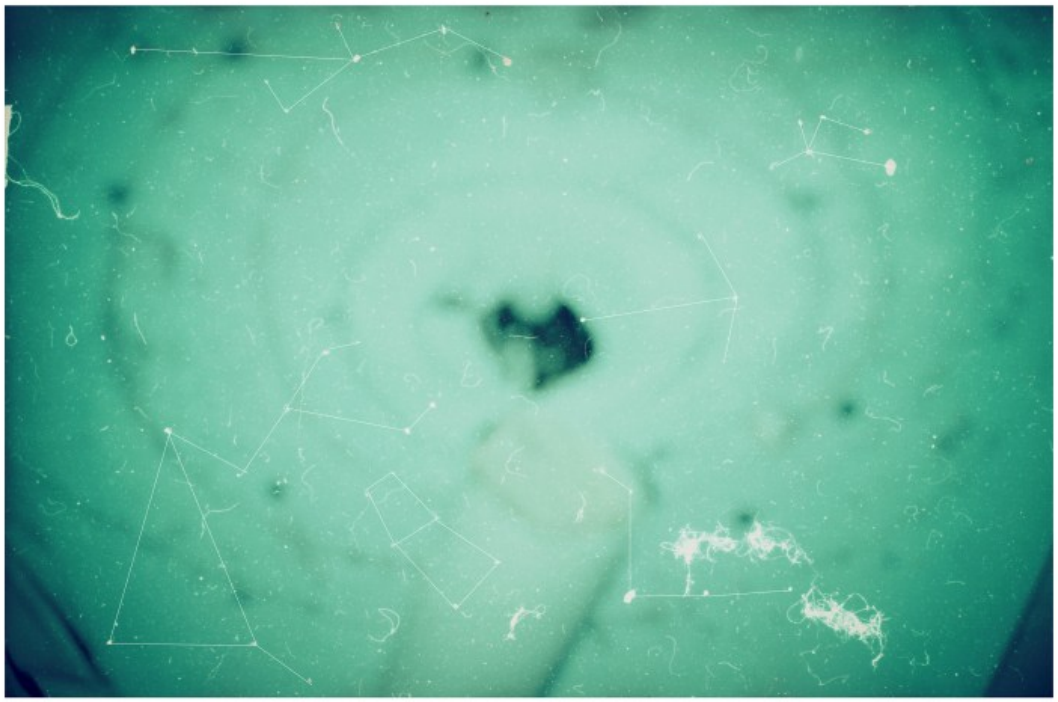

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As an attempt to depict the principles of a distinctly Husserlian aesthetics, this paper is restricted primarily to the method of the imaginative variation of phenomena as discussed in Husserl's *Ideas III* (1980) and his letter to Hugo Von Hofmannstahl. It will pivot on several questions:

1. Whether the phantom is a necessary condition for the intuition of essences, i.e., whether the essence of the phenomenon can be truly grasped without the phantom at the extreme horizon of imaginative variation?
2. Whether the free play of the imagination, as Husserl understands it, is the ground for the possibility of the ghost story, of philosophical and religious talk of angels, those of Islam (Rilke), of the Christian Middle Ages (Thomas Aquinas), of the Renaissance (Pico della Mirandola, 1956)
3. Whether phenomenological intuiting is equal to or the same as aesthetic intuiting.

## Question # 1. The response to this question serves as a prelude, a horizon, for addressing the other questions.

Let us begin with a brief exposition of the eidetic reduction as it appears in *Ideas III* in which it is

