



# Aesthetic, Intuition, Experience

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**Aesthetic, Intuition, Experience:**  
**Husserl's Redefinition of the Transcendental Aesthetic**

**Abstract:** This chapter approaches the relationship between Kant and Husserl's transcendental philosophies from the point of view of the transcendental aesthetic. The phenomenological conception of the transcendental aesthetic is rebuilt by studying its relationship with transcendental analytic, then with transcendental logic. The first perspective shows not only that Husserl's concept of a transcendental aesthetic aims at a double-leveled task, but that the second level implies a non-Kantian integration of causality along with time and space in the aesthetic frame. On this basis, it is possible to see Husserl as a heir of Schopenhauer's critique of Kant's philosophy. The second perspective shows that Husserl has always seen the transcendental aesthetic as the first step of a new type of logic: first, a "real logic", then a "world-logic", namely the transcendental logic itself in a genetic point of view, describing the world's "history" within the subject's intentional life.

In<sup>1</sup> a letter to Ernst Cassirer dated April 3, 1925, Husserl points out Kant's role in his own philosophical itinerary and admits that his "original hostility" has faded as he became aware that "the science which was growing in [him] encompassed—by means of a very specific method—the whole of Kant's problematic". Thus, he could "confirm, in a rigorously scientific foundation and delimitation, Kant's main results" despite the explicit recognition of the flaws of his method and the deficiency of his analysis (Husserl 1994, p. 4). Until his manuscripts from the *Krisis* period, Husserl maintains this rather ambivalent appreciation of Kant's philosophy, where praise and criticism intermingle in a way that can easily cause many "misunderstandings [...] about phenomenological transcendentalism" (Husserl 1956, p. 238). Beyond retrospective considerations, explicit claims of a "Kantian legacy" (Husserl 1956, p. 286) or public statements in academic context, these possible misunderstandings are favored by the fact that Husserl takes up a large number of Kantian concepts to name not only some fundamental aspects of his phenomenology's theoretical program but also the main moments of its unfolding. This obviously applies to the term "transcendental" itself, but also and above all to some of the major divisions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, especially Transcendental Aesthetic, Logic, and Analytic.

In this paper, I would like to focus on the transcendental aesthetic because, as numerous studies have pointed out, it is one of the places where the issues related to Husserl's reception of Kant's philosophy are particularly striking, either from an internal and architectonic perspective (related to the very definition of transcendental philosophy) or from an external and more historical one (related to the opposition between phenomenological and Neo-Kantian reception of Kant). However, these studies all tend to neglect or minimize the fact that Husserl determines the transcendental aesthetic according to *two very distinct approaches*<sup>2</sup> – a duality highly indicative of his critical relationship with critical philosophy: sometimes, according to the structure of the "Transcendental Doctrine of Elements" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the field of transcendental aesthetic is phenomenologically redefined as opposed to that of transcendental *logic*; sometimes, ignoring this Kantian division, it is redefined as opposed to the field of the *analytic*. Now, as a matter of fact, these two

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a translated, corrected and slightly extended version of a previous article ("L'esthétique, l'intuitif et l'empirique. La refonte husserlienne de l'esthétique transcendantale" published in: *Meta. Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology and Practical Philosophy* 8. No 2, pp. 546-570). I thank Iulian Apostolescu and Claudia Serban for welcoming it in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> The exception is represented here by Michela Summa, who pays explicit attention to this double distinction (Summa 2014, pp. 46-47). But she relates it only with Husserl's criticism of Kant's anthropologism and in the next steps of her work, only the first distinction (that between transcendental aesthetic and analytic) plays a structuring role (see Summa 2014, pp. 49-52).

approaches don't lead to exactly the same definition of the transcendental aesthetic. To be more precise: taking as a guide this twofold approach, I would like to show that it allows not only, on a structural point of view, a better understanding of the phenomenological conception of transcendental logic and of the role of causality in this framework, but also, on a historical point of view, the assumption of a probable – yet generally unrecognized – presence of Schopenhauer in the background of Husserl's criticism of Kant. In both cases, we will see how intuition, understood in relationship with empirical evidence, becomes in Husserl the criterion of what must be called "sensible" while implying a strong distinction between aesthetic and mere sensibility.

### **§1 Duplication of the Aesthetic and Aesthetization of Causality**

In order to sketch out the phenomenological conception of transcendental aesthetic first in its relation to the transcendental analytic, I shall start with a statement dated 1919 which shows how balanced Husserl's reception of Kant's distinction is:

We must [...] point out *another fundamental stratification*, expressed in Kant's brilliant distinction between *transcendental aesthetic* and *transcendental analytic*, a distinction worthy of admiration despite the fact that all the distinctions mentioned here as well as the essence of what is in his view "aesthetic" in the transcendental sense have remained obscure to him, which is not unrelated to the fact that his theories are far from possessing the scientific power to which he aspired with so much ardor. (Husserl 2002, p. 171)

These lines don't suggest a phenomenological elimination of the distinction between aesthetic and analytic, but rather its modification, its revision, and at the same time its critical justification, by bringing it back to its true meaning, compatible with the requirement of a return "to the things themselves". Let us recall the general principles of such a revision.

