object” (1908/09), oriented on the *Logical Investigations*, according to which in music, poetry, visual and applied arts the “aesthetic object [...] is an ideal one for which it is essential that it be ‘realizable’” (ibid., 453). But it also indicates nothing less than Husserl’s struggle for an understanding of aesthetics itself. Paul Janssen (1974, 469–484: “*Textkritische Anmerkungen. Ergänzender Text IV*”) has reported on Husserl’s (1974, 358–360) preliminary version of § 2 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* that in this “starting part of the lecture on transcendental logic first given in the winter semester of 1920/21,” Husserl first wrote “Ästhetikers [as] *V[er]besserung*. für *Wissenschaftlers*” and thus, as Janssen plausibly argues, meant ‘*Kunst-Wissenschaftlers*’ (ibid., 476). Husserl (1974, 359) later replaced this with “*Kunst-Ästhetikers*.” In the 1929 printing of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, “Ästhetikers” made it into the text, even though here, too, a few lines later, “Ästhetiker” is used (Husserl 1969, 21). In a larger context, the following should be noted: Considered from the perspective of Kant, Husserl would have had to speak consistently of the ‘transcendental aesthetician’ in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, if he had indeed differentiated Kant’s transcendental aesthetics to such an extent that it ultimately had included the aesthetics of art, that is, the philosophy of the arts. This would have made sense for Husserl’s *transcendental logic* also in view of his reevaluation and rewriting of the Kantian coupling of transcendental aesthetics and transcendental logic in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Husserl, however, insists for ‘Aesthetics’ on the Kantian justification of a physical science of nature in the conclusion of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*: In the gradual ascent of the “logos of objective worldly being [...] arises [...] not [a] ‘descriptive’ science, which captures ‘aesthetic’ entities [of nature] [...], but an idealizing-logifying one. [...] [a] Platonizing geometry, which does not speak of straight lines, circles, etc. in the ‘aesthetic’ sense and of their *apriori*, that of the appearing in real and possible appearance, but of the regulative idea of such a space of appearance, the ‘ideal space’ with ‘ideal straight lines,’ etc. All ‘exact’ physics operates with such ‘idealities’” (ibid., 297). Thus, Husserl no longer speaks of the arts as bracketed by the “elimination of the associated problems” (ibid., 23), but returns to the restricted Kantian transcendental aesthetic of the ideality of space and time.

for the art-aesthete, they would retain only an affective value: similar to the literary originals [*Urschriften*], after they have been faithfully reproduced with regard to their linguistic stock. (Husserl 1974, 359f.)¹⁴

3.2 Ideality and Culture

Although the matters of the linguistic and its formations are to remain excluded, they incessantly recur in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. They continue to be inscribed into the realm of culture. For instance, “the thoughts that are thought in the thinking [...] are [...] unreal formations produced by the mind; [...] they admit, however, of a physical embodiment [...] and gain [...] and thus they gain a secondary spatial existence” (Husserl 1969, 155; see also Husserl 1973, 265–267). Thus, at stake is

[...] the *ideality of the formations with which logic is concerned* [...] of a separate, self-contained, “*world*” of ideal Objects and [...] formations that can be rightly accounted as ideal Objects in an ideal “world.” [...] idealities [...] in the cultural world [...] which must surely be considered as real. (Husserl 1969, 260f.)

Also,

[...] *it is not only the case that for each object there is a peculiar evidence: the evidence of it and the object itself, as evident, exercise functions that overlap* ‘those of other evidences and objects’. Every cultural object is an example. Any cultural object is an example. The ideality in which its peculiar being consists becomes “embodied” in a material objectivity [...]; and consequently the evidence of the Objective cultural determination is founded on an evidence relating to Nature, and intimately combined with this evidence. (Ibid., 288)

¹⁴ As if commenting on this, Walter Benjamin (2002, 103f.) linked the loss of authenticity and aura of works of art to their ever-improving mechanical technology of reproduction, observing that with respect to this development and particularly to photography the “*exhibition value begins to drive back cult value on all fronts*” (ibid., 23).