principally presented under the terms *eidetic focusing, eidetic seeing, eidetic intuition, eidetic attitude,* and *eidetic insight*, all of which would disclose beneath the flow of contingent variations an *a priori*, i.e., a universal and necessary invariant, an *eidos*, an essence, a pure sense (Husserl 1980, 26), a fixed framework for the course of possible experience (Husserl 1980, 27), finding its expression through logical concepts, regional concepts, and their material particularizations (Husserl 1980, 84). This seeing of essences is achieved by the method of imaginative variation of the phenomenal object under consideration. It is said to be free because the weight of actuality, of the factual world discussed by physics and chemistry, does not restrict it, free also from all metaphysical interpretation, from all doxic positing of existential commitments embedded in the natural attitude which are "suspended" (Husserl 1980, 26), put out of play, but not negated. This 'freedom-from' is achieved by what Husserl discusses as the transcendental reduction which reveals consciousness in its purity and absoluteness, and which liberates consciousness for catching the phenomenon as it is unfolding in the play of its very appearing and appearance, to intuit the phenomenon as pure phenomenon independent of any practical or empirical conceptual interest. Husserl affirms that the imagination is enriched by possibility and not by existence, and so he lets it roam and play in the field of the logically possible, within an openly endless multiplicity of variants of the object under consideration until an absolute invariant, pervading all variants, is intuited, relative to which a whole world, even diverse from our own, can be construed for us (Husserl 1980, 28). Husserl thus writes that the imagination is a "world destroyer" and a "world builder" (Husserl 1980, 28).

Let us take world destroyer first: Starting from the phenomenologically reduced perception of a material thing, through free phantasying, "we let the thing move, deform its shape in any way we like, let its qualitative determinations, its real properties change themselves as we like, …we play…we even invent…unheard of transformations…the most incredible deformities of things, the wildest physical spectre, scorning all physics and chemistry" (Husserl 1980, 26). If we drop the assumption that the starting perception and its regulated organizations are valid, then "things fall apart in manifolds of phantoms (Husserl 1980, 27)." Husserl concludes this foray into the excesses of imaginative variation by writing "if freely ruling phantasy breaks through these organizations in an unbridled manner, then not only is an individual schema transformed into a 'mere phantom,' but the whole world becomes a mere flow of phantoms (Husserl 1980, 27).....a chaos of phantoms (Husserl 1980, 29)." A little note on what Husserl means by 'phantom': introduced explicitly in *Ideas II*, the 'phantom' is a "pure spatial schema" of the sensible object as experienced with its properties and profiles, stripped however of its material existence, i.e., "without the stratum of any apprehension of materiality(Husserl 1980, 41)." It manifests itself as imaginative variants of the perceived object.

Although he privileges the visual phantom, Husserl does not restrict the concept to just the visual, allowing, for instance, for tactual and auditory phantoms.

Now on to world builder: if we begin with a legitimate perception of a physical thing, we can freely invent a progression of experiences which would harmoniously authenticate all sides of that which is perceived, even if we construe completely different worlds in which it is perceived (Husserl 1980, 28). The very sense of the perception, grasped intuitively, pre-delineates *a priori* an "absolutely fixed framework", a categorical or regional framework, for the unfolding by pure constituting consciousness, in the case of a physical thing, of various sides or profiles of the perceived object, since the perceived object "is no chaos but a regionally ordered whole, and thus there is no need of actual infinities of concepts in order to become acquainted with the thing." (Husserl 1980, 24) The latter point is stated more fully in the Summer Seminar of 1925: "the openly endless multiplicity of variants, this open infinity does not signify an actual continuation in infinity, the nonsensical demand actually to produce all possible variants – as if we could only then be sure that the *eidos* which subsequently becomes grasped actually accords with all possibilities (Husserl 1977, 57)." As he had already affirmed in Ideas I that "fiction makes up the vital element of phenomenology, as it does of all eidetic science (Husserl 2014, 127." Husserl argues in Ideas III that "it lies in the nature of things that to an incomparable broad extent his (the eidetic investigator) thinking is guided by fantasy. Only it, with its freedom of shaping, gives him….the ability to run through freely and on all sides the endless manifolds of possibilities….to see universalities according to eidetic law, to attack problems like those of the constitution of real things in general (Husserl 1980, 44)." As world-builder, imaginative variation generates many worlds, such as those of Tolkien, George Lucas, etc., and is ultimately possible and productive only within the field of transcendental consciousness.

