

One Phenomenological Approach to Beauty

Andrej Démuth, (prof., PhD)

Trnava University, Slovakia

Slávka Démuthová, (Associate prof., PhD)

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia

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Abstract

The presented contribution attempts to introduce a phenomenological-existential analysis of experiencing beauty (aesthetic experience) through Heidegger's approach to the examination of state-of-mind. It points out a topic which no doubt extremely interested Heidegger, but which he did not approach by the method he offered in *Being and Time*. The text thus attempts to reconstruct what Heidegger's answer to the question "what is beauty?" might have sounded like in this period of his work. The offered analysis respects the original structure of the question regarding the state-of-mind and examines beauty from three viewpoints: 1) what beautiful objects have in common and what characterises them, 2) what characterises aesthetic experience, and finally, 3) what matters to us in an aesthetic experience. Thus it attempts to interpret beauty within Heidegger's understanding of being and being-in-the-world before the "turn" in his thinking. The study points to the cognitive aspects of aesthetic experience in the sense of understanding beauty as the uncovering of being and the truth of the world.

Keywords: Beauty, experiencing, aletheia, being, value

Introduction

In this study we shall attempt to analyse the issue of beauty and aesthetic experience¹⁴ through a unique phenomenological approach, which was presented by Martin Heidegger in his *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* in the hope that this approach may prove to be beneficial not only for the philosophical study of beauty, but also for other disciplines dealing with beauty, or even for philosophers – non-specialists – dealing with other issues and disciplines of philosophy.

¹⁴ Despite the thematic multidimensionality of aesthetic experience, containing a great many more aspects than just beauty, for the purposes of this study (due to methodological reasons) I shall limit myself to the identification of beauty with the content of the aesthetic experience.

As we know, Heidegger held a rather critical attitude towards classical aesthetics (Scottish, Baumgarten, Kant),¹⁵ rejecting its contemporary subjectivism and subject-object split (Thomson 2017). Instead, and in the place of the analysis of subjective feelings, he proposed a return back to the phenomenology of art (of the artwork itself), which he documented, especially in his 1935/1936 lectures entitled *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*,¹⁶ as well as in numerous later works, in which he kept coming back to the topic of beauty, truth and art.¹⁷ Although the work *Being and Time* originated much earlier (1927) with the purpose of introducing the structure and fundamental role of phenomenological thinking and deals very little with the question of beauty or aesthetics, I still believe that for the correct understanding of Heidegger's approach to beauty and art, the key for the perception of beauty as an existential uncoveredness may be sought, in particular, in this early and most academic of his treatise – in *Being and Time*.

In this work Heidegger applied a phenomenological-hermeneutic-existentialist way of thinking to the analysis of completely different phenomena – fear (Section 30) and anxiety (Section 40). However, it seems, its use may be applied to almost all existential states-of-mind. Aesthetic experience is doubtlessly one of them. Especially if the point of departure for its study is not some kind of objective analysis of the properties and qualities of objects themselves as physical objects - an analysis and description of how beautiful the objects are, as objects, in their formal or material structure in the form of some Pythagorean aesthetics of ratios. Or, on the other hand, the study of the processes that accompany the origination and progress of aesthetic experience in the brain and the CNS (neuroaesthetics), but rather on the contrary, a first-person description of aesthetic experience and that means what we experience and how we experience it; what our experience uncovers for us.

¹⁵ According to Ian Thomson, Heidegger's attitude to aesthetics may be described as anti-aestheticism and is best expressed by Barnett Newman's statement that "Aesthetics is for the artist as ornithology is for the birds" (Thomson 2017)

¹⁶ The lecture was first given on 13 November 1935 at the Kunstwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft in Freiburg, then in January 1936 in Zürich, and as a lecture cycle in the same year (17 Nov, 24 Nov, 4 Dec) also in Frankfurt am Main.

¹⁷ As is known, Heidegger wrote several works on the topic of beauty and art: *Wozu Dichter?* (1946), »...dichterisch wohnt der Mensch...« (1951), *Die Kunst und der Raum* (1969) and lectures: e.g. on Hölderlin and his poetic work, or *Über die Bestimmung der Künste im gegenwärtigen Weltalter* (Baden-Baden Haus Schweizer 7.–8. Mai 1959), *Bemerkungen zu Kunst – Plastik – Raum* (St. Gallen 3. Oktober 1964), *Die Herkunft der Kunst und die Bestimmung des Denkens* (Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste in Athen 4. April 1967) and even his last official lecture (*Die Frage nach der Bestimmung der Kunst*, which he gave on 9 April 1970 in München) was dedicated to the issue of art.