As Dominique Pradelle recently argued (Pradelle 2012, 2014), Husserl's redefinition of the distinction between transcendental aesthetic and analytic implies a twofold criticism. First, Husserl criticizes Kant's anthropologism, that is the presupposition of a transcendental subject, provided with distinct and pre-determined faculties (sensibility as a receptive faculty and the understanding as a spontaneous faculty) whose functioning is supposed to be valid only for us, human subjects. Suspending such a presupposition implies for Husserl something like a "de-subjectivation" of the distinction between the sensible and the intellectual, insofar

as it is no longer referred to human subjective faculties but to possible types of objects in correlation with distinct types of intuitive givenness. Accordingly, not only is the distinction between sensibility and understanding redefined as a distinction between what is sensible and what is categorial, but moreover, space and time are no longer determined as *a priori* forms of sensibility but as *a priori* “forms of ‘sensible object of a possible experience’” (Pradelle 2014, p. 296), of the “appearing object” itself, that is to say as “immanent structures within the sense contents” (Pradelle 2012, pp. 265-266).

Husserl’s second criticism doesn’t concern Kant’s presupposition of subjective faculties but rather the operating mode of those faculties. More precisely, Husserl casts away Kant’s definition of the understanding by the synthetic activity as well as the consecutive reduplication of the distinction between aesthetic and analytic by the distinction between what is pre-synthetic and what is synthetic in consciousness. On the contrary, because synthesis is for Husserl “the primal form belonging to consciousness” (Husserl 1950, p. 77; En. tr., p. 39), it is “coextensive with all the intentional life of pure consciousness” (Pradelle 2012, p. 277) and therefore already operates at the aesthetic level in the constitution of space and time themselves as pure intuitions, so that phenomenology can describe their genesis instead of presupposing them as already constituted structures. And since Kant himself seems to acknowledge a synthetic operation at the aesthetic level of sensible intuitions even if he mentions it only in the context of transcendental analytic, Husserl spots a contradiction between Kant’s aesthetic and analytic (Husserl 1956, p. 405), a contradiction which he sums up in the following anti-Kantian alternative:

Without the study of the “synthesis” in which the spatio-temporality of an experiential world is constituted, the ontological necessities such as Kant elaborates them are empty from a transcendental point of view. But if synthesis determines the distinction between aesthetic and analytic, then space and time would remain precisely excluded from aesthetic, and we would then remain only with the sensitivity of sensations as a residue. (Husserl 2002, p. 180)

What conception of transcendental aesthetic and of its relations with analytic results from this twofold criticism? Two main aspects can be underlined.

First of all, the texts in which, from 1919, Husserl expressly confronts this set of problems show a *splitting* (or a *duplication*) of the *phenomenological transcendental aesthetic*. But such a splitting is far from being the effect of an equivocation in the definition of the task of transcendental aesthetic. On the contrary, Husserl clearly emphasizes the

thematic unity of the aesthetic as opposed to the analytic. While the latter is dedicated to the description of the modes of idealization according to which an exact and objective, physico-mathematical nature is constituted, the task of the transcendental aesthetic is to elucidate the necessary structures and modalities of constitution of empirical and intuitive objectivity, or, as Husserl puts it, of “nature as it is precisely given in experience” (Husserl, 1920-1926, 13b), i.e. in a simply perceptive way before any idealizing synthetic activity. But this one task is in fact divided into two layers, corresponding to two constitutive levels of the “thing” which is intuitively given in experience: first it’s mere *sensory* determination, and second the fundamental properties in which its *reality* unfolds.

The first of these two layers corresponds to what Husserl calls a “systematic ontology of the phantom”, this last term referring to the “pure sense-thing” (Husserl 2002, p. 174, 172), that is to say the pre-empirical and purely sensory unity that each sense allows to grasp from the thing, whether this unity has or not a spatial extension. For example, this sheet of paper in front of me can be described by its visual phantom (the pure visual thing), and its tactile phantom (the pure tactile thing), both implying an extension whose congruence or covering (*Deckung*) constitutes space in its originarity. It is also possible to describe the sound (the pure tonal or acoustic thing) detached from the material reality related to its conditions of production (for example a violin in the side room). It then remains “a tonal spatial phantom, appearing with a determinate orientation” (Husserl 1952, p. 22; En. tr., p. 24). Because phantoms are thus “concrete units of experience” which constitute “an *a priori* necessary lower layer” (Husserl 2002, p. 174) in any experience of a thing, the highlighting of their own structures is a crucial moment in the elucidation of the constitution of the intuitive experienced thing and, jointly, in that of the constitution of space and time as *a priori* forms of its intuitive givenness (see Summa 2014, pp. 136-142). It is well-known that Husserl develops such analysis as early as the 1907 lectures on *Thing and Space* (Chapter IV, § 19-25) or in the first part of *Ideas II* (§ 10 and 15b). However, the deepening of his constitutive problematic leads him to gradually integrate them into the systematics of a transcendental aesthetic, but only as a first layer. Indeed, the phantom is not the intuitive thing itself, as it is given in the experience, but just one of its components, gained by a certain abstractive procedure. Interrupting or suspending this abstraction is precisely what is required to reach the upper layer of the transcendental aesthetic.

