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'Estrangement' in aesthetics and beyond: Russian formalism and phenomenological method

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Abstract
We investigate the parallelism between aesthetic experience and the practice of phenomenology using Viktor Shklovsky's theory of "estrangement" (*ostranenie*). In his letter to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Husserl claims that aesthetic and phenomenological experiences are similar; in the perception of a work of art we change our attitude in order to concentrate on how the things appear to us instead of what they are. A work of art "forces us into" the aesthetic attitude in the same way as the phenomenological *epoché* drives us into the phenomenological one. The change of attitudes is a condition of possibility of aesthetic and/or phenomenological experience. Estrangement is an artistic device that breaks the routinized forms of perception: one sees the thing as new and does not just "recognize" it automatically. Shklovsky insists that it is possible if one experiences or feels the form of the work of art—in an affective and even sensuous way. We claim that this is similar to the phenomenological seeing, or intuition, which, according to Husserl, should be devoid of all understanding. Phenomenological *epoché* can also be described as a philosophical technique that aims to arrest the "ready-made," "taken for granted," "pre-given" meanings in order to access a new meaning which is not yet stabilized, the "meaning-in-formation." It is not enough to turn from what appears to how it appears; one has to oscillate between these conflicting attitudes, or rather to keep them both at the same time thus gaining a kind of a 3D-vision of meaning in its becoming. This double life in two different attitudes (or, following a Husserlian metaphor, "double bookkeeping") can be clarified in terms of Roman Jakobson's theory of antinomic coexistence between the poetic and communicative functions of language. The notion of "double life in two attitudes" uncovers the role that *ostranenie* can play in the philosophical transformation of the subject based on variety and essential mobility of the affective components involved. Proposing a phenomenological interpretation of a passage from Samuel Beckett we show how the radicalization of *ostranenie* can lead even to "meta-estrangement": to estrangement of the everyday "lack of estrangement." We conclude with a remark on the productivity of this form of estrangement in the phenomenological context.

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> *Ostranenie* is the sensation of surprise felt toward the world, a perception of the world with a strained sensitivity. The term can be established only by including the notion of "the world" in its meaning. This term simultaneously assumes the existence of a so-called content, supposing that content is the delayed, close examination of the world. …Science avoids the act of wondering, it tries to overcome the element of surprise. Art preserves it. – *Viktor Shklovsky*[1]

> From the beginning the phenomenologist lives in the paradox of having to look upon the obvious as questionable, as enigmatic, and of henceforth being unable to have any other scientific theme than that of transforming the universal obviousness of the being of the world – for him the greatest of all enigmas – into something intelligible. … [He] sees with astonishment that this whole objectivity with all the sciences of it is a huge problem. The radical problem is already the obviousness, in which this world is constantly and which this world is. – *Edmund Husserl*[2]

Art and philosophy do cause *wonder*. However, one should not confuse this wonder with *admiration*, the first passion, against the excess of which Descartes warned his readers; nor with the numinous *awe*, which is proper to religious life. Although the philosophical wonder (*thaumazein*) is a classical topic since Plato and Aristotle, in the Middle Ages it was treated with suspicion. Thomas Aquinas linked wonder in response to natural phenomena to ignorance; wonder is only appropriate in response to the Divine. The interest in wonder resurges in the seventeenth century when wonder moves away from the marvelous and the curious to the simple and the usual.[3] The experience of wonder becomes a major aesthetic principle of Romanticism: "Poetry, says Shelley, makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar." In the words of Poe, "unexpectedness arises from expectedness," from the expected banality of our common life in the world. This point resonates in Heidegger's dictum that in the philosophical wonder "what is most usual itself become the most unusual."[4] In phenomenology and art, wonder does not aim to overwhelm the person who lives it through: on the contrary, it interrupts the predicted course of life experience, gives way to the unforeseen and unforeseeable and thus provides one with a truer access to one's own self.[5]

[1] Shklovsky (2011, pp. 283–284); Shklovsky (1970, p. 230).

[2] Husserl (1976, pp. 183–184), eng. tr. Husserl (1970, p. 180); Husserl (1992, p. 119), eng. tr. in Moran (2010, p. 181).

[3] For more details see Rubenstein 2009.

[4] Heidegger (1984, 166; eng. tr. 1994, p. 164).

[5] Within the phenomenological tradition one should mention numerous references to *thaumazein* in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty; however both of them primarily treat *thaumazein* as a feature of philosophical, rather than aesthetic, experience. The task of philosophy is for Heidegger "to make the obvious incomprehensible and the unquestioned something questionable,… shocking common sense out of

The comparison between aesthetic and phenomenological experiences of wonder is a vast domain of investigation. Here we focus on a narrower topic, that of parallelism between the *practice* of Husserlian phenomenological reduction and the aesthetical technique of *ostranenie,* that is, estrangement or defamiliarization. We attempt an "intralingual translation" of the descriptions of wonder from the conceptual language of Russian Formalism to the language of Husserlian phenomenology and back.

The question immediately arises: is such a translation possible at all? And if yes, to what extent? We would suggest that it is possible as long as there is a shared experience of wonder that brings forth a new dimension of sense. This experience is expressed in different terms, using various conceptual languages; phenomenology and Russian Formalism each supplies us with such a language. Once the language of description is fixed, the corresponding expression will necessarily distort the original experience; these respective deformations explain certain divergences between phenomenological and Formalist accounts of experience. A translation *stricto* sensu is possible between languages of description, but even though the approaches of phenomenology and Russian Formalism are directed towards different ends, we hope that the return to the unity of experience will lead to fruitful exchanges between the practices.

In our reflections we will, besides the classical works by Hirsch (1968), Holenstein (1976) and Hansen-Löve (1978),[6] rely on more recent papers by Huemer (2003), Maiatsky (2009), Popa (2011), Flack (2013) and Shore (2015) linking Husserlian phenomenology, aesthetics and/or Russian Formalism. Our approach to the phenomenology was strongly influenced by the seminal works of Eugen Fink, Henri Maldiney, Michel Henry and Marc Richir.

1 Husserl and Shklovsky on aesthetic experience: change of attitude and set towards expression

It is slightly discomforting to compare Husserl's aesthetic theory to that of Russian Formalism: what is meant under the name of a "work of art," is rather different in each case. For Husserl, exemplary artworks are the *chefs d'oeuvres* of classical European art such as Dürer, Beethoven, Rafael; on the contrary, Russian Formalists promoted Cubism, Futurism, Suprematism and even so-called "trans-rational

Footnote 5 (continued)
its presumptive self-glorification" Heidegger (1978, p. 6); eng. tr. (1984, pp. 5–6). The wonder has a function of "awakening:" "to make the obvious incomprehensible…, so that we become awake." (Ibid.) Merleau-Ponty understands phenomenological reduction as a key example of philosophical wonder, see Merleau-Ponty (1981, p. xiii, 1952, p. 247). See also Chernavin (2017).