Can culture be the object of a transcendental logic? As ideality of logical entities probably yes, without the internal differentiation of, for example, artistic and non-artistic formations playing a role here.

3.3 The Image of an Artistic Formation

Husserl continuously speaks of partly aesthetic formations. Indeed, formations constitute what is at stake in the arts besides other cultural activities. But he does not base the concept of artistic formation [*Gebilde*] on an analysis of the concept of the image, where such an analysis could ground the aesthetic of the aesthetic object and formation indeed. Rather, his differentiation of the ‘image’ of the sonata or the visual image transcends a categoriality beyond the visual arts.

This is expressed as early as 1905 when Husserl reflects on the “multiple imaging” (*mehrfältige Bildlichkeit*) (Husserl 2005a, 189) of engraving and (!) sonata which he does apart from the “multiple kinds of imaging” (*mehrfache Bildlichkeit*) (ibid., 182). Husserl runs through a declension of this pictoriality with the example of a photographic reproduction of a reproduction of Titian’s painting *Heavenly Love*: “a charming little advertising image [= 3, P. M.] [...] lies before me [...] as a picture of the large reproduction” of the engraving (ibid., 182): “1) The engraving as image of the original: The original is the Madonna in Dresden. 2) The engraving as image: I immerse myself in it visually and have the image [painting, P. M.] of the Madonna.” (Ibid., 189)

However, in music, the ideality of the musically linguistic crosses with the comparison of renderings or performances at “the ideal (‘How Beethoven himself conceived of the Sonata,’ or how it ‘should’ be played).” (Ibid., 190) Thus, the *First Logical Investigation* had stated that the “ideality of meanings is no ideality in the normative sense” if, in the latter, “a young artist takes the work of a great master as the ideal” (Husserl 2001a, 231). Apart from this, ‘image’ is to be applied in a threefold manner: the “physical image *in individuo*” first, and that which is offered to the “imaging consciousness” of the “image object” second, as well as to the consciousness of the image “subject” third (Husserl 2005a, 182). In this context, image-*sujet* means the musical “subject of the work” (ibid., 190) to be performed, the reproduction of a sonata by the piano player and [...] the sonata just as Beethoven meant it. Or rather, as the person who brings about this image consciousness [...]. Everyone has his ideal Beethoven.” (Ibid., 189) To these three

meanings of image adds a fourth “pure perceptual figment” in the form of the spectacle which is “from the beginning only the artistic ‘image’” (Husserl 2005b, 617f.). Husserl (2005a, 159) specifies the work of art’s fully immanent

Ideally: I study the Sonata: Demands that the parts of the aesthetic whole reciprocally exert – this would correspond to the knowledge of the subject of the work and of its aesthetic presentation in these tonal structures. As in the case of any art work, “absorption” is needed in order to produce the interpretation adequate to it. What did the artist intend to present, and how did he intend to present it? What feelings did he want to excite, and so on? But not abstract reflection. In itself, every aesthetic apperception is ambiguous. Which interpretation [*Deutung*] is the appropriate one? Which attitude toward the image, which mood, and so on? Understanding the image yields this.

Again, Husserl (2005c, 651–654) traverses the arts between 1916 and 1918 in the fragment “On the Theory of Art.” There he states that the arts are about our actual “real world” or “some world”: “All art moves between these two extremes.” (Ibid., 651) This is done on the one hand by “image art [...] in depicting,” and on the other hand by the “[a]rt that is purely a matter of phantasy,” for instance with a proverbial phrase such as “once upon a time” or with “music, [with] playful fantasy” (ibid.). To the two parallel distinctions of depiction and generation and pictorial art and fantasy-forming literature/music Husserl ties a third distinction of “[r]ealistic art fiction, painting, sculpture)” (ibid., 652) and “[i]dealistic fiction” (ibid., 653). Unlike the positivistically oriented realist, the “idealistic author [...] has a *normative* focus.” (ibid.) and “sees ideas and ideals, and, in seeing them, values them and sets them forth as values.” (Ibid.)

3.4 Summary Husserl

Everything in the definition of the arts derives from the ideality of the linguistic. As with other mental formations, the linguistic inventory is reproducible from the outset. A (literary) text does not multiply itself; it is unique independently of multiplicities.