What exactly was set aside by this abstraction in the first level of aesthetic? The answer is *causality*, understood in a non-physico-mathematical way but according to its intuitive determination as a simple relation of regulated mutual dependence between the data

of experience. Conversely, with the re-introduction of causality, the phenomenological description of the intuitive datum changes level by opening itself to *reality* as such, with its essential character of substantiality:

A deformation of a physical body followed by a movement is of course a process within the phantom, for example in the visual thing as a pure visual thing. But this does not yet give the elasticity, which is a truly real property, a property of the physical thing. The pure phantom is not yet a physical thing. What does the term “elastic” mean? Well, the continuous property of a thing according to which, under certain circumstances and if it is hit in a certain way, it undergoes certain typical deformations followed by oscillating movements. Seeing a deformation followed by a movement for example in a cinematographic phantom, is different from seeing the elasticity. But if we see an elastic plate oscillate, then we [...] *experience* that because the plate was hit, it oscillates, and so on. (Husserl 2002, pp. 180-181; see also Husserl 1930, 56a)

This rather long quote shows very clearly that the intuitive content of concrete experience goes far beyond the mere sensory (or aesthetic in the narrow sense of the word) content of the things given in it. And it shows at the same time that if causality allows this enrichment, it is because it implies together substantiality, materiality – and thus reality (Husserl 1956, p. 41). This is confirmed by the following synthetic notation:

If we stick to reality, then causal properties belong to things and these are, as substrates, substances for such properties. (Husserl 1920-1926, 20b; see Husserl 2002, p. 182)

As a result, it appears that first, the specific task of the transcendental aesthetic’s second layer is a description of the constitution of the properly intuitive (and no longer simply sensory) unity of the real thing given in experience (and, by extension, the constitution of a possible world of experience); second, that within such an ontology of reality (or of materiality), causality represents a necessary structural form (Husserl 1930, 57a).

Given this last result, it is easy to see what characterizes the second fundamental aspect of transcendental aesthetic in its phenomenological re-definition: the *aesthetization of causality* and, with it, of a significant part of what is categorial in Kant’s sense. As a synthetic result of the highlighting of an intuitive causality within experience and of the conception of aesthetic ruled by intuition rather than mere sensibility, this aspect reveals a proper phenomenological subversion of Kant’s distinction between aesthetic and analytic, insofar as

it implies that at its second level, the transcendental phenomenological aesthetic coincides with some of the tasks that Kant ascribed to the analytic:

Having sketched out the clear and well-defined horizon of the problems and the researches which refer to an ontology and a phenomenology of phantoms, we would have to come to a transcendental aesthetic of the immediately superior layer, which, in Kant, doesn't stand under the title of a "transcendental aesthetic", but is rather integrated with the transcendental analytic. (Husserl 2002, p. 179)

In Kant's transcendental analytic is to be found much of what must be called in the authentic sense a transcendental aesthetic, that is, in our view, a transcendental aesthetic of materiality. (Husserl 2002, p. 198)

For a better understanding of this "part" of Kant's analytic which the phenomenological topology ascribes to aesthetic, we can refer to what Husserl calls in the *Krisis* Kant's "great discovery" (while stressing at the same time that it has remained for Kant himself only a "preliminary discovery"), namely, the two-fold functioning of the understanding (Husserl 1954, p. 106; En. tr., pp. 103-104). On the first hand, the understanding is the faculty which produces the idealizations, the concepts and the norms of intersubjective scientific objectivity. On the other hand (and, so to speak, "in concealment"), the understanding simultaneously works to "rationaliz[e] sense-data", i.e. to constitute the "sensibly intuited world of objects" (Husserl 1954, p. 97; En. tr., p. 94), in short: the world of the perceptual experience upon which the scientific idealization operates (Kern 1964, pp. 261-269; Pradelle 2012, pp. 289-294). In other words, against Hume's sensualism, Kant discovers that "mere sensibility, related to mere data of sense, cannot account for objects of experience", but that "these objects of experience point to a hidden mental accomplishment", that "enables [...] pre-scientific experience, through logic, mathematics, mathematical natural science, to be knowable with objective validity" (Husserl 1954, p. 96-97; En. tr., pp. 93-94). If the proper task of the analytic is to give an account of the constitution of the scientific world by highlighting the acts of idealization upon which it is grounded, highlighting the acts of identification which rule over the pre-scientific constitution of an intuitive world is the proper task of transcendental aesthetic which, in its broadest sense, coincides with the idea of a



“transcendental theory of experience” (Pradelle 2012, p. 294)<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, because the “concealed” functioning of understanding is related to the aesthetic constitution of an intuitive world of experience whereas its “manifest” functioning is related to the constitution of an objective nature, it seems possible to claim that Husserl’s redefinition of Kant’s topology ultimately consists in *reducing the tri-partition between sensibility, understanding and reason to the duality of the intuitive and the discursive, the given and the constructed, or between experience and thought*.