To summarize the results of our response to Question 1: Husserl sees the phantom as a necessary condition for the intuition of essences, yet he asserts that the essence of the phenomenon can be truly grasped without taking the phantom to the extremity of imaginative variation, although the thinkable, the logically possible mere phantom (illusion) serves to set-off as a horizon what is the really possible of experience. A moderate realist would agree with Husserl in this analysis, but would eliminate the transcendental idealist step of world destroyer, of suspending the existence of the world. For the moderate realist, intellectual insight into the invariable intelligible structure of any actual thing is achieved by leaving out of consideration all the properties that are variable in every species, such as color and shape, and that are expressed through the individual image or phantasm.

## Question #2. Whether the free play of the imagination, as Husserl understands it, is the ground for the possibility of the ghost story, of philosophical and religious talk of angels, those of Islam (Rilke), of the Christian Middle Ages (Thomas Aquinas), of the Renaissance (Pico della Mirandola, 1956)

Let me begin with Husserl in his study at Göttingen, where a copy of Raphael's *Madonna del Baldacchino* hangs above his desk. Therein are depicted two robust and youthful angels and two little cherubs. He sees the angels every day. They are part of his lived experience. These are the angels of Christendom *described* by Thomas Aquinas in his "Treatise on Angels" or Pico della Mirandola in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, not the Islamic angels of Rilke's *Duino Elegies.* He also refers to Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* in Dresden with its two cherubs. Angels are a strong motif in painting and literature, and are clearly found throughout Hebrew, Christian and Islamic scripture. Although Husserl does not thematize angels, what he says of ghosts also applies to angels. Both serve as mere phantoms.

In a winter 1909 manuscript, Husserl speaks of the ghost as a semblance object. "I can contemplate a semblance object without paying attention to my unbelief. For example, the movements of a ghost, its meaningful gestures, and so on…..it is contemplation of the appearing object as appearing (Husserl 2005, 338)." In *Ideas III*, there is only one reference to a ghost, namely "the wildest physical spectre (Husserl 1980, 26)", but in *Ideas II,* there are several discussions of ghosts, for instance on p. 227 he writes "the comportment of the subject towards its surrounding world, as the world posited by it, includes not merely realities but also, for example ghosts (Husserl 1989, 227)." Later he notes that "things are correlates of the respective lived experiences…if other people…see ghosts, then their correlates are precisely ghosts (Husserl 1989, 301)." However Husserl is quick to deny the reality of the ghost: "I am afraid of the ghost, perhaps it makes me quiver, although I know that what is seen is nothing actual. The dramatic action of the theatre moves me deeply, although it is not something real as I well know….I am determined by the mere phantasy-things of art (Husserl 1989, 244)." In his discussion of the constitution of animal nature, Husserl conducts a kind of eidetic analysis of the ghost when he writes "even the ghost has its ghostly Body. To be sure, this Body is not an actual material thing – the appearing materiality is an illusion – but thereby so is the affiliated soul and thus the entire ghost…is a pure "spatial phantom (Husserl 1989, 100)." Husserl goes so far as to say that the ghost is not only a subjective spatial phantom but that it is also intersubjective: "it would be thinkable that

ghosts appear not only to one subject but also intersubjectively (Husserl, 1989, 101)" (as is the case of Hamlet's late father first appearing to a duo of soldiers – Bernardo and Marcellus – and a visitor to Denmark, Horatio), but not the 4 ghosts of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*: the ghost of old Marley and the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future, seen only by Scrooge himself). Husserl concludes his analysis by claiming that "if thereby the *a priori* (although entirely empty) possibility of actual ghosts is granted, then the immediate consequence is that a psychic subject without a material body is indeed thinkable, i.e., as a ghost instead of a natural animal being, but in no way without a Body of some kind (Husserl 1989, 101)," *(similar to the angels of Renaissance painting that always appear corporeal, the angels of Islam can also appear as a shaft of fire or a burst of light*). Husserl's analysis does not address claims of ghosts or angels as pure presences, felt but never seen or touched or heard.

Any aesthetic theory must account for the creative process. In writing about ghosts and angels, relative to the human person as spirit and body, Husserl engages in the age-old occupation of the poet, the composer, the writer of literature in an imaginative variation as both world destroyer and world builder, a radically free phantasy that is thus the ground for the possibility of all creative expression, including that of philosophy. Like Husserl certain poets and philosophers, in seeking the ultimate and fundamental structure and condition of the human, suspend or put out of play the theses of the natural attitude pertinent to their own times and liberate the imagination to enter the field of pure phenomena where, in the case of poetry or music, affective states are experienced as 'in' the phenomena in the same way as their colors and forms, not there by association, analogy, representation, or empathic projection; sign and signified are in one another, the sadness is in the music.