[6] This brilliant research considers only Husserl's life-time works, not the posthumously published Husserliana volumes; this particularly affects the claims regarding the role of eidetic variation in phenomenological reduction. See Hansen-Löve (1978, pp. 183–184).

poetry" (*zaumnaya poesia*).[7] This is not just a disagreement about taste. For Husserl a work of art—even a piece of music[8]—delivers a kind of image. In his earlier writings he understands this image as depicting,[9] later the accent on the reproductive side of "images" fades, but the art is still a matter of imaging (*Bildlichkeit*) and thus of imagination.[10] Husserl's aesthetic theory is first and foremost a theory of phantasy and imagination; on the contrary, the aesthetic theory of Russian Formalism was coined in order to fight the legacy of Potebnia, especially his so-called "theory of image."[11] Indeed, aesthetics of Formalism declared that art is not about the production of images, either depictive or non-depictive; Formalists had no interest in imagination. Therefore, to build a meaningful comparison between Husserlian phenomenology and Russian Formalism, one should put aside Husserlian aesthetics inasmuch as it is grounded in his theory of imagination.[12] We intend to compare the phenomenological *practice* with the *practice* of estrangement rather than phenomenological aesthetics with aesthetic theory of Russian Formalism.

We would like to start with a closer look on how Husserl compares the work of an artist and the work of a phenomenologist, concentrating on two of his texts: his letter to Hugo von Hofmannsthal from January 12, 1907, and one of his drafts from 1912 on *Aesthetic consciousness*. The dates are important for the history of phenomenology, as Husserl conceived and developed his method of phenomenological reduction in these very years. Hofmannsthal gave a lecture in Göttingen on December 6, 1906, and the same day he visited the Husserls, who were his distant kin.[13] He also gave Husserl one of his books, *Kleine Dramen*; Husserl's letter, containing one

[7] The Formalist theory does not only deal with literature. Young Jakobson was close to Malevich and was influenced by his ideas. See Jakobson and Pomorska (1983, pp. 8–9). There is a series of articles written by Jakobson and Shklovsky in 1919 while collaborating in the review *Iskusstvo*, in which they apply the key elements of their theory to painting. See Jakobson (1981, 2013) and Shklovsky (2005, pp. 54–57, 58–62). On Formalism and visual arts see also Hansen-Löve (1978, pp. 59–98).

[8] Cf.: "Music characterized by means of titles as music that presents something (*als darstellende Musik*). Symphonie Pastorale" Husserl (1980, p. 144), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 167).

[9] In 1918 Husserl writes: "Earlier I believed that it belonged to the essence of fine art to present in an image, and I understood this presenting to be depicting. Looked at more closely, however, this is not correct… we <have> "images" within the cohesive unity of one image… Certainly depictiveness (*Abbildlichkeit*) is not the *primary* concern; rather, it is a matter of imaging (*Bildlichkeit*) in the sense of perceptual phantasy understood as immediate imagination" Husserl (1980, p. 514), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 616). See also Dufourcq (2011, pp. 59–78).

[10] We could not find anything in Husserl's legacy that indicates that he was aware of the existence of non-figurative painting. To the best of our knowledge, for Husserl, any work of art transports us to a certain world of phantasy, that is, a world in the mode of *as if*, while non-figurative painting or trans-rational poetry do not aim to create such a world. To the best of our knowledge, for Husserl, any work of art has an element of presentation (*Darstellung*), the model of *Dartstellbarkeit* can be traced even in Husserl's theory of perception; according to A. Dufourcq, the objects of perception are "images of themselves" Dufourcq (2011, p. 306).

[11] On the reception of Potebnia's legacy in Russian Formalism and Moscow linguistic circle see Pilshchikov (2014), eng. tr. Pilshchikov (2017); also Bakhtin (2003, p. 305). In 1935 Jacobson acknowledged the importance of Potebnia's thought for Andrei Bely and Russian Formalism, see Jakobson (2011, p. 31).

[12] On the role of imagination in Husserlian phenomenology in general see Popa (2012); on the role of imagination in the phenomenological method see Dufourcq (2011, pp. 135–156).

[13] Frau Husserl was related to Frau von Hofmannsthal, see Hirsch (1968, p. 109).

of the first drafts of the future phenomenological reduction, is a 'thank you' note for this gift. It is likely that Hofmannsthal was impressed neither by the conversation nor by the letter; they seem to have left no trace in his heritage. On the contrary, the comparison between the poet and the philosopher, suggested by Hofmannsthal in his lecture, *Der Dichter und diese Zeit*,[14] was picked up by Husserl, although Husserl approaches it from a totally different angle. Hofmannsthal claims that all interest in philosophy is fundamentally a misled longing for poetry; Husserl builds an analogy between the praxis of poetry and the praxis of philosophy while maintaining the strict autonomy of these two areas.

So where should one look for similarity between phenomenology and art? In this section we compare phenomenological and Formalists' theories of attitudes. Let us start with Husserl. According to Husserl's letter to Hofmannstal, art as well as practice of phenomenology presuppose a change of attitude. Indeed, in order to do phenomenology—or to perceive the work of art aesthetically—one has to suspend the natural, "existential" attitude, that is, the attitude of *Seinsglaube*, and to obtain another—phenomenological or aesthetical—attitude. The work of art "forces me into" the aesthetical attitude[15] where I bracket my belief that the world exists in reality and plunge into the realm of pure aesthetic 'intuition', seeing (*Schauen*). This notion of seeing is a difficult one, but before we discuss it properly we need to pause and reflect on what Husserl calls *Stellungname* or later *Einstellung*, and what is translated in phenomenology as attitude and in Roman Jakobson's theory of poetics as set.[16]

So, what does it actually mean—to suspend the attitude of believing in reality and to switch to another, aesthetical or phenomenological, attitude? If we think of art, it would seem rather obvious. Indeed, when one reads in a newspaper that a law student killed an old lady with an axe, one would certainly find it abhorrent, but when the same person reads the same story in Dostoyevsky, they could rather like it. However, Husserl's position is more complicated than that. To switch to another attitude means that a work of art—and the world itself, if we speak about the phenomenological attitude—*can* be seen (and even *must* be seen) from two totally different points of view: in order to relate to a work of art *as such*—not as a material object, a story or an image[17]—one must be displaced (*versetzt*) to a different position. If we, the humans, were not able to switch from one attitude to another, or maybe even to retain both attitudes in a specific act of "double vision,"[18] there would be neither art nor phenomenology at all. This change of position can be described as a *condition of possibility of aesthetical and/or phenomenological experience*. Without this

[14] Hofmannsthal (1979, pp. 54–81).

[15] Husserl (1980, p. 370); eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 442).