## § 2 Schopenhauer’s Shadow?

On this basis, I would now like to emphasize something generally ignored in secondary literature, namely the fact that this criticism and reorganization of Kant’s topology is very similar to the criticism that Schopenhauer, one century earlier, raised against Kant. It is true that Schopenhauer’s name is sometimes mentioned as far as Husserl’s concept of the living-body as *Willensorgan* is concerned, but never – at least to the best of my knowledge – in relation with Husserl’s redefinition of the transcendental aesthetic or analytic<sup>4</sup>. And yet, as I would like to show now, both philosophers are in so close proximity to each other on this matter that it is maybe possible to support *the assumption of Schopenhauer’s influence on Husserl*. After all, we know for sure that Husserl acquired Schopenhauer’s *Sämmtliche Werke* in 1880 (Sommer 2012, p. 293-294)<sup>5</sup> and dedicated two seminars in 1892-93 and in 1897 to some aspects of his philosophy (Schuhmann 1977, p. 9; 34; 51). If we also take into consideration two convergent statements of Husserl to Dorion Cairns in 1931, revealing that Schopenhauer was among the first philosophers he read (Cairns 1976, p. 47, 60), it is not unreasonable to assume that Schopenhauer’s criticism of Kant could have played a role in Husserl’s thought.

I shall begin with an external observation. As a result of his integration of causality into the field of transcendental aesthetic, Husserl frequently mentions time, space, and

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<sup>3</sup> In these pages, the author opposes the tasks of transcendental aesthetic and transcendental logic, clearly identifying the latter with the transcendental analytic. On the contrary, my claim is that the opposition between aesthetic and logic represents a different level of analysis, which I shall address in the third part of this paper.

<sup>4</sup> It is instructive to note that even Michela Summa, in her detailed and thorough study of Husserl’s transcendental aesthetic, mentions Schopenhauer only when it comes to the role played by the living-body (Summa 2014, pp. 287-290), but not once as far as the integration of causality in the spatio-temporal constitution of the aesthetic thing is concerned.

<sup>5</sup> This paper also shows that the highlighting of Schopenhauerian aspects in Husserl’s phenomenology plays a significant role in Michel Henry’s work, but also in the program of a “phenomenologically inspired” philosophical anthropology (notably in Hans Blumenberg).

causality *in conjunction with each other* as the three basic dimensions of reality, or the three aspects of a unique aesthetic *a priori* of the world. In other words, as the “necessary structural forms” of a possible world of experience, determining its “global style” and allowing a “science of the world’s universal structure” (Husserl 1962, p. 89, 68 and 64). Now, such a conjunction of time, space, and causality is one of the key features of Schopenhauer’s theory of representation. In an explicitly critical relation to Kant’s distinction between aesthetic and analytic, Schopenhauer conceives them not only as the “conditions” of “our faculty of apprehension”, but also and consequently as “the essential [...] and therefore universal forms of any object”, or as the “laws according to which all phenomena are connected to one another” (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 513-514, 31 and 516; En. tr., p. 418, 5 and 420). While it could be a mere terminological coincidence, we must go back to the principle of such a conjunction of time, space, and causality in Schopenhauer’s philosophy to check whether the phenomenological redefinition of transcendental aesthetic can be seen as its distant inheritor.

The texts in which Schopenhauer outlines his criticism of Kant’s philosophy clearly show that this principle is closely related to *the requirement of a rigorous definition of the sphere of intuitiveness as such*, which, for Schopenhauer, is coextensive with experience and its conditions (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 32 and 39; En. tr., pp. 6-7 and 13). This requirement is indeed the root of one of Schopenhauer’s main critical arguments against Kant: that of having confused intuitive knowledge with abstract knowledge, or what is intuitive with what is abstract in knowledge (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 532, 535, 579 and 580; En. tr., p. 434, 437, 473 and 474). Now, in Schopenhauer’s view, the iconic place of this confusion is the theory of categories, of the pure concepts of the understanding which, according to Kant, are constitutive of a possible experience in general.