As with the natural and the formal word languages, the literary, but also some non-literary arts are concerned with units of ideal sensuous-linguistic body with expressed ideal sense. These units constitute the aesthetic object and share the ideality of logical formations.

The ‘image’ of each artistic formation is traced back to the formation-*sujet*, its idea. This is what carries the aesthetic object. By contrast, there are ideas and ideals beheld and valued first and foremost in (idealistic) poetry. They exist vis-à-vis the realistic art of painting and sculpture. But they also exist vis-à-vis poetry whenever it is realistic. There is the ideal of a staging or embodiment of the work of art.

4 Acquaintance, Appraisal and Distancing

There is hardly any other writing in which Cassirer’s ambivalent stance towards Husserl is more evident than in the *Five Studies on the Logic of the Humanities*, though not only here. In general, Cassirer grants Husserl some achievements. Yet he is aware of the far-reaching difference between the two of them.

Husserl’s ideating abstraction, it is true, could be used to justify a concept of culture such as Jacob Burckhardt’s “Renaissance Man” or other “genuine concepts of style in the humanities” as independent entities (Cassirer 1961, 140). Thus would be confirmed, historically, Husserl’s “ideational abstraction [...] [or] ‘meaning’ in [...] ideal sense [...] that several men may, at the same or different times, have the same presentation, memory, expectation” (Husserl 2001b, 123).

Husserl, it is true, rightly distinguishes in the *Logical Investigations* “between the form as an ‘ideal unity of meaning’ and the psychological experience, the ‘acts’ of taking-as-true, of beliefs, judgments, which refer themselves to this unity of meaning and have it as their object” (Cassirer 1961, 131; see Husserl 1969, §§ 56–73).

The two sides of objective form and psychological experience, it is true, would not merge into the “simple acts of speech, of artistic creation and enjoyment,” as he emphasizes with Karl Bühler’s and not Husserl’s “ideality of the objects of language” (Cassirer 1961, 131).¹⁵ Accordingly, the psychology of art could no longer

¹⁵ This is Cassirer’s verbatim adoption from Karl Bühler’s *Sprachtheorie*, where Bühler (2011, 68) dissociates Ferdinand de Saussure’s (!) “ideality of the object ‘language’” from Saussure’s alleged lapse from material. Bühler’s *Sprachtheorie* otherwise frequently

suppress the theory of art, for “the domain of a pure ‘theory of pure forms’ has taken shape with ever increasing clarity, a domain which employs other concepts than those of empirical psychology” (ibid.).

And it is true, when Cassirer in a 1920s fragment on the “*Metaphysik des Symbolischen*” (Cassirer 1995, 259–271), sees emerging in the “whole development of ‘pure logic’ [...] a detached inventory of the logical” (ibid., 269), he would even be willing to acknowledge “Husserl’s ‘third realm’” (ibid., 270).¹⁶

However and nevertheless, Cassirer’s reference to phenomenology remains critical of Husserl. This emerges at length in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, when Cassirer reflects on Husserl’s distinction between *hylē* and *morphē* (Cassirer 2021c, 234f. on Husserl 2014, § 97) and insists on a unity of the sensuous and the sensible apart from eidetic reduction.¹⁷ Ultimately, Cassirer’s ‘genuine ideality’ seems to remain unmediated vis-à-vis Husserl’s ‘ideality of the linguistic.’ Thus, Cassirer wrote his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* conceptually apart from Husserl (cf. Möckel 2016, 303ff., 309ff.). Obviously, *Ideas I* from 1913 and later works by Husserl found virtually no entry into Cassirer’s writings. Probably Cassirer’s 1924 essay “*Eidos und Eidolon. Das Problem des Schönen und der Kunst in Platons Dialogen*” (Cassirer 2013a) – intended as a philosophy of art and in upholding the ideal as modern-epochal for art – must also be read as a silent protest against Husserl’s *Ideas I* and its anti-idealistic use of ‘eidos’ instead of idea.¹⁸

refers to Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* and *Cartesian Meditations*, but like Cassirer, never to *Formal and Transcendental Logic*.