The creative process is found in the Italian Renaissance philosopher Pico della Mirandola. In his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, Pico asks what precisely is the nature of the human such that he or she is worthy of the highest admiration (Mirandola 1956, 4). In response, he puts out of play what medieval thinkers named the 'hierarchy of being' (Mirandola 1956, 4) in which the human has a fixed place, and in doing so Pico intuits intellectually that he or she is in fact essentially indeterminate, is absolutely *free from* all constraints or determinations (Mirandola 1956, 7) and as a result of his or her portentous capacity to say "No!." Pico freely imagines that he or she can descend to the lower forms of life, to the vegetative, the brute beast, etc., or ascend to the higher divine forms (Mirandola 1956, 8), even beyond the highest three orders of angels, Thrones, Seraphims, and Cherubims. Pico goes as far as to assert that the human, through his or her will, can become "one with God in the solitary

darkness of the Father (Mirandola 1956, 9).” This helps to make sense of the Christian claim by St. John of Damascus that Mary is the queen of the angels, and certainly this is depicted not only in Raphael’s *Madonna del Baldachinno* but also in so many of the *Annunciation* paintings of the Italian Renaissance where the angel is kneeling in supplication to Mary. Through his or her natural freedom of self-determination, the human person creates himself or herself. Mary said “Yes” to Gabriel. In summary, Pico suspends the existence of God, the angels, and the whole of nature, temporarily bracketing his belief in them in order to describe them relative to the essence of the human as it is disclosed to insight through free imaginative variation.

Similar to Pico, Rainer Maria Rilke also engaged in radical free imaginative variation. In the *Duino Elegies*, published in 1922, he uses angels to depict, by contrast, the ultimate and fundamental condition of the human. *“Who, if I cried, would hear me among the angelic orders? And even if one of them pressed me against his heart, I should fade in the strength of his stronger existence. For Beauty’s nothing but beginning of Terror we’re still just able to bear, and why we adore it so is because it serenely disdains to destroy us. Each single angel is terrible* (Rilke 1967, 21).” Rilke writes: “The Angel of the *Elegies* is the being in whom that transformation of the visible into the invisible we are performing already appears complete…The Angel of the *Elegies* is the being who vouches for the recognition of a higher degree of reality in the invisible – therefore, ‘terrible’ to us, because we, its lovers and transformers, still depend on the visible (Rilke 1967, 87).” Like that of Rilke, Husserl’s phenomenological project involves the transformation of the visible into the invisible, of transcendence within immanence made possible by the transcendental and eidetic reductions.

In his letter to Hugo Von Hofmannstahl written in 1907 when he was still developing the *epoché*, Husserl claims that the “short dramas” of Von H were a great source of inspiration for him. “For me, the “inner states” that are portrayed in your art as purely aesthetic, or not exactly portrayed, but elevated into a sphere of pure aesthetic beauty, these states hold, this aesthetic objectification, a particular interest – i.e., not only for the art lover in me, but also for the philosopher and phenomenologist Husserl 2009, 1).” Husserl goes on to state that “phenomenological intuiting is closely related to aesthetic intuiting in pure art (Husserl 2009, 2.)” In fact, Husserl writes that he performs his research “in a purely intuiting (as if it were aesthetic) fashion (Husserl 2009, 2).”