Schopenhauer’s critical argument has two sides: first, he claims that only intuition provides a relation to an object, so that any conceptual element is dismissed as an abstraction:

Generally, according to Kant, there are only concepts of objects, no intuitions. On the other hand, I say that objects exist primarily only for intuition, and that concepts are always abstractions from this intuition. (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 549; En. tr., p. 448)

In other words, Kant’s mistake is to give to conceptual abstractions a constitutive function for experience that should only be granted to intuition. But far from globally rejecting Kant’s categories, Schopenhauer highlights in a second step the particular status of causality:

Kant ascribes the objects themselves to *thinking*, in order to make thus experience and the objective world dependent to the *understanding*, yet without letting the understanding be a faculty of *intuition*. [...] But actually [...] our empirical intuition is at once *objective*, just because it comes from the causal nexus. (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 543; transl., p. 443)

In pointing out that causality gives our intuition an objectifying power, Schopenhauer clearly draws a boundary between this category, related to intuitive knowledge, and the eleven others, “only” conceptual and abstract. But where does causality get this privilege of intuitiveness from?

The answer can be found in Schopenhauer’s claim that the sensitive impression, “mere sensation in the sense-organ” (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 538; En. tr., p. 438), is, strictly speaking, not a representation because sensation doesn’t imply any relation to an object as such (see Schopenhauer 1977b, p. 66). In other words, sensibility is reduced to mere sensoriality, so that, in Schopenhauer’s view, it couldn’t constitute any experience of an empirical object without the intervention of an additional element, bestowing an objective significance on our intuition. This element is precisely causality, i.e. the law according to which an object is real only as the effect of another one or as cause for another one. To be sure, causality is intellectual and, as such, takes root in the understanding. However, it is important to emphasize that for Schopenhauer, causality is simply the link that unites time and space (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 35; En. tr., p. 10; see also Schopenhauer 1977b, pp. 43-44). As such, causality remains, so to speak, at the same level of intuitiveness as time and space, so that the sphere of intuitiveness goes beyond that of sensibility taken in the narrow sense of the sensoriality. Thus, experiencing an object is possible, in Schopenhauer’s view, only if the understanding applies the law of causality to the impressional sense-data: in doing so, it “converts the mere sensation into objective empirical intuition”, which means “into a *representation*”, which now “exists as *object* in space and time” (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 552 and 538; En. tr., p. 451 and 439).

While this statement could simply be regarded as a new form of the classical distinction between sensation and perception, its full significance is actually related to causality in a way that directly affects the transcendental topology. On the one hand, causality becomes the only necessary *and* sufficient constitutive condition for any empirical object and, more broadly, of a real “world of experience” (Schopenhauer 1977b, p. 44 and 58). That is why Schopenhauer feels justified in retaining only this category as a subjective condition of experience and in “throw[ing] away” the eleven others (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 549; En. tra.,

p. 448). On the other hand, and in return, causality is sufficient to define the essence of the understanding, reduced to the only function of causal objectification, a function that is for sure intellectual, and yet not conceptual, but intuitive (Schopenhauer 1977a, pp. 37-38, 538 and 547; En. tr., p. 11, 439 and 446; see also Schopenhauer 1977b, pp. 92-93). In contrast, the eleven other categories are indeed concepts, products of reason, and reason is conceived in a deflationary way as a mere faculty of abstract representations (Schopenhauer 1977a, pp. 580-581; En. tr., p. 475; see also Schopenhauer 1977b, p. 84 and 112-113).

On this basis, I would like to suggest that *Husserl's critical diagnosis of a "twofold functioning of the understanding" in Kant is prefigured by Schopenhauer's claim that, in his theory of categories and with his concept of the understanding, Kant confuses two different things: first, the process through which a possible world of experience is intuitively constituted for us, and, second, an abstract conceptuality stemming from a rational activity of the mind that in fact presupposes the intuitive world of experience.* Therefore, it's already possible to find in Schopenhauer the critical gesture that we have previously identified in Husserl; namely, the reduction of the tri-partition between sensibility, understanding and reason to the duality of the intuitive and discursive. *In both philosophers, intuition is released from its narrow and merely sensory meaning, and extended to the categorial sphere* (Schopenhauer, 1977a, p. 580-581; transl., p. 475). Thus, Husserl could have perfectly taken up Schopenhauer's diagnosis according to which Kant was right in distinguishing between intuition and thought, "although here, the nature of this distinction is a fundamentally false one" (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 580; En. tr., p. 474).

Against such a convergence, one might argue that the aesthetization of causality, as one of the fundamental aspects of Husserl's criticism of Kant, has nothing to do with Schopenhauer in so far as Schopenhauer specifically relates causality to the understanding and defines causality as the one and only object of the understanding (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 38; En. tr., p. 11). However, I believe that this is less a real divergence between the two, but rather a difference between two possible and symmetrical readings of the same revision, so to speak, of Kant's distinction between aesthetic and analytic; a revision guided by the requirement of intuitiveness and leading to the discovery of the analytic's internal duality. Hence, I suggest that *what appears in Husserl as an aesthetization of causality corresponds exactly to what appears in Schopenhauer as an intellectualization of intuition*, and that the difference is related to what is at stake for each of them in criticizing Kant. Whereas the claim of an intuitive causality allows Husserl, despite the extension of the synthesis to the sensibility, to oppose the Neo-Kantian who, like Cohen, argue for an absorption of the

aesthetic within the analytic (see Pradelle 2012, p. 135; 160; 274; Pradelle 2014, p. 304), Schopenhauer's demonstration of the role of understanding for the possibility of empirical intuition allows him to bring out the idea of an intellectual intuition while firmly opposing the speculative conception of such an intuition in Fichte or Schelling (Schopenhauer 1977a, pp. 38-39 and 549; En. tr., pp.11-12 and 448-449; see also Schopenhauer 1977b, p. 65).