Heidegger's philosophical thoughts were based on his analysis of everydayness and of how we understand ourselves and the world in everydayness. That is why in the course of his research he especially focused on moods and the phenomenon of "being-attuned" (especially fear) and the description of the inner experience and understanding of things in the world and ourselves in our moods. In his approach he preferred a scheme that was distinguished by three questions: 1) what all "fearful" things have in common, 2) what our fear shows us, and 3) what really matters to us in our fear or anxiety. And that the same scheme (as I believe) may also be used for aesthetic experience.

It is an indubitable fact that objects of taste and liking represent a wide and unstable range of the most diverse objects. Hence there is probably no sense in looking for any common physical characteristics in these objects but rather in focusing on one of their key characteristics as aesthetic objects, that undoubtedly being their ability to evoke a feeling of liking.

What the objects we assess as beautiful have in common is their ability to produce a fancy – pleasant feeling caused by our perception of these objects, regardless of their formal, material or other aspects. It seems that despite their variety almost all of them produce the same or a very similar state, that being the feeling of fancy.

This piece of information sounds too banal when heard for the first time for it to be philosophically studied in more depth. The ability of "beautiful" objects to evoke a feeling of liking, however, is not self-evident at all. We may wonder whether beauty is an objective quality of things (beauty as a property of the object itself – Thomas Reid) or on the contrary – if it is the product of the observer (*Beauty is in the eye of the beholder* -see Démuth 2016), but also whether and in what manner various things evoke aesthetic experience. At times we immediately consider the object of fancy as beautiful and do not have to particularly focus on it. At other times we need it to be pointed out to us, or we only notice its beauty after repeated observation, after further experience, after education or simply when in a different state-of-mind. What then causes one thing (phenomenon, event) to appeal to us as beautiful while another does not?

In the way of Heidegger we could wonder about a certain quality of the thing itself. However, it is not its physical ability or quality, but rather the ability of its phenomenal action. "Beautiful" things must have perceivable beauty at their disposal, they must seem, present themselves in a form which is capable of being liked. In this respect it does not matter whether this "beautiful form" of appearance belongs to the nature of something and its uncoveredness, or whether it is its appearance or even a deceptive semblance (Heidegger 2001, 51). In order for something to seem to be beautiful, it has to

have the mentioned ability to evoke such an impression. However, that in itself is certainly not enough.

Beautiful objects do not only possess their own beautiful phenomenal structure; in addition to that they also have to be capable of affecting us with it – of touching us with its (real or apparent) beauty. In order for them to touch us in this way, we have to be located in the operational range of the object. When we find ourselves in the vicinity of a beautiful object we do not always, realise its beauty. Its beauty may be covered from our eyes, hidden by something – physically or intellectually. Physically, for example, if it is in the “shadow” of another object or phenomenon which makes it impossible for it to affect us. Intellectually if it presupposes a certain revelation and understanding.

But even when the object does not presuppose such a pre-understanding, it may still not touch us in a way. That is because its aesthetic effect on us is not strong enough, or it is too distant and does not affect us with sufficient intensity. In no case is this, however, a matter of physical or geometrical proximity and distance. Beautiful things do not have to be close, we may like distant countries or objects which are physically distant, but are still close to us in a different sense: they are an object of our thoughts, imagination and feelings. We carry them within us in the form of a memory or a creative imagination – they dwell in the land of our ideas, and therefore are (with) us. They are near because we are aware of them, they are near because we perceive and feel their effect. They are literally as near as they can be – they stand as though they are immediately in front of us (and may even be inside us – as feelings in our receptors and our cortex; opposite us and before us as images – *Gegenstand* – *Vorstellung* – in our minds). Thus they are close enough to touch us and we can touch them with our consciousness (sight, touch). Not only somewhere at a mental distance (in a bygone and forgotten past) but on the contrary – right now. If the memory does not affect us, it may already be too distant. Beautiful images work only when they are perceived as current. In this sense we may wonder about the need to find ourselves in the current operational range of the beautiful phenomenon.

The effect of beautiful things, however, is not a bodily, physical process. Beautiful things do not automatically attract us in the same way as gravitation or magnetism affects our bodies. Heidegger rather speaks about radiation and emanation (Biemel 1995, 121). The effect of beautiful things is nevertheless a certain form of gravitation – it is attraction. Their attraction focuses on our consciousness – our attention. Beautiful things, like ugly things, draw our attention. They affect the mind and our feelings in such a way that they often capture them. Thus if we thus perceive a truly beautiful object, it often happens that it attracts our attention in the same way as the gaze of the mythical Medusa. Beauty can take our breath away (alter its frequency as well

as affect other bodily functions), it can paralyse the body and totally change the future. Just as terror or ugliness can often paralyse the body and do not permit the mind to avert our gaze or attention away from their source, in the same way beauty draws our attention and urges us to notice and examine it in more detail (Kawabata, Zeki 2004). Due to its value we cannot turn away from it and we want to perceive it with as much attention as possible. If nothing else forces us to act otherwise, we dedicate ourselves to it, we contemplate it, we attempt to remain in its proximity, we expose ourselves to its influence. If (for any reason) it is not physically possible, at least we indulge ourselves in its effects in our imagination.