Is it possible that these “inner states” are those described by Von Hofmannstahl in his famous *Lord Chandos Letter* which was written 4 years before Husserl’s letter to him? In this letter which he addresses to Francis Bacon, Lord Chandos writes that he cannot think or write anymore because of

certain experiences he has had. When confronted with the aesthetic significance of ordinary things such as a water can which "suddenly take on for me a sublime and moving aura which words seem too weak to describe (von Hofmannstahl 2005, 123)," he reports of "a steeply rising tide of heavenly feeling (von Hofmannstahl 2005,123), a swelling tide of higher life in "the present, the fullest most sublime present (von Hofmannstahl 2005, 124)," of a vast empathy streaming across into things and creatures, a "presence of the infinite…a feeling of the marvelous…tremors of the supernatural, "a plenitude, such a presence of love (von Hofmannstahl 2005, 125)." He adds that if we begin to think with our hearts, "we enter into a new momentous relationship with all of existence (von Hofmannstahl 2005, 125)" such that "there is nothing into which I cannot merge (von Hoffmannstahl 2005, 125)." Inside and outside, self and other, are inextricably intertwined in the field of consciousness. Foreshadowing Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, the visible is transformed into the invisible of pure aesthetic consciousness. These epiphanies lead him to describe a "mysterious, wordless, infinite rapture (von Hofmannstahl 2005, 126)…a kind of feverish thinking, but thinking in a medium more direct, fluid, and passionate than words (von Hofmannstahl 2005, 127)." He wishes he could write "in the language in which mute things speak (von Hoffmannstahl 2005, 128)." He finds his imagination liberated in such a way as to enter the zone of the trans-linguistic and trans-conceptual. Surprise and awe are generated by his desire to make sense, discovering the internal and dynamic relatedness between rational thought and feeling. Always prior to any excessively cognitive abstraction, feelings have for Lord Chandos a spiritual and rational core, a primordial spiritual affectivity animating both the highest forms of intellectual life and the feverish thinking of the heart.

In his letters to Rilke that expanded from 1902 to Rilke's death in 1926, there is evidence that Hofmannstahl had read in 1902 Rilke's highly popular *Book of Hours* of 1900, the real theme of which is the poet's own inner life, his struggles toward comprehension, and, above all his perils as a poet. Hofmannstahl's *The Lord Chandos Letter* was also written in 1902, and this work reflects to a certain extent Rilke's influence on Von H. The reverse is also the case it would seem. In his 9$^{th}$ *Elegy*, Rilke writes: *"….in our speechless heart…..the long experience of love, just what is wholly unsayable. But later, among the stars, what good is it – they are better as they are: unsayable…..Perhaps we are here in order to say: house, bridge, fountain, gate, pitcher, fruit-tree, window – at most: column, tower….But to say them, you must understand, oh to say them more intensely than the Things themselves ever dreamed of existing. Isn't the secret intent of this taciturn earth, when it forces lovers together, that inside their boundless emotion all things may shudder with joy.* (Rilke 1967, 75)." Although Husserl was not directly influenced by Rilke's writing, it would be worth researching the extent to which he may have been influenced by Rilke through Von Hofmannstahl.

In his letter to Von Hofmannstahl, Husserl writes that the phenomenon "perception" is the only givenness (the only thing that is given unquestionably, and (as said above) that he performs his research "in a purely intuiting (as if it were aesthetic) fashion." Wolfgang Huemer interprets this to mean that "Husserl equates the "phenomenological look" with aesthetic experience," (in *Writing the Austrian Traditions: Relations between Philosophy and Literature*, p. 121-130). However, Husserl writes that they are "closely related" and Sven-Olaf Wallenstein (In SITE Magazine 26-27.09 ISSN 1650-7894), argues that they are "closely allied." Yet both Huemer and Wallenstein regard the letter to von Hofmannstahl as 'enigmatic.' It almost seems as if there is a single intuition that splits off into the philosophical and the artistic, depending on the interest or attitude. J. N Mohanty, in discussing Husserl's letter to Von Hofmannstahl, refers to 'the aesthetic reduction' and contrasts it to the phenomenological reduction claiming that the latter "brackets all transcendence, it suspends the very belief in the world (Mohanty 2008, 314)." In addition it is effected by "a voluntary change of attitude" while the aesthetic reduction is not. He opens a disjuncture between feeling and intellect (Mohanty 2008, 314), confining the aesthetic to feeling, disregarding therefore what Von Hoffmannstahl might regard as the feeling of being reflectively conscious. We must ask whether the *epoché* brackets all transcendence or only the doxic positing of transcendence in the natural attitude. Furthermore, instead of being passive, aesthetic perception can very much indeed be voluntary as well, as when we step back to contemplate the sea and starry nights and sunsets and pleasant pastures and groves and sometimes fear-inspiring scenes like storms and mountains and waterfalls.