Whatever the case may be, the close relationship between the two philosophers in their common criticism of Kant's distinction between transcendental aesthetic and transcendental analytic is confirmed by the fact that *once put into intuitive continuity with space and time, it is causality which allows Schopenhauer's philosophy as well as Husserl's phenomenology to address the question of the conditions not only of experience but of empirical reality*. In a way that strikingly anticipates Husserl's approach, Schopenhauer shows that causality immediately implies materiality and the latter substantiality (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 36; En. tr., pp. 10-11). These three concepts are finally identified with each other<sup>6</sup> and represent together what might be called the *a priori* coordinates of reality.

For all these reasons, it is possible to suggest that what Husserl sees as the task of the transcendental aesthetic (once its relation to the analytic phenomenologically clarified) corresponds to and inherits from what Schopenhauer saw as the task of highlighting the principle of sufficient reason of an intuitive representation of the world.

### **§ 3 Aesthetic and Logic: From “Real Logic” to “World-Logic”**

Let us now turn to Husserl's last determination of the transcendental aesthetic, specifically from the point of view of its relation to the whole of the transcendental logic, not just the analytic. In this perspective, a new anti-Kantian feature can be stressed in Husserl's thought: *the incorporation of the transcendental aesthetic within the transcendental logic*. Such an integration, which obviously presupposes a redefinition of the transcendental logic and its tasks, doesn't happen at once in Husserl but results from an evolution that I shall briefly reconstruct.

First, it is important to emphasize that in his oldest texts dedicated to the idea of a phenomenological transcendental aesthetic (especially the 1906-1907 lectures *Introduction to*

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<sup>6</sup> Schopenhauer explicitly identifies causality and materiality (Schopenhauer 1977a, p. 37 and 546; En. tr., p. 11 and 445; see also Schopenhauer 1977b, p. 98), but also materiality and substantiality (Schopenhauer 1977b, p. 44, 58 and 98); hence, by inference, causality and substantiality, as Husserl does. The only difference is that Husserl often describes their mutual involvement before introducing materiality, which is rather mentioned as a complement (see for example Husserl 1920-1926, 21a: “Causality and constitution of things, then of a world of things as permanent substances of changing properties”).

*Logic and Theory of Knowledge*), Husserl sees it as a part of a logic which he calls “real logic” (*reale Logik*). He defines real logic in opposition not only to formal logic but also – and perhaps more surprisingly – to Kant’s transcendental logic. In fact, this idea of a real logic is related to the way Husserl sought at that time to carry out the program of a material ontology as it emerged in the third of the *Logical Investigations*. The discovery of a material and synthetic *a priori*, irreducible to the formal *a priori* and related to the object’s real content, required the development of a science which could provide a logical analysis of this material ontological sphere in its specificity and refer the heterogeneous variety of empirical sciences to its internal structure. This material and concrete logic is exactly what Husserl calls “real logic” in 1906-1907. By taking into consideration not only the factual reality as it is dealt with in the empirical sciences, but also the reality as an idea (i.e. in the most general sense of all the necessary conditions of a factual reality), this logic aims at “the ascertainment of the truths grounded in the universal essence of real Being as such” (Husserl 1984, p. 100; En. tr., p. 98). Its particular task is then to bring out material categories, concepts “in which what is real as such is to be understood in terms of its essence “, “concepts like thing, real property, real relation, state, process, coming into being and passing away, cause and effect, space and time, that seem to belong necessarily to the idea of a reality” (Husserl 1984, p. 101; En. tr., p. 98). Even if Husserl doesn’t explicitly speak of transcendental aesthetic in this context, this indicative list of concepts shows obviously, however, that its thematic field is exactly congruent with the definition of a real ontology and logic. A clear confirmation is to be found a few pages later:

However, despite their kinship, really partial overlapping, with Kant’s transcendental logic, one will not be able to identify the idea of such an ontology in the sense we have in mind without further ado. [...] Attention would [...] have to be turned to the Kantian distinction between transcendental esthetic and transcendental logic, which I cannot go into here. (Husserl 1984, 113; En. tr., p. 109)