[16] Holenstein (1976, p. 52), in Russian—*ustanovka.* See also Hansen-Löve (1978, pp. 213–214).

[17] Here, in order not to overload the reader with the jargon of Husserlian philosophy, we do not differentiate between 'acts' and 'quasi-acts' and also between "feelings" and "quasi-feelings," when engaging with the problem of image and imagination.

[18] According to Husserl, this "double vision" or, to be more precise, "double perceptual apperception" is proper to the aesthetic experience in the case of theatre performance. See Husserl (1980, p. 517), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 619).

ability to live in a "hybrid situation,"[19] where various attitudes are intertwined or even simultaneously retained, the destabilization of automated meanings would not be achievable.

Also, both the creator of art and the perceiver have to fulfil this condition of the possibility of aesthetical experience. Not only Husserl in his letter to Hofmannsthal, but also Merleau-Ponty, Henry, Marion, Richir, Maldiney and many other phenomenologists develop their aesthetical theories in the *area of shared experience* between the creator and the perceiver; likewise, Roman Jakobson's concept of attitude presupposes *mutual involvement* of the creator and the perceiver of the same linguistic object in the act of signification.[20] This is by no means a universally accepted approach. In this respect the phenomenological aesthetics differs sharply from that of Kant, where the domain of creative productivity is detached from the domain of taste.[21]

What is the destination of this displacement? The initial 'existential' or "doxic" attitude is not rejected completely, but rather suspended or modified: according to Husserl, instead of concentrating on an object, I concentrate on the appearance of the object in both aspects of its appearance: on *what* appears to me and on *how* it appears. I am directed towards the appearance in its "manner of appearing" (*Erscheinungsweise*). It is the *how* of the appearance, that is, its *manner of appearing*, that enables me to relate to the object aesthetically[22]; the directedness towards the manner of appearing is what Husserl calls aesthetic consciousness or "aesthetic intuition," which is "closely related" (*nahe verwandt*) to the phenomenological intuition.[23] In a nutshell this may look very straightforward: Certainly, when we visit a museum to see a still life by Cézanne, we are not so much interested in *what* is depicted (apples on the table, for example), but we rather pay attention to *how* those apples are depicted, to Cézanne's manner of painting,[24] or, to use another conceptual language, to the *form* of this work of art.[25] There is neither artistic creation nor indeed perception of art without this displacement from *what* to *how* or (if we use Roman Jakobson's language) without a *set towards expression*.[26]

Early Jakobson insisted that the poetical utterance—that is, "an utterance with a set toward expression" is indifferent to the referent of the utterance, that is, to the

[19] Fink (2006, p. 284).
[20] Bradford (2005, pp. 15–18).
[21] Shestova (2015, p. 302).
[22] Husserl (1980, p. 388), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 496).
[23] Husserl (1994, p. 135), eng. tr. Husserl (2009, p. 2).
[24] Cf. Husserl (1980, p. 37), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 40).
[25] Cf.: "For an aesthetic description, what counts is not *what* is depicted and *what* expresses the thing depicted, but *how* the thing is depicted and *how* the depicting is done. That '*how*' is to be sought in the words and sounds of the poem." Bely (1985, p. 235), italics added according to Russian original in Belyi (1910, p. 244).
[26] Jakobson (1979, p. 305, 330), Jakobson (1981, p. 718).

reality. "What Husserl calls *dinglicher Bezug* is absent," explains Jakobson.[27] In his later works[28] he sees in the poetic "autotelism" a necessary condition of poeticity:

> But how does poeticity manifest itself? Poeticity is present, where the word is felt as a word and not as a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion, when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and inner form, acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality.[29]

The attitude is changed: instead of a natural set towards reality there is an interest in *how* this reality appears, how it is presented, an interest in the manner or the form. But what does it mean – to become aware of the manner of appearance?

2 Intuitio sine comprehensione

Let us look at the characteristic of poetic perception stated by Viktor Shklovsky in his early manifesto written in 1914 before the formation of OPOIAZ. It sounds quite similar to Husserl's position:

> If we have to define specifically "poetic" perception and artistic perception in general, then we suggest this definition: "Artistic" perception is that perception in which we experience form – perhaps not form alone, but certainly form."[30]

Another member of the OPOIAZ, Boris Eichenbaum, discussing this passage in his 1925 overview of the Formal method, calls this idea "the principle of perceptible form" (*princip oshchutimosti formy*, the principle of the sensation of form[31]). If we look at this statement, two questions immediately arise: what does it mean exactly to experience a form (*perezhivat' formu*), and how this "perceptibility" or "sensation" of a form could be gained. We know Shklovsky's answer to the second question: there are certain efforts, certain devices that can be used by the writer and the reader. Also Husserl provides us with a technique for changing the attitude, that is, "phenomenological *epoché*": see below the comparison between these two techniques. The first question has no obvious answer, but we hope that the juxtaposition of Shklovsky and Husserl will help to clarify the matter.

[27] Jakobson (1979, p. 336).

[28] Evolution of Jakobson's views on the independence of the poetical function was beautifully summarized by Tsvetan Todorov (1982, p. 274); see also Winner (1987, p. 263).

[29] Jakobson (1987, p. 378).

[30] Shklovsky (1973, p. 42), eng. tr. cited by Eichenbaum (2012, p. 113).

[31] Eichenbaum (2012, p. 113).

In his letter to Hofmannsthal, Husserl does not explain how the work of art "forces us into" the aesthetical attitude,[32] but he spends hundreds of pages clarifying different aspects of the phenomenological *epoché* and the phenomenological reduction. One has to leave the "natural attitude," to break with his/her usual involvement with the world and to accept the unnatural, phenomenological attitude that arrests all "understanding" of the world in order to get the pure "seeing." "As little understanding as possible, as much pure intuition as possible: *intuitio sine comprehension*,"[33] writes Husserl in 1907. This insistence on the primacy of seeing in contradistinction to understanding, i.e., to "discursive knowledge," is analogous to Shklovsky's emphasis on "seeing" (*videnie*) as opposed to "recognition" (*uznavanie*). According to Shklovsky, the familiar, that is, the automatically recognizable, and the "perceptible," mutually exclude one another. This is why we need estrangement, *ostranenie*.

"We do not sense the familiar, we do not see it, we recognize it," says Shklovsky. The problematicity of the life is lost, and the new artistic techniques are needed to "return to the man of sensation of the world."[34] In the aesthetic experience we deal with a special kind of perception:

> The purpose of the image is not to draw our understanding closer to that which this image stands for, but rather to allow us to perceive the object in a special way, in short, to lead us to a "vision" of this object rather than mere "recognition."[35]

We perceive the object in such a way that suspends all 'sedimented,' established systems of meaning,[36] "as it were perceived for the first time."[37] Instead of dealing with the ready-made meaning of the object, for example its name, the artistic creation produces a fresh meaning that can be called a "meaning-in-formation." This meaning-in-formation is intimately linked to the temporal structure of this "special

[32] Husserl explains this in one of his later manuscripts: "The phantasies here are not freely produced by us (the creative artist alone has freedom here and exercises it only in union with aesthetic ideals). Rather, they have their objectivity; they are prescribed for us, forced upon us in a way analogous to that in which the things belonging to reality are forced upon us as things to which we must submit. In an analogous way—yet naturally not in quite the same way" Husserl (1980, p. 519), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 620).