¹⁶ John Krois (1995, 356, 382) suspects that Cassirer (2013c, 267) alludes to his “idealities as distinct from the physical and the psychic,” to the “realm of pure meaning,” toward the “‘third’ realm” of which strives “language from the sense of expression to the pure sense of representation.” See on this and other posthumous notes Bösch (2002, 161).

¹⁷ This says Bermes (1998, 191). It has often been remarked that Cassirer’s usage of and reference to ‘*Phänomenologie*’ is non-uniform, unsteady, if not fickle, certainly critical at times. For that see Martell (2015, 421, 428); Möckel (1992, 1059); Orth (2004b, 168). According to his own information Husserl seems to have dealt with the problematic of the distinction of *hylē* and *morphē* already in 1910/11 (Husserl 1969, 294–312, in particular 303–310), a fact at which Kaufmann (1949, 816) hints.

¹⁸ In “*Eidos und Eidolon*” Cassirer (2013a, 217) explains the modern ‘ideal’ as a “later offshoot” of Platonic idea: “Later theory [i.e., modern, P. M.] attempted to [...] free art from the reproach of mere ‘imitation’ by substituting for the rigorous Platonic concept of idea [*Idee*] the dazzling and ambiguous concept of the ‘ideal.’” (Ibid., 230f.) Cassirer sees in the aesthetic ideal a hybrid species between the sensuous and the intelligible

If, then, the same interests flare up in Cassirer and Husserl – idealism and realism in literature,¹⁹ the *universe of discourse*, semiotics – both thinkers nevertheless appear like stars circling far away from each other. Thus, ideality does not seem to be able to provide a missing link for the connection of both philosophies.

5 Conclusion, with Bull: Back to the Origin?

It can be stated that Cassirer and Husserl each in their own way strove for ‘ideality’ in the field of the philosophy of the arts. Cassirer aspired to provide the arts with access to the sphere of the ideal world. Husserl endeavored to wrest a linguistic ideality from the structure of logic, which *no lens volens* leads into the area of the arts. If one draws the two philosophies of the arts closer to each other, a certain longing arises not only to mediate the two aesthetics, however far they have been developed, but to tackle a meta-theory of ideality for a complementary philosophy of the arts.

One would like to take the bull by its two horns: by the ideality of a critical idealism, in modern form espoused by Cassirer²⁰ and by the ideality of a transcendental

unacceptable not only for mathematics according to Plato (232f.). This view on the historical destiny of ‘idea’ is plausible against the background of the Schiller chapter in *Freiheit und Form* (Cassirer 1918, 419–471): “In art too is involved the antithesis between the striving for infinity and striving for objectivity, between ‘ideality’ and ‘reality,’ between ‘liberty’ and ‘nature.’” (Ibid., 461) All this finds a general confirmation by history of philosophy in Angelica Nuzzo (1995, 100), according to whom Kant replaced the Platonic idea since his dissertation of 1770 with the notion of the ideal. And it is confirmed by the Marburgians who generally thought more of ‘idea’ than of ‘eidos’ (Kaufmann 1949, 818).

¹⁹ Schiller’s (2004, 770) distinction between the realist, who remained from the naïve character, and the idealist, who remained from the sentimental character as their poetic quality respectively, marked the beginning of a long discussion in literary theory of which Cassirer as well as Husserl were probably aware.

²⁰ Cassirer consistently referred to his own position as critical idealism. Unlike the post-Kantians, his roots, formed by Descartes and Leibniz, shoot forth through Kant’s *Third Critique* and early Weimar Classicism to unfold in the philosophy of culture. (See on this, Cassirer 2021a, ix, 9, 13ff.; Bösch 2002, 150; Luft 2015, 167; Möckel 2018, 451; and Renz 2012, 114f., whose two pages moved me to make a belated submission for the successful 2019 Cologne conference which came to a most grateful conclusion with the three editors in a roaring night.)

idealism as phenomenologically oriented by Husserl from *Ideas I* onwards. But who wants to do that?