## Question 3. Whether phenomenological intuiting is equal to or the same as aesthetic intuiting.

Now let us imagine a letter to Husserl written 10 years later, in 1917, by Von Hofmannstahl after he has read *Ideas I*, a book that has deeply moved him.

Dear Herr Husserl,

Since we last met in Göttingen, I have had the pleasure of reading several of your manuscripts dealing with phantasy and image consciousness, but it is only when I read your 1913 publication, *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy,* that I began to appreciate the magnitude of the impact you will make for the future of philosophy. Indeed that work signals a 'Renaissance' in contemporary thought, and such a renaissance is to be understood as rupture,

radical transformation, rather than simply as revival or rebirth. It opens a 'new direction,' and brings about 'a radical renewal,' 'an efflorescence' made possible by an extension through the imagination of the sphere of conceivability. Obviously you understand the place of the imagination in knowing and experience. For me it is to be regarded as the font of all thinking and a principle of creativity that is formative for the very opening upon things, a novel agency operative in the sheer advance of the present over the past. In my judgment, and I am sure you would share this, the force of imagination extends to all spheres of human life and to fields ranging from art to philosophy to physics. Notwithstanding the profundity of your thought, I still have some questions to ask, questions obviously limited by my being a poet and librettist and not a philosopher and obviously reflecting my poetic interests as expressed in my *Letter to Lord Chandos* which you were so kind to read and comment on. This work is in fact autobiographical as you may have suspected.

In your letter to me, you indicate that you conduct your research in a purely intuiting (as if it were aesthetic) fashion. Accordingly, I would be interested in knowing to what extent, if any, you think that primordial aesthetic values permeate all givenness, even that of pure consciousness in so far as it can be given in primary reflection? Can we speak meaningfully of the feeling of consciousness, of the felt experience of cognition? If so, can the feeling be analyzed, can it be put out of play without such action already presupposing it? Let me be more specific. Is there not always an affective coloration to reflective consciousness, a shunning or seeking, attraction or repulsion? Are there felt qualities, aesthetic values that belong simply to being conscious and that motivate consciousness in all of its activities including the shift to the theoretical attitude? Is there not a kind of aesthetic pleasure in the very manner of givenness of the powers and performances of consciousness? At all levels of constitution, consciousness is valued for itself, we shun the abyss, the night of nothingness, meaninglessness, emptiness, powerlessness, futurelessness. From sleep we awaken to an opening upon the life-world that engulfs us, an experience with its vividness and feeling tone intact, not an abstraction from the vital context of life; we grasp things as their emotional qualities and intrinsic expressive patterns awaken consciousness before analysis has done its work of dividing and abstracting. Even though the ego's original self-grasping is pre-theoretical, are not the feelings evoked therein, and in which the ego lives, extended even to the theoretical attitude that delights in them so that we might say that the consciousness of joy is rooted primordially in the joy that is internal to consciousness, that the consciousness of anguish is rooted primordially in the anguish internal to consciousness? It seems to me that the aesthetic field in its originary mode is fundamentally the pre-objective life-world upon which the primordially intersubjective givenness of all objects is based, from which all other senses and types of objectivity derive. The aesthetic field

includes all natural objects that delight the beholder by the bare fact of their being apprehended, awakening awe, reverence, lofty emotion, a sense of immense power or magnitude. In the *Letter to Lord Chandos*, I wrote about the strangeness and beauty of even the most common thing grasped in the coloring of the imagination! And so I must ask if all givenness is in the mode of the aesthetic? Is the originary transcendental field of consciousness a pure aesthetic field? In which case (and let me repeat my question again), would you agree to at least consider that any form of givenness to reflective consciousness and ultimately to transcendental consciousness is a species of aesthetic givenness?

