

The Phenomenological Aesthetics of Nicolai Hartmann and Vasily Sesemann

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In many ways, Vasily Sesemann's (1884-1963) aesthetics is connected with Moritz Geiger (1880-1937) and Nicolai Hartmann's (1882-1950) expanded analysis of aesthetic reality. All three authors are against subjectivism in aesthetics, but they also reject naturalistic and objectivistic explanations of the aesthetic phenomena. However, unlike Geiger, Sesemann and Hartmann focus their attention not only on specific aesthetic experiences, but also attempt to reveal the internal relation of intentionality between these experiences and the structure of aesthetic objects. They argue that aesthetics is fundamentally connected with phenomenology, because, in order to understand aesthetic values, the observing subject must possess a special kind of intuition and judgment. It is impossible to analyze any aesthetic object without at the same time attempting to understand how its elements are expressed in aesthetic perception itself.

The objective of this paper is to show that Hartmann's and Sesemann's aesthetics can be discussed in light of phenomenology philosophy. The most important characteristics of the perception of aesthetic objects according to Hartmann is derealisation or dematerialisation. The aesthetic object's meaning and value are only revealed by doing that kind of action. Many aspects of Sesemann's aesthetics are similar to that of Hartmann's. Both philosophers argue that there must be a correlation between an object and the act of its aesthetic experience (in Husserl's phenomenology it is called the correlation between the intentional object and the intentional act). This correlation can be discovered only by using the method of phenomenological reduction.

Phenomenological aesthetics should also be able to show how the structure of any given aesthetic object is connected with the experience of that object, as well as to demonstrate the necessary conditions for the aesthetic experience itself. In order to do so, one must argue against one-sided assumptions, such as the presupposition of aesthetic objectivism that beauty is exclusively a feature of reality completely independent on the subject's experience of it, or its opposite belief that beauty is essentially and solely the projection of the subjective taste onto things in the world.

This paper first explains the conception of the aesthetic object's structure in Hartmann's and Sesemann's aesthetics: real versus unreal; sensations in connection with meaning; etc. Then, it examines the aesthetic perception in Hartmann and Sesemann's aesthetics. Finally, I argue that the aesthetics shared by Hartmann and Sesemann is essentially based on the method of phenomenological reduction.

Hartmann, Nicolai, *Ästhetik*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1966.

Sesemann, Vasily, *Aesthetics*, translated by Mykolas Drunga. Amsterdam, New York, 2007.