Note: If you want to take the bull by its two horns ‘critical idealism’ and ‘transcendental idealism,’ you could go back, if not to a possible root of the two idealities in Plato’s doctrine of ideas, then to Kant.²¹

It is questionable whether this return does not leave important things on the way, if, as in the case of Husserl and Cassirer, a bend is made around the thinking of ideality in German idealism. For the tradition of thinking ideality in German idealism for philosophy in general and the philosophy of culture and the arts in particular is considerable. Thus, Fichte (1970, 186, fn. 14) intends, contra Kant, to “prove the ideality of space and time from the demonstrated ideality of objects” (ibid., 171) whereby “the principle: no ideality, no reality, and vice versa, [...] receives confirmation, or [...] the ultimate ground of all consciousness is an interaction of the self [Ich, P. M.] with itself, by way of a not-self that has to be regarded from different points of view” (ibid., 248). Schiller (2004) sees the musical poet Klopstock proving himself “in the field of ideality” (ibid., 734) rather than individuality in the encompassing opposition of naïve individuality and sentimental ideality (ibid., 750) – musical in that music, unlike the visual arts, does not imitate an object or is dominated by imagination through a particular object but, like lyric poetry, produces a “state of mind” (ibid., 735). For Schelling (1978), in the deduction of all knowledge from the “overall ideality of knowledge” of the “*I am*” (ibid., 34), it becomes evident how the I, by practical “overstepping” [in the Original: *Hinausgehen*], “would [...] be ideal, and hence *qua* ideal, or in its ideality, be real and limited” (ibid., 66). And according to Hegel (1970), “form and content [...] rise to ideality” (ibid., 120) from symbolic architecture to classical Greek sculpture to the romantic triad of medieval and Renaissance painting, modern music, and contemporary poetry, with the “incipient ideality of matter” (ibid., 121) being particularly noticeable from music onward.

And yet. Shouldn’t the obvious Platonic inclusions of German idealism be a warning for us to be wary of the uncritical reception of the philosophy of identity?

²¹ One such path runs through medieval philosophy. Angelica Nuzzo refers to Descartes’s translation of the scholastic ‘idealitas’ into ‘thinking subjectivity’ (Nuzzo 1999, 591) and to W. Hamilton’s “On the History of the Word Idea” as well as Gilson’s *Index scolastico-cartésien* (Nuzzo 1995, 81). Already Cassirer (1922) had identified ideality in Cartesianism and Renaissance philosophy in the first volume of his *Erkenntnisproblem*.

Doesn't the question arise whether the historically contemporaneous doctrine of ideas of the philosophical discipline and direction of post-revolutionary sensualist *idéologie* contains something about the theory of ideality before it was deformed into an object of criticism by Marx and positivism? And wouldn't the two philosophical movements of *idéologie* and (German) idealism have to be examined to see how they stand up to Kant's immediately preceding critical transcendental philosophy?

For Cassirer and Husserl, the intended reference to Kant is explicit and obvious. In which way ever Cassirer's critical idealism (see Luft 2015, 74, 162) and Husserl's transcendental idealism (see Möckel 2016, 317) remained limited to certain positions and did not result in elaborations of the 'ideality' of the arts, now there can be detected indications of a closeness to Kant (1996) who himself thought that critical and transcendental idealism are identical with formal idealism (ibid., 45, 126f.). And yet the two horns seem to exist without a common root in Kant.

Cassirer leaves Kant's *First Critique* behind and moves on to his *Third Critique*. It says that the "*ideality* of purposefulness lies in the beauty of nature" (Kant 2009/10, B252) and is defined in "beautiful art [...] by aesthetic ideas, which are essentially distinguished from ideas of reason of certain purposes" (ibid., B253f.). Here Kant explicitly separates the "idealism of purposefulness, in judgment of the beautiful of nature and art" from the transcendental-aesthetic "*ideality* of the objects of the senses as appearances" (ibid., B254) as found in the *First Critique*, that is, from space and time as ideality of the forms of intuition as the "ideality of outer appearances" whose "doctrine [...] idealism" already was (Kant 1998, A367). It is ultimately this ground of the *Third Critique* on which Cassirer aims at his own genuine ideality and does so starting from Plato's "theory of the ideal world" (Cassirer 2006, 234).