[33] Husserl (1973, p. 62), eng. tr. Husserl (1999, p. 46).

[34] Shklovsky (1973, p. 41).

[35] Shklovsky (1990, p. 10).

[36] There are two concurrent traditions of English translation of Husserl's term *Sinn*: as 'sense' and as 'meaning'. This is what L. Hardy says in his translator's preface: "I have translated *Sinn* as 'sense' rather than 'meaning' (annexing the latter to *Bedeutung*). … As such, it far exceeds in scope the concerns of the philosophy of language; indeed, for Husserl, it also precedes those concerns insofar as all linguistic reference is ultimately founded on pre-predicative acts of consciousness" Husserl (1999, p. 12). Moran and Cohen claim that there are cases where translation of *Sinn* as 'meaning' would be suitable: "Husserl sometimes distinguishes 'sense (*Sinn*)' from 'meaning (*Bedeutung*)', although he regularly uses the terms interchangeably…. In his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl tends to use the terms *Sinn*, *Bedeutung* and also *Meinung* more or less as equivalent notions, although later, in *Ideas I* §124, he will restrict '*Bedeutung*' to linguistic meaning only." Moran and Cohen (2012, p. 296). Being aware of two concurrent translating traditions we use terms 'sense' and 'meaning' interchangeably.

[37] Shklovsky (1990, p. 6).

kind of perception": the isolated *moment* of recognition is replaced by a continuous *process*.

> Art… with its "longing for the concrete" … is based on a step-by-step structure and on the particularizing of even that is presented in a generalized and unified forms.[38]

The object is no longer given to us as an entity, but as a whole range of almost disjoint "stages of an action in the process of unfolding."[39] In the case of literature, the language must be made "difficult," "laborious," "impeding," "distorted"; "the perceiver, pausing in his reading, dwells on the text" and thus breaks his automated perception of the thing.[40]

The longing for the problematicity of the world is also the driving force of Husserl's phenomenological *epoché*[41]: Everything has to become questionable, incomprehensible, enigmatic,[42] nothing is to be taken for granted, nothing is to go without saying.[43] One has to be freed from all "habits of thoughts" in order to "*see, merely to see*… with one's own eyes," to see "for the first time," writes Husserl's last assistant, Eugen Fink,[44] almost repeating Shklovsky's formula for the estrangement. All established understanding of the world is declared "pre-given" and thus "falling under the blow of the reduction":[45] not rejected, but rather suspended, turned into phenomena.[46] What was "transparent," "comes into sight precisely because of the

[38] Shklovsky (1990, p. 22).

[39] Jakobson (1987, p. 28).

[40] Shklovsky (1990, pp. 12–13).

[41] Cf.: "was mir bisher *als Welt galt, als unmittelbar selbstverständlich… den Stempel der Unverständlichkeit hat und der Epoché unterworfen ist. …Besinnung über die Unverständlichkeit der Welt aus Philosophie—führt zur Epoché."* Husserl (2002, p. 483). How does this problematicity of the obvious as a motivation of the phenomenological work match with the classical image of Husserlian rationalism? The Husserl with whom we are engaging in this paper deviates from the more traditional Husserl of *Ideas I*. Indeed, we examine Husserl's phenomenology not as a completed "doctrine," not as a philosophical system, but rather as an *Arbeitsphilosophie*, as an open research project outlined in the manuscripts of 1920s and 1930s, see Chernavin (2014, pp. 185–239). In the supplements to *Crisis* (Husserliana XXIX) Husserl introduces the notion of "*Sinnverwandlung… und bewegliche Sinnbereicherung*" (1992, p. 77), that is, an ongoing process of meaning-transformation and meaning-enrichment in which the phenomenologist participates. In these manuscripts, the accent shifts from "egology" or the analysis of noetico-noematic correlation to the elucidation of formation, enrichment and transformation of meaning. It is this aspect of the late Husserlian phenomenology that protects it from solidification into a philosophical doctrine.

[42] Husserl (1994, p. 134), eng. tr. Husserl (2009, p. 2).

[43] Husserl (2002, p. 482).

[44] Fink (1966, p. 192), eng. tr. Fink (1981, p. 31).

[45] Husserl (1973, pp. 76–77).

[46] J. Dodd remarks on the topic of pre-giveness in phenomenology: "This is what Husserl calls pre-given (*vorgegeben*): the pre-given is a given that never broaches on the questionable, thus which remains within the circle of what is familiar, as its center of gravity" Dodd (2004, p. 69). We can say that within the natural attitude the pre-given never becomes questionable, always stays familiar; but within the phenomenological attitude we start to question the ways of pre-giveness and in a certain sense we defamiliarize the familiar. Cf.: "die naive Vorgegebenheit der Welt wird problematisch" Husserl (1956, p. 59); "Nicht diese vorgegebene Welt, sondern das sie vorgebende transzendentale Sein und Leben… [ist] meine Sache" Husserl (2002, p. 319); cf. also "An inquiry into modes of pre-givenness distinguishes a transcendental investigation from an ontology insofar as it inquires into the ways in which the lifeworld is pregiven" Steinbock (1995, p. 103); cf. also Bégout (2005, p. 264).

epoché":[47] The phenomenological *epoché* problematizes our relation to the world and thus make us notice it.