It is not difficult to understand why Kant’s distinction between logic and aesthetic is mentioned by Husserl in order to reject any identification between his real logic and Kant’s transcendental logic. In the earlier list of material categories provided by Husserl, some concepts belonging to the logical sphere or, in Kantian terms, categories (such as cause and effect) are brought together with concepts belonging to the aesthetic sphere, or pure intuitions (space and time). This simple observation indicates that Husserl’s real logic implies a new

definition of the relations between transcendental aesthetic and logic, in critical tension with Kant's conception. As a *logic*, it implies a categorial dimension which Kant could only locate in the analytic moment of his transcendental logic; but as a *real* logic, it can't be limited to the merely formal conditions of an object in general. In this context, the controversial dimension of Husserl's discovery of a material, synthetic *a priori* becomes clear: in Husserl's view, in fact, Kant's distinction between transcendental logic and esthetic implies that the true sense of such an *a priori* is completely ignored or – which is all the same – that apriority is tacitly reduced to formality. Such an exclusively formal conception of the *a priori* makes it impossible to develop the idea of a real logic as a science of the material *a priori* in the terms of Kant's architectonic. Thus, because it is necessarily tied to Kant's transcendental esthetic *and* logic, Husserl's real logic, as the “general basis of all individual sciences of reality” (Husserl 1984, p. 114; En. tr., p. 110), can't be identified with the entire transcendental logic as opposed to formal logic, nor, as a science of the synthetic *a priori*, with Kant's transcendental aesthetic as opposed to the analytic moment of his transcendental logic (Husserl 1984, p. 113; En. tr., pp. 109-110).

Still, this idea of a real logic is strongly affected by the “genetic turn” according to which Husserl's constitutive phenomenology doesn't limit itself anymore to the only task of exhibiting the subjective modes of constitution corresponding to each single type of object. Rather, it seeks to describe the temporal and motivational connections between the acts which constitute these objects from the level of the associative passivity, in order to bring out the “history” of these objects within consciousness and, correlatively, the “history” of the living subjectivity itself. Indeed, this new orientation allows Husserl to provide a genetic interpretation of the presupposition according to which the world's predicative and scientific determination refers to its intuitive and pre-predicative determination in the passive syntheses of the pre-scientific and perceptive life. As a result, the program of a transcendental logic as a science that accounts for the possibility and the modalities of a rational determination of the world in the positive sciences turns into that of a “world-logic [*Welt-Logik*]” (Husserl 1974, p. 296; En. tr., p. 291). Namely, the science that elucidates in their genetic sequence the various world-constituent performances (*Leistungen*) from pre-theoretical passivity to active scientific conceptualization, thus tracing the world's “history” within consciousness. According to this definition, the transcendental logic absorbs and relativizes that which was the task of the real logic (the foundation of the positive sciences of reality): it is now a mere local task, which corresponds to a particular stratum of the world's “history” in the subject's intentional life.

In this new perspective, Husserl still considers the transcendental aesthetic as taking part in a logic. However, at a further distance from Kant's topology, this logic is henceforth the transcendental logic itself, conceived as a genetic logic. If it is to be distinguished from all dogmatic sciences (including logic in the usual formal sense) to the extent that "it wants to be the ultimate science that goes back to ultimate givennesses, namely, to those givennesses that are already presupposed in all other givennesses, in all naive givennesses" (Husserl 1966, p. 255; En. tr., p. 389), the aesthetic then represents its first moment, which brings out precisely the structures of the passive pre-givenness of the experiential world, before the ego's categorial spontaneity adds various layers of idealities to it:

"Transcendental aesthetics" – in a new sense of the phrase (which we use because of an easily apprehensible relationship to Kant's narrowly restricted transcendental aesthetics) – functions as the ground level <in a world-logic>. It deals with the eidetic problem of any possible world *as a world given in "pure experience"* and thus precedes all science in the "higher" sense; accordingly it undertakes the eidetic description of the all-embracing *Apriori*, without which no Objects could appear unitarily in mere experience, prior to categorial actions (in our sense, which must not be confounded with the categorial in the *Kantian* sense), and therefore without which the unity of a Nature, the unity of a world, as a passively synthetized unity, could not become constituted at all. (Husserl 1974, p. 297; En. tr., pp. 291-292)

Hence, the genetic perspective allows us to come back to the meaning of the phenomenological distinction between transcendental aesthetic and analytic as we have highlighted it at the end of the first part of this study and to complete it. From the noetic point of view, the transcendental aesthetic is the "the science of consciousness that pre-gives meant reality" (Husserl 1966, p. 256; En. tr., p. 389), and its task is to elucidate the primal forms of objectification as they take place in passive, essentially perceptive syntheses in the sphere of pre-theoretical sensible receptivity as opposed to that of categorial spontaneity, studied by transcendental analytic (Husserl 1966, p. 361; En. tr., pp. 444-445). From the correlative noematic point of view, the transcendental aesthetic is the science of the world constituted in this passive and pre-theoretical givenness within the framework of the perceptive, pre-predicative experience. It must therefore provide the *a priori* of the aesthetic world. In other words, the *eidōs* of an experiential world in general, now defined as a perceptual world since perception is *par excellence* the intuitive mode of givenness (Husserl 1966, p. 295; En. tr., pp. 581-582).