Husserl, by contrast, halts at Kant's *First Critique* and its mathematical ideality of space and time in order to "keep the highly important *Kantian concept of the idea* purely separate from the general concept of the (formal or material) essence" (Husserl 2014, 7). He does so, however, with the benefit of establishing, in some similarity to the formal ideality of numbers and geometrical forms, a formal ideality, now of the linguistic, for the arts as well. The result is the formality of the reproduction of all arts except painting. Ideality appears here as a general epistemological-ontological principle opposite to the ideality of time and space as forms of intuition. Husserl relies on this ideality of transcendental aesthetics in a certain

way ‘objective’ (Kant 1998, A28f., A36, A38), but ties it back to the former principle for his extension in order to semiotically recapture the logical of *logos* for a more general ideality of the linguistic. Thus, this reconnection might also appear in a new light with Kant “proving indirectly the transcendental ideality of appearances, if perhaps someone did not have enough in the direct proof in the Transcendental Aesthetic” (ibid., A506/B534).

But the following question has remained unanswered so far: Is there *one* root of Husserl’s extension of mathematical ideality and Cassirer’s inclusion of the “ideality of purposefulness in the beautiful of nature” and in “the beautiful art” which latter ideality Kant (2009/10, B252f.) addresses only in the *Critique of Judgment* and there only in § 58? To expose this second ideality would be all the more important, since it leads both Kant and his ‘disciples’ to philosophical idealism and with it to an according aesthetics of the arts.

Kant himself is close to recognizing the importance of this ideality for the arts in the *First Critique*. It is true that when he treats “The ideal in general” (Kant 1998, A567–A571/B595–599) he never speaks of ideality. He does so in the *Third Critique* where the “ideality of the objects of the senses as appearances” is placed alongside the “idealism of purposefulness, in judgment of the beautiful of nature and art” (Kant 2009/2010, B254). He could start it with the following: It is the “the *ideal*, [...] the idea not merely *in concreto* but *in individuo*, i.e., as an individual thing which is [...] determined” (Kant 1998, A568/B596) What else, if not a work of art, could be understood by this?

But here Kant takes a turning to the ethical. Ideals have “practical force” and enable the “perfection of certain *actions*” (ibid., A569/B597). Thus, for example, the Stoic sage with his virtues is an ideal, a “standard for reason” (ibid.). However, this ideal could not be realized in an appearance, an example. Kant thinks that “to try to realize the ideal in an example, [...] such as that of the sage in a novel,” would “render even what is good in the idea suspect by making it similar to a mere fiction” (ibid., A570/B598). But, contra Kant, if the very condition of the possibility of realizing an ideal in a text is conceived (and then discarded), then this presupposes that ideals can be embodied in a text at all, to whatever degree. Therefore, in Kant, the ideality of the ideal world in the arts – Cassirer – seems to be connected with the ideality of the linguistic of the spiritual formations of the arts – Husserl.

Is it not the case that *La Nouvelle Heloise* and *Jeanne Dielman* represent vastly unrestricted ‘individuals’? Is a novel in such a way not from the outset something

individualized in terms of content which transcends the seemingly limited objectivity of the subject and the work of art? Kant himself concedes a certain right to the arts when he lets the rejected novel immediately follow the drawing which he acknowledges. “It is [...] otherwise with the creatures of imagination” like “a wavering sketch, as it were, which mediates between various appearances [in the original: *Erfahrungen*]” with which “painters and physiognomes” are concerned not only “in their heads,” but even if only with a “silhouette [in the original *Schattenbild*: phantom, scheme or even images of the camera obscura, P. M.] of their products”. But are such “ideals of sensuality” (ibid.) not also valid for the novel, in which this ideal is combined with the “ideal of reason [...] as a rule and an original image” (ibid.)? Wherein, however, would the ideality of these two ideals consist of, and can it structure the arts, connecting Cassirer and Husserl?

Translated from the German by Thiemo Breyer

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