3 Seeing the thing, feeling the form

But what is the true nature of this "visibility" of the vision? Is it also a kind of vision, of intuition? We see the thing, but we "feel" (*oshchushchaem*) or "experience" (*perezhivaem*) the work of art, claims Shklovsky:

> And so, in order to return sensation to our limbs, in order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony, man has been given a tool of art. The purpose of art, then, is to lead us to a knowledge of thing (*oshchushchenie veshchi*) through the organ of sight instead of recognition. By 'estranging' objects and complicating forms, the device of art makes perception long and 'laborious'. The perceptual process in art has a purpose all its own and ought to be extended to the fullest. *Art is a means of experiencing the process of creativity (perezhit' delanie veshchi).*[48]

"The tool of art" switches the perceiver from the practical functions of language to its poetical function: one pays attention to certain peculiarities of the phonetic, rhythmical structure and thus experiences, "feels" the poetic message in the *how* of its modes of givenness. This insistence on the sensuous aspects of the literary message is especially striking in Shklovsky's choice of metaphors:

> A crooked road, a road in which the foot feels acutely the stones beneath it, a road that turns back to itself – that is the road of art. … Art is not a march set to music, but rather a walking dance to be experienced or, more accurately, the movement of the body, whose very essence is to be experienced through senses.[49]

It may sound puzzling but in 1919 Shklovsky claimed that we can "feel" not only sensuous, that is, phonetic, acoustical, or rhythmical, but also *semantic* structure of the poetical language:

> Poetic language is distinguished from practical language by the perception of its structure. The acoustical, articulatory, or semantic aspects of poetic language can be felt. Sometimes one feels the verbal structure, the arrangement of the words, rather than their texture.[50]

[47] "Before the *epoché* the intentional object which belonged to the act of perception, was, as it were, 'transparent', one could look through it so that it was not itself visible… it comes into sight precisely because of the *epoché*" Ingarden (1972, p. 43).
[48] Shklovsky (1990, p. 6).
[49] Shklovsky (1990, p. 15, 22).
[50] Quoted in: Eichenbaum (2012, p. 114).

In a similar way one can "feel" the composition of the novel, its *plot*. Later Jakobson is more precise in his analysis as his main interest in poetics is to bring into light the "internal nexus between sound and meaning":[51] It is the "*sensation* of the sign, the *feeling* of the sign"[52] that makes poetry *semantically* so ample and rich.[53]

Why do the Russian Formalists speak about *feeling*, and not *seeing*, of the artistic form? What does this difference between seeing and feeling mean? We can grasp it better if we keep in mind that, according to Husserl, the "pure seeing" means that we see in an object *more* than we actually *see* in it.[54] The visual perception of the spatial object is accompanied by a variety of background apperceptions; without these apperceptions one would not be able to "see" a physical thing as a whole. What is more, these apperceptions *motivate* the genesis of other apperceptions: we do not just grasp what is given to us, we are also open to all that *is* or *was* related to what is given. To speak the phenomenological language, we see the things as belonging to a more general horizon, the world-horizon.[55] That is why to see something phenomenologically means to see it not as already constituted, but as being constituted together with the history of this constitution. To see something means to obtain its meaning *not* as a stable, fixed, ready (*fertig*) meaning, but as a meaning that is to emerge. Whatever we see in the phenomenological attitude, we see with its own infinite horizon of meaning-formation (*Sinnbildung*). One can say that "making us see" of "horizonal structure of experience"[56] opens up the mind: the very structure of meaning presupposes "an advancing *enrichment of meaning* and a *continuing development of meaning*."[57] However, this "pure seeing does not see itself":[58] it is rather felt or experienced, *erlebt* and *durchlebt*. We feel our seeing, *sentimus nos videre*, as Descartes put it. The feeling is not reflective, it is not representational, we do not grasp it with its own horizon, but we are somehow affected by it. This affection occurs not on the intentional or cognitive level of consciousness, but on the unintentional level of *hyle* or *aísthēsis*[59]; this level includes affective and *leiblich* moments

[51] Jakobson (1987, p. 87).

[52] Jakobson (2011, p. 36).

[53] "The Formalists [Jakubinsky, Brik, Shklovsky] began their work with the question of the sounds of verse [i.e. on the level of sensation]" Eichenbaum (2012, pp. 104–134).

[54] The notion of 'horizon' is indeed one of central notions of phenomenology; it is also one of the most complex notions of Husserl's thought. S. Geniusas in his excellent overview of this subject qualifies it as an "operative notion" that was never properly clarified by Husserl himself, see Geniusas (2012, p. 17). We cannot analyse it here in much detail; for the purpose of the argument we only need to distinguish between the horizonality of consciousness of the existing object and the non-thematic world-horizon in general, as well as the idea of the genesis of sense (of the horizon of sense-formation).

[55] "In seeing I always 'mean' it with all the sides which are in no way given to me, not even in the form of intuitive, anticipatory presentifications. Thus every perception has, "for consciousness," a *horizon* belonging to its object…we are conscious of them as things or objects *within the world-horizon*" Husserl (1976, p. 161, 146), eng. tr. Husserl (1970, p. 158, 143, italics by Husserl); for more details regarding the intertwining of the horizon of the object and the world-horizon, see Geniusas (2012, pp. 179–182).

[56] Cf.: "It is the horizonality of experience that always remains the main focus whenever the question of the emergence of sense-formation is posed" (Geniusas 2012, p. 173).

[57] Husserl (1976, p. 161), eng. tr. Husserl (1970, p. 158, italics added).

[58] Henry (2008, p. 81).

[59] With regards to the problem of *aísthēsis* in phenomenology, see Brudzińska (2010).

of sensation, but excludes sensuous impressions (*Empfindungen*) understood as pure *data* of sensation.[60]

So for Husserl to see the thing means to step beyond this very thing and beyond this very seeing: our seeing has *a kind of history* which goes from initial recognition to new configurations of sense. We grasp the things with their implicit background, in their horizon of recognition; we rely on what is familiar to us. However, our phenomenological eye can turn to this background – special and temporal; the phenomenologist thematizes relations between the object and its surroundings with their temporal determinations. New perceptions affect the ego as "a slap in the face to all expectations"[61] and so "the unfamiliar is then transformed into something familiar;"[62] the phenomenologist watches the genesis of constitution. We meet a similar claim in Shklovsky's paper on Suprematism. Shklovsky shows how a certain "tradition of perception" determines the perceiver's focus of attention so that the perceiver experiences a painted space in a particular way.[63] The "palpability of the form" takes place only on the basis of recognition—or, rather, on the basis of a plurality of conflicting recognitions.[64] In order to provoke a true vision some elements of the picture should be in conflict with other elements and/or our recognitions of these elements; to become the subject of artistic perception the human body should be changed, transformed or disfigured.[65]

Could some insights from Husserl's analysis of aesthetical consciousness help us to understand this better? Indeed, Husserl sees the specificity of the aesthetical position not only in the directedness towards the manner of appearing, towards the form—but also in the affective, emotional involvement: "*the manner of appearing is the bearer of aesthetic feeling-characteristics.*"[66] There is no aesthetical experience without feelings (*Gefühle*), but these feelings are not purely subjective, but belong to the object, that is, to its *how*, to its manner of appearing. But there is no *how* without *what*, no manner of appearing without the appearance of the object. The feelings can be seen as "aesthetical determinations of the object itself."[67] So my aesthetical feelings come into play when I get access to the appearing in its ambiguity of appearing (*Erscheinen*) and appearance (*Erscheinung*). Husserl writes:

> If I do not reflect on the manner of appearing, I do not live in the feelings, I do not produce them. The appearance is the appearance of the object; the object is the object in the appearance. From living in the appearing I must go back to the appearance, and vice versa. And then the feeling is awakened: The

[60] Cf. Henry (2008, pp. 12–21), Maldiney (1994, pp. 186–187), Richir (2000, p. 61).