Finally, I want to emphasize that in the context of a transcendental logic conceived as a world-logic, the distinction between transcendental aesthetic and analytic paradoxically goes hand in hand with a fundamental genetic continuity from one to the other. They correspond to two successive degrees of a single process of constitution and allow the phenomenologist to bring out *the genesis of predicative ideality from that of empirical evidence*. In this perspective, the proper task of the transcendental aesthetic is to account for the process through which the true world of science proceeds from the world of experience as it is always already passively given. This process, which the famous section 9 of the *Krisis* describes as “Galileo’s mathematization of nature” or as an idealization of the life-world (Husserl 1954, p. 20sq.; En. tr., p. 23sq.), without any reference to the transcendental aesthetic, belongs nevertheless *de jure* to it, as many of Husserl’s lectures and manuscripts since the mid-20’s undoubtedly confirm it. I won’t develop further this well-known theme, but simply highlight a very important feature of Husserl’s later thought: if this theory of idealization as a process that leads from relative and situated life-world evidences to irrelatively exact evidence of science brings to light a genetic continuity from experience to science in the form of an *archaeological rooting* of the former in the latter, Husserl doesn’t neglect the reverse movement, which brings back the higher formations of science to experience in the form of a *teleological sedimentation* of science in experience. One of the first descriptions of this process can be found in the 1927 lectures on *Nature and Spirit*:

The products of thought are not something that could be found next to the experiential world, but they belong to this world, they bear its print although they are not themselves new intuitive and sensitive features in this world. Any other act, any way of being active while being affected by the ambient world of each moment creates thereby at the same time aspects which fit into this ambient world and become experienced in their own way by an isolated subject or in an intersubjective way. (Husserl 2001, pp. 228-229)<sup>7</sup>

Taking into account this downward movement responding to the upward movement of idealization allows to introduce the important precision according to which the aesthetic world is at the same time – and in a non-contradictory way – the intuitive basis of scientific

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What is called here *sich einfügen* will become, in the 1930’s and in the context of the *Krisis*, a theme of analysis and fundamental descriptions under the title of the *Einströmen*, the “inflow” of theoretical idealities within the life-worldly experience (see Husserl 1954, pp. 115, 141 (note) and 212-213; En. tr. pp. 113, 138 (note) and 208-209).

activity while made of the conceptual sedimentations of such an activity. In other words, it is undoubtedly pre-predicative, but not really pre-theoretical.

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In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the multiple aspects of Husserl's phenomenological re-definition of Kant's transcendental aesthetic can be referred to *the unfolding of a unique intuitionist requirement that frees intuition from its dependency on a narrow empiricist or sensualist conception of sensibility and thus implies a disjunction between what is aesthetic and the mere sensory content of sensibility*. But if this means that we enter the sphere of transcendental aesthetic as soon as we are "in the sphere of intuition which is the sphere of experience" (Husserl 2002, p. 193), then it is possible to claim that the transcendental aesthetic, phenomenologically understood, is no longer primarily determined by an *object* which would be its specific theme (like, in Kant, the pure forms of sensible intuition). Rather, it is determined by a *mode of givenness* which is irreducible to the mere sensory *datum* and has nevertheless to serve as a standard for what "sensible" means, namely "the original self-exhibition" (Husserl 1954, p. 118; En. tr., p. 116)<sup>8</sup>. This intuitionistic feature lies at the root of the aesthetization of causality, now conceived along with time and space as an *a priori* structure of empirical reality and, more broadly, of a possible world of experience. Together with "the reintegration, within the transcendental aesthetic, of the synthesis as *Urform* of consciousness" (Pradelle 2012, p. 304), this aesthetization ensures, on the one hand, the subversion of Kant's distinction between transcendental aesthetic and *analytic*, and on the other hand it simply cancels Kant's distinction between transcendental aesthetic and *logic*. Indeed, insofar as the transcendental aesthetic now coincides with the science of the prescientific constitution of an intuitive world of experience (i.e. of this life-world on which the scientific production of idealities is grounded), it represents itself the first moment of a transcendental logic meant to provide a genetic elucidation of the empirical and then theoretical constitution of the world within the subject's intentional life. Finally, this same intuitionist feature seems the deepest vindication of the convergence I brought out between Husserl's redefinition of the aesthetic-analytic distinction and a central aspect of the criticism raised against Kant by Schopenhauer a century before. The way both philosophers define space, time and causality in conjunction with each other as the conditions, which are themselves intuitive, of any empirical intuition seems significant enough in my view to

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<sup>8</sup> Hence Husserl's important notation a few pages before: "Here we can now clarify the very limited justification for speaking of a sense-world, a world of sense-intuition, a sensible world of appearances" (Husserl 1954, p. 108; En. tr., p. 106).

support the assumption that Husserl's "original hostility" (Husserl 1994a, p. 4) towards Kant is not due solely to Brentano's influence but also to the more diffuse but not less real influence of Schopenhauer, whose philosophy might have allowed one of young Husserl's first encounters with Emmanuel Kant's thought.

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