It would appear that for you the wonder of all wonders is pure Ego, pure consciousness. For me the feeling of awe or wonder is one of the highest experiences of which the human psyche is capable. Rooted in the archaic levels of consciousness, it is a deep aesthetic passion underlying the finest that music, poetry and philosophy can deliver. As I intimated in my Lord Chandos Letter, wonder is a return to things themselves when they, in their radical otherness and dwelling in their own intrinsic dignity and untampered-with innocence, break through objectivating intentionality and press upon the heart, and through it I am lifted beyond the dominant categories and language of thought and experience which cease to contain them and which thus leaves me speechless. It seems to me that transcendental consciousness intends meaning as what is in itself beautiful, and in this sense pure aesthetic intuiting and phenomenological intuiting can be said to be equal if not the same.

Let’s take up some claims about mathematical consciousness which seems, at least to me, a variation of what you call absolute consciousness. As you know Henri Poincaré, claimed, that the essence of mathematical experience is aesthetic? As Poincaré puts it, mathematical beauty is a real aesthetic feeling that all true mathematicians recognize, finding a kind of pure and rarefied beauty in formal structures. Can you recognize the incomparable beauty and elegance of particular theorems, proofs and theories, that beauty is one of the key motivations behind the formulation of mathematical proofs and a criterion for choosing one mathematical theorem over another? I am quite confident that you are interested in the relation of theoretical interest to aesthetic pleasure. Our mutual friend, the young Hermann Weyl, has recently declared to me that his work always tries to unite the true with the beautiful, but when he has to choose one or the other, he usually choses the beautiful. Is this because beauty is a transcendental value belonging to the being of everything including consciousness? Is the directedness of consciousness toward meaning at the same time a directedness toward beauty?

You and I both agree that aesthetic intuition is disinterested in the existence and use value of an object, and if that is the case, is it because the *epoché* has already been performed by it? Are you not only inspired by pure aesthetic intuition in your formulation of the *epoché* as you indicated in your 1907 letter to me, but did you discover it already at work in your own pure contemplation of the beautiful? In this sense, can the *epoché* be traced back to Kant? It is famously known that Kant would exclude moral, practical, or appetitive interest from pure aesthetic intuition because these entail concern for the existence of its object; for Kant, the aesthetic attitude is concerned with the imaginative perfection of the vision and not the real existence of the object. For Kant the freedom of the imagination is untrammeled; no extraneous interest, sensuous or moral, no concept, no purpose, no necessity is imposed from without, is allowed to interfere with it. Whereas in ordinary cognition, the imagination is subordinate to the understanding, in aesthetic experience the understanding is subordinate to the imagination that freely creates another nature out of the perceptual data that phenomenal nature presents to it. The result is the joy and freedom of the human spirit in the vivacious play of its powers.

Finally old friend, I must ask whether you have ever questioned your transcendental theoretical starting point in the pure ego with theoretical reflection having primacy? Have you ever seen the phenomenological reduction in its two-fold dimensions (transcendental and eidetic reductions) as a particular theoretical stance rooted historically and culturally in the European tradition? Have you understood the full nature of theoretical thought if you have failed to see it in its proper context, namely, in its relation to the life-world? It seems to me that as long as we are imagining, we have not eliminated ourselves and our own predilections, and it may be virtually impossible to do so. Your discussion of angels and ghosts situates you in a particular culture (Renaissance Florence), or at a particular theatre in Vienna where Hamlet is playing, and so the eidetic reduction occurs in a historical context, and so I wonder if this does not limit the range of free variation. Is this reduction mediated by culture, by history? In other words, must the *eidos* ‘man’ (the subject of the search by Pico and Rilke) not only include the *eidos* community, intersubjectivity, culture, but also history?

Dear Herr Husserl, I have gone on too long, and not being a philosopher I think it best to leave my reflections on your beautiful work in an interrogative space that hopefully you will enter in reply.

With best regards,

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Patrick Burke

Patrick Burke is Professor of Philosophy at Gonzaga University, assigned to its campus in Florence, Italy where he served as Dean for many years and taught courses since 1989 on the art and philosophy of the Florentine renaissance, existentialism, and ethics. He specializes in contemporary French philosophy and has published extensively on the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the influence of Schelling on his thought. His most recent publication (with Jason Wirth) is *The Barbarian Principle: Merleau-Ponty, Schelling, and the Question of Nature*.