[61] Husserl (1966, p. 211), eng. tr. Husserl (2001, p. 263).

[62] Husserl (1966, p. 212), eng. tr. Husserl (2001, p. 264).

[63] Shklovsky (2005, p. 61, translation modified).

[64] Shklovsky calls it *raznopredmetnost'*, multiplicity of objectness (2005, p. 61, translation changed); Hansen-Löve argues that a complete lack of object, objectlessness (*bezpredmetnost'*), is an extreme case of *raznopredmetnost'*, see Hansen-Löve (1978, p. 84).

[65] Shklovsky (2005, p. 54).

[66] Husserl (1980, p. 389), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 462).

[67] Husserl (1980, p. 391), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 464).

> object, however displeasing it may be in itself, however negatively I may value it, receives an aesthetic coloration *because of its manner of appearing*; and turning back to the appearance brings the original feeling to life.[68]

It may be worth noting that Husserl distinguishes the object from "the content of the object itself" and makes a special note concerning the feelings which are incited by the nature of this content. However, all those feelings combined participate in the manner of appearing, that is, in the form. So there is always a whole manifold of aesthetic feelings; their diversity increases as they provoke one another in a constant oscillation between *how* and *what*.

So, it is not sufficient to change the attitude from the natural to the strictly aesthetical one; it is not enough to put aside the *Gegenständlichkeit*, the reference to the object, its *what,* and concentrate only on the *how*, on the message, on the expression. Husserl' analysis shows that aesthetic experience presupposes not only the accent on *how*, but also a certain return to *what*; the structure of the aesthetic pleasure can be compared to that of a *fort-da* game: indeed, we are always oscillating,[69] always fluctuating between the *what* and *how*, between poetic and practical attitudes—if we retranslate all this in Roman Jakobson's terms.

4 Ambiguity of meaning and meaning-in-formation

There is also a difference between the purely affective layer and the reflective one, and they are intimately intertwined. Aesthetic experience presupposes a conscious aesthetical reflection on the manner of appearing, but *this aesthetical reflection is not an end in itself: it is provoking a new wave of affective involvement*. Therefore, the affective component of the aesthetic experience is at least twofold: we are affected by the work of art on the two totally different levels. Let us take an example of a novel. On one level the reader feels a whole range of different feelings—it may be love, pity, fear or disgust for the heroes of the novel; on another level they reflect on the beauty of the phrase or the plot, they enjoy them—but this reflection and enjoyment serve to spot more details from a new angle, to produce new feelings and thus to intensify the overall aesthetical delight.

What is more important, it is exactly this intrinsic heterogeneity that makes aesthetical experience so complex and not only affectively, but also *semantically rich*. It is these oscillations of feelings between the *what* and *how* of appearance that make the aesthetic attitude analogous to the phenomenological one: the meaning, which is intrinsically linked to the *what* of appearance, to the object as it is intended, is destabilized and enriched. The old meanings are not necessarily rejected, but they are not taken for granted any more. Indeed, transcendental *epoché* destabilizes the meaning, because the existence of a particular object cannot be suspended: one needs to suspend the existence of the whole world, and thus the world as the universal horizon

[68] Husserl (1980, p. 389), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 462).

[69] Richir (1996, p. 8, 455).

of meaning-in-formation is acquired.[70] It may seem that aesthetic *epoché* does not destabilize the whole universum of meaning; however, these oscillations of affectivity create a meaning that is not yet fixed but is being constituted. The oscillations of affectivity produce new meanings, because the constant play of contradictory feelings and associations make our pre-understanding of the object somewhat "wobbly."

All this is very similar to the technique of estrangement, as Shklovsky describes it using examples from *War and Peace*. Let us look at the episode of Rostov's attack on a French officer with "a dimple in the chin and light-blue eyes,"[71] that Shklovsky classifies as "an estrangement of war and death."[72] A dimple in the chin, repeated several times, "is not even a detail, it is a tag," says Shklovsky: a tag of this human being's singularity. However, Tolstoy makes us feel (with the protagonist, Rostov) not only pity, but also "confusion"[73] and even "vaguely disagreeable feeling of moral nausea."[74] These confused feelings are provoked by the conflict of *what* has appeared in the expected manner of its appearance ("an enemy's face suited to a battlefield") and *how* it appeared to him because of the estranging detail: "a most ordinary, homelike (*komnatnoe*) face." The automated, routinized thoughts are accompanied by the ready-made, standardized feelings; suddenly the flow of these feelings is obstructed, frozen, blocked. The conflicting feelings (pity) appear and provoke embarrassment; this embarrassment means that the previous, "obvious" set of meanings is not taken for granted anymore.

> So that's all there is in what is called heroism! And did I do it for my country's sake? And how was he to blame, with his dimple and blue eyes? And how frightened he was! He thought I would kill him. Why should I kill him? My hand trembled. And they have given me a St George's Cross. I can't make it out at all.[75]

So, this mixture of feelings blows up the meaning of what we mean by a war, an enemy, a good officer, a heroic deed and so on. The plasticity of affective life leads to the destabilization of sense. The sense loses its univocal character and acquires ambiguity.

In 1960 Jakobson noted that

> Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focused message, briefly, a corollary feature of poetry…The supremacy of the poetic function over the referential function does not obliterate the reference but make it ambiguous.[76]

[70] On the intertwining of the world-horizon and the horizon of existing objects, see Geniusas (2012, p. 182).

[71] Tolstoy (2010, p. 701).

[72] Shklovsky (1928, pp. 92–93).

[73] "Something vague and confused (*chto-to nejasnoe, zaputannoe*), which he could not at all account for, had come over him with the capture of that officer and the blow he had dealt him" Tolstoy (2010, p. 701).

[74] Tolstoy (2010, p. 702).

[75] Tolstoy (2010, p. 701).

[76] Jakobson (1987, p. 85).

The ambiguity of meaning is related to "awareness of the inadequacy of the identity… between sign and the object."[77] There is a gap between the referential function of language and the sensuous form of sign. The poetical function of language is essentially linked to the sensuous and affective aspects of sign and thus assures the mobility of meaning: the "feeling of the artwork's form" gives access to the horizonal structure of seeing. Our analysis shows that the key messages of Russian Formalism and phenomenology are quite similar, although expressed using different language: the heart of aesthetical experience is the constitution of a new meaning as a meaning-in-formation driven by our affective involvement with a work of art.

How can this complexity of affective involvement with a work of art be translated into the phenomenological language of attitudes? One could think that while the Russian Formalism proclaims the perceptible character of form in art on the level of *aísthēsis*, the phenomenology only seeks to make "visible" the horizon-structure of experience, to make it accessible on the purely theoretical, or even cognitive, level. On the contrary, we claim that the phenomenological experience also presupposes an affective register, it is also grounded in *aísthēsis*.

5 Estrangement and phenomenological life in two attitudes

Indeed, the phenomenological analysis allows one to distinguish between two layers or "registers" of sense: the layer of pre-given, fixed, sedimented meaning-formations *is accompanied* by the layer of open, not yet stabilized meaning-*in*-formation. This distinction, however, cannot be made within the framework of the natural attitude. It is the phenomenological *epoché* that makes one aware of the horizon-structure of sense; only then the role of pre-givennes, ad-perception and anticipation in the formation of meaning can be brought into light.[78] On the other hand, the access to the horizon is never "guaranteed": the phenomenologist as an empirical subject will always oscillate[79] between the desired impartiality of the phenomenological seeing and the natural involvement in the world. This is why Marc Richir describes the phenomenological seeing as a "transient apperception (*entre-aperception*)" or as a "flashing apperception (*blitzhafte Apperzeption*)."[80]

[77] Jakobson (1987, p. 378).

[78] According to Husserl, every perception carries in itself the elements of anticipation. So, there is no mere perception, as there is no perception without apperception or ad-perception, without the surplus of meaning. In the same way, from the phenomenological standpoint, every giveness is *pre*-giveness: there is no giveness without pre-giveness. And finally, the apperceived content is never completely given or perceived, it is always outlined through the *anti*cipation, see Husserl (2008, p. 438, 67). There is a kind of thought experiment: Husserl isolates the perception from apperception, the giveness from the pre-giveness, the present from the anticipated in order to see how the perceived or the given becomes incomprehensible, or "bizarre.".

[79] Regarding the metaphor of oscillation in phenomenological context cf. Husserl's use of *Schwebe* (1976, p. 159; 2002, p. 329, 420, 641; 2008, pp. 74–75, 784), Fink's use of *Schwingung* as analysed in Finetti (2011), and Richir's use of *clignotement* (1992, p. 110; 2000, p. 33).

[80] Richir (1992, p. 222); Richir (2001, p. 238).

The effective phenomenological experience provides the phenomenologist with a certain access to the apperceptive horizon, though not on a permanent basis. The horizon, and therefore the layer of meaning-in-formation, is accessible only in a 'flash'. Here we follow the line of argument of Marc Richir according to which the *epoché* does not consist in 'switching' from one attitude to another; its temporal structure does not permit to distinguish between "before the *epoché*" and "after the *epoché*." The phenomenological *epoché* is achievable only as a kind of "double vision" or "double attention."[81] Husserl himself used the metaphor of "double bookkeeping" to describe the phenomenological life as "split," or even as "*ein Leben in 'doppelter Buchhaltung*.'"[82] The phenomenologist constantly oscillates between two attitudes, or even lives in two attitudes at the same time[83]: The phenomenological experience is not shielded completely from the common experience, rather we attempt to break through the common experience to a new layer of meaning which is not yet stabilized.

The phenomenological *epoché* involves not only the suspension of the belief in being, but also the suspension of all pre-given apperceptions, including self-apperception. Self-suspension leads to self-estrangement, as a final purpose of *epoché* is "to suspend and to take by surprise" (*à suspendre et à surprendre*).[84] So, the practice of phenomenology presupposes a certain transformation of the philosophizing subject. One can neutralize the naïve-dogmatic natural attitude by the second-level reflexive attitude; but it would be superficial to think that the phenomenological attitude is affectively distilled, because the very movement of neutralization brings forth an additional affective level.[85] The *epoché* takes place not only at the level of reflection and theory, but also at the level of praxis. This practical dimension is made possible by the affective layer, and generally speaking, by the *aísthēsis*.[86]

The incessant destabilization of meaning is a way of life for the phenomenologist, who sees his/her goal in the constant avoidance of the automated reproduction and recognition of predetermined sense-formations.[87] Therefore, the phenomenological "seeing without understanding" requires a constant renewal of effort: one has to block one's natural understanding of the world in order to see it anew.

[81] Richir (2015, pp. 160–161).

[82] Husserl (2002, p. 12, 16).

[83] Cf. also Arp (2004) and Staiti (2009). It is not the only strategy to explain the relation between attitudes that we find in later Husserl and young Fink (alongside with the "secondary mundanization" Fink (1988a, p. 138); eng. tr. Fink (1995, p. 126) and "unidirectional" conversion, cf. Husserl (2002, p. 10)), but we find it still very plausible because it helps to explain at the same time the regress in the natural attitude *and* the irreversible character of the phenomenological *epoché*.

[84] Richir (2000, p. 476).

[85] Cf. "Theoretical interest is related to aesthetic pleasure. The delight in knowledge—in mathematical knowledge, for example, because of the beauty of mathematical relationships, proofs, theories" Husserl (1980, p. 392), eng. tr. Husserl (2005, p. 464).

[86] Cf.: "Als Ich der Epoché habe ich mich aber wesentlich geändert. … Ich lebe ja weiter, ich blicke herum, ich will mir das Ding näher ansehen, ich übe positive Wissenschaft, theoretisiere mathematisch, etc.; … Aber ich bin doch nicht 'mit dem Herzen' dabei ('mit dem Herzen' mit Bleistift leicht gestrichen. - *Anm. d. Hrsg*.)" Husserl (2002, p. 10).

[87] Dufourcq (2014).

We propose to interpret the practice of phenomenological *epoché* as an example of estrangement; from this point of view estrangement will appear as a kind of ascetic technique or a practice of self-transformation in the sense of Foucault. To the best of our knowledge there is no explicit development of a similar strategy within the framework of Russian Formalism.[88] Shklovsky, Jakobson and Eichenbaum avoid appealing to the concepts of subject or subjectivity. The phenomenological "double life," as well as estrangement, functions not only on the level of thought, but also on the affective level. The transformation of subjectivity through the *epoché* or estrangement as a 'technique of self' presupposes a transformed affectivity: the initial, natural affects and their modified equivalents.

Our analysis of estrangement shows that it is the affective life that helps us to overcome the ready-made, taken-for-granted thoughts and convictions. Indeed, the *prêt-à-penser* thoughts always go alongside with the *prêt-à-sentir* feelings. Once the estranging detail appears, the affectivity becomes double-layered and ambivalent: it includes the initial layer of feelings that accompany the old meanings as well as a layer of new, unexpected, conflicting feelings. As a result, the initial layer of feelings partially collapses, not capable to support the old system of meanings anymore. This system is shaken: the old meanings are not simply rejected, they are rather suspended and put into question. The flickering of attitudes plays a key role in the phenomenological enrichment of meaning (*Sinnbereicherung*). The affective tonality of estrangement also includes the sentiment of disavowal of the pre-given meaning-formations (that is, the schemes that pre-determine what to feel and/or what to think) and the embarrassing observation of meanings and feelings *in statu nascendi*.

6 Meta-estrangement: questioning the background obviousness

Modern prose offers examples of estrangement of a kind not found in Tolstoy. The following excerpt from Beckett's "Trilogy" is not one of those straightforward cases when a character in a novel loses the ability to recognize a perfectly ordinary setting, while this setting remains immediately recognizable to the reader. A phenomenological reading of this text will show how the very *background obviousness* of our everyday existence becomes at once questionable and question-worthy (*fragwürdig*).[89]

> Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. … Present state. This room seems to be mine. I can find no other explanation to my being left in it. All this time. Unless it be at the behest of one of the powers that be. That is hardly likely. Why should the powers have changed in their attitude towards me? It is better to adopt the simplest explanation, even if it is not simple, even if it does not explain very much. A bright light is not necessary, a taper is all one needs to live in strangeness, if it faithfully burns. Perhaps I came in for the

[88] Cf. Hansen-Löve points out that the formalistic description of the perception and recognition influences not only our world-perception but also the position of the subject, see Hansen-Löve (1978, p. 17).

[89] Cf. Sekatski, Ivanov, Orlova, Pogrebnyak, Razeyev, Savchenkova, Slinin (2002, pp. 83–126).

> room on the death of whoever was in it before me. I enquire no further in any case. … There is a cupboard I have never looked into. My possessions are in a corner, in a little heap. With my long stick I can rummage in them, draw them to me, send them back.[90]

In this passage the character does not know where he is (or even who he is) but he does not allow himself to be distracted by it: he is so successful in inhibiting the uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*) and the strangeness of his own life-situation that the reader unwillingly starts to feel these suppressed feelings. Instead of sliding into panic he provides himself (and the reader) with an immediate rationalization ("This room seems to be mine. I can find no other explanation to my being left in it."). The protagonist is not experiencing any feelings one would be expected to have in such a situation: fear, anguish, or surprise. His lack of access to his own feelings gradually starts to disturb the reader who, so to say, tries to empathize with the emotional experience that is simply not there. The protagonist's affective life is absolutely still and so is his cognitive evaluation of his situation. He is wanting what Keats once called "negative capability": he is "reaching for facts and reason" carefully avoiding all "uncertainties and doubts," and this is irritating indeed.[91] His aborted feelings affect the reader by the very fact of their absence.

What we face here is the abnormality of normal common sense, the blatant irrationality of compulsive rationalizations: "It is better to adopt the simplest explanation, even… if it does not explain very much." The reader's irritation helps to uncover the strangeness of the routinized and imperturbable common understanding: the reader experiences the neutralization of the pre-given and anticipating self- and world-apperception. The very phenomenon of the usual human "engrossedness" (*Versunkenheit*)[92] into the world becomes visible for the reader.

The background obviousness (*Selbstverständlichkeit*) constitutive for the everyday common sense is revealed by Beckett as a lack of estrangement. We would like to call *meta-estrangement* this estrangement of the "lack of estrangement." It is, so to say, estrangement of the second degree: not only we see something obvious as strange; we start to see how strange our own unreflective immersion into the obviousness was. In this respect it is quite important that Beckett's narrator does not experience the sentiment of estrangement himself—he does not experience it so that the reader may.[93] If in *War and Peace*, Rostov is confused in order that our understanding would become richer, in Beckett's *Trilogy* Malone's very lack of confusion troubles our understanding. Malone's failure to be surprised, his anesthetized, frozen affectivity is precisely what bewilders the reader.

One can notice that the narrating figure is "split": a strange cleft opens within his self-apperception: although the narrator is no longer able to reproduce the obvious coordinates of his world (where he is or who he is), he is still dominated by the

[90] Beckett (1965, p. 289, 182, 184).
[91] Keats (2009, p. 60).
[92] Fink (1988a, p. 9, 92); eng. tr. Fink (1995, p. 8, 83); Fink (1988b, p. 139).
[93] For an example of a similar technique in Andrei Platonov's prose, see Olga Meerson (1997).

obviousness of the obvious (he is still sure that as long as he has a living body he has to be somebody and somewhere). The character never completely loses his ability to recognize the basic everyday structure of what is ready-at-hand ("this room seems to be mine," "my possessions are…"). Alongside with the non-recognition of the newly seen world ("Where now? Who now? When now?"), there remains a certain background recognition, a rudiment of the previous self-apperception. As a result of this "split," the narrating figure—as well as the reader fascinated by the text—starts to live an estranged life in two attitudes. The reader will certainly distance themselves from the text, but he or she won't be completely the same as before. The obvious axiomatics of his or her own self- and world-apperception becomes questionable and unstable.

What we called here meta-estrangement provokes a partial neutralization of the self-apperception of the reader by sowing a seed of *ostranenie* into his or her background consciousness. It is quite close to the phenomenological use of estrangement which turns into something more than just a technique or a device. It becomes a 'launch pad' for developing a new life-form: an estranged life in two different attitudes, reflective and unreflective, an affective life in two different registers, those of ready-made feelings and newly experienced feelings.

7 Conclusion

Let us summarize the path of our reflections. We started with the presentation of Husserl's and Shklovsky's views on aesthetic experience, where Hofmannsthal played a role of a mediating figure. We also compared the phenomenological change of attitude with the set towards expression in Russian formalism. The next step consisted in the parallel treatment of the principle of perceptible form and of the phenomenological attention towards the manner of appearing. We also brought together the ambiguity of meaning as a central feature of poetical function of language and the meaning-in-formation as a research perspective for phenomenological philosophy. After that we showed how the phenomenological philosophy uses the experience of estrangement, especially within the framework of life in two (natural and phenomenological) attitudes. We applied these hypotheses concerning the phenomenological use of estrangement to the reading of a passage from Beckett's "Trilogy"; it helped us to thematize a sort of "meta-estrangement" which we find quite similar to that of phenomenology.

So we claim that estrangement does not need to be understood solely as a literary device or technique; it can be applied not only to the study of literature, it can also be seen as a phenomenological tool. Russian Formalism introduced the very notion of *ostranenie* and successfully studied its impact on aesthetics; the use of *ostranenie* in the disclosure of the meaning-in-formation makes it an important part of the phenomenological method. But its true significance for phenomenology goes beyond its indisputable epistemological value. The analysis of estrangement clarifies how the affectivity of the philosophizing subject is involved in the practice of phenomenology. The unstable "flickering" of the phenomenological attitude *through* the natural attitude, the "flashing" of the problematicity (*Fragwürdigkeit*) *through*

what is commonly taken for granted is possible only on the basis of variety and essential mobility of the affective components involved. We even believe that the estrangement can be described as a specific form of philosophical praxis, for the phenomenological transformation of subjectivity is grounded in the transformation of the affective life.

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