The reason why we do this is rooted in the pleasant feeling that beautiful objects evoke. Simply, we like beauty and we like to like it. For many aestheticians beauty is essentially connected with pleasantness and fancy. And “pleasantness” and fancy make us yearn for greater fulfilment.

Beautiful things affect us with their exceptional qualities and they thus fulfil us and enrich us in a certain way. This (intellectual) enrichment is based on a new experience and the emotional enrichment of the (repeated) derivation of the experience of the perception of it. That may be the reason that we surround ourselves with beautiful things, why we want to be in their proximity and why we yearn for them. That is why beauty is so often connected with lust, jealousy or envy – with a possessive approach towards objects of fancy.

The essence of enrichment and fulfilment is the future and its drawing close. “This drawing-close is within what is close by” (Heidegger 2001, 180). We often yearn for beauty in direct proportion to the proximity of it in which we find ourselves. Its attraction increases with the ratio of its possible fulfilment; however, if from being close it draws near to such an extent that it is already here and not in the future (the moment of fulfilment), its attraction suddenly disappears (Kierkegaard). Thus, if we are exposed to the effect of nice things, or their variability, in the long term, after an intense perception, after a certain time we are no longer capable of absorbing any more of the effects of the beautiful objects. They cease to affect us and it is even possible for us to temporarily or permanently become satiated. At that moment they have nothing more to give us.

Beautiful things can affect us with their beauty only from a closeness that draws closer, which evokes the liking that we like.

The pleasant feelings which beautiful things evoke in us draw our attention to the aesthetic experience itself. It seems that aesthetic experience may be perceived as a certain form of understanding of things and ourselves. Understanding things in the sense that during a disinterested aesthetic experience we behold within the objects their distinctive aesthetic qualities. In other states-of-mind we do not perceive these qualities, that is we are not aware of them or are not sensitive to them.

Heidegger analyses this phenomenon with the example of fear. When we are afraid of fire, we perceive its threat and are incapable of seeing the usefulness or beauty of the flames. Similarly during a normal experience with a knife, we behold its ability to cut bread or spread butter but not the danger it presents. We only see that when somebody takes it in their hand and we realise that it may serve as a powerful weapon. And that not only during real Hitchcockian movements, but especially in our imagination using the mechanisms of Bayesian probability.

One of the characteristic features of the Heidegger approach is the conviction that various moods make the world accessible in various ways. To express this, Heidegger uses the spatial metaphor of finding oneself in a state-of-mind (*die Befindlichkeit*), as well as the acoustic metaphor of being-attuned (*Stimmungen* - see Démuth 2011). A state-of-mind is a spatial determinant which enables us to see things from a certain aspect – perspective. At the same time, however, it also necessarily hides certain aspects of things. That is why, if we are afraid, we cannot see the beauty of the world, its utility or amusing qualities. On the contrary, when feeling elated joy we do not perceive threats or the tragedy of the situation. Heidegger believed that moods function as certain lenses which unlock the world in a particular manner. Every lens does that in its own unique way and only by using more perspectives and with their combination is it possible to arrive at an objective and complex understanding.

Aesthetic experience makes the aesthetic qualities and values of things accessible. That is exactly what we focus on when we perceive beauty. If we like something it is because it can especially register with those aspects of things which are worthy of fancy. That means that we understand things in a certain way. We perceive their form, structure, quality, ignoring their purpose, origin, price or real existence. Whereas in fear we notice threat and the potential harmfulness of things, on the contrary, with beauty, we feel nothing like that. We feel the excellent elaboration, exceptional rendering, unique rarity, perfection or, simply, harmony of forms and structures.

The source of this understanding of things undoubtedly comes from these phenomena themselves. That is the main premise of phenomenology. Beautiful things simply appeal to us (similar to an attack of fear). The essence of feeling beauty is thus its appearance. And the art of the aesthete is the ability to see beauty where it occurs. With this, however, we arrive at a serious problem: Is beauty something that lies in the essence of the appearance of beautiful things or is it a matter of our beholding?

One of the fundamental features of Heidegger phenomenology is the conviction that we can only arrive at reality through the uncovering of the pristine essence of the phenomenon. Only the phenomenon, that is the fact that something is mediated for us in any way at all, makes it possible for us to perceive it as beautiful, ugly, true or false. It is clear that superficial and non-

authentic forms of appearance may present something as beautiful although it is not in reality (it is only glitz, a semblance) and on the contrary, some things are only beautiful under the surface, once we penetrate towards their deeper and more archetypal structures. Phenomenology then may be, in the sense of Section 7 of *Being and Time*, understood as art, “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself” (Heidegger 2001, 58), or as the art of uncovering reality in such a way as for us to behold it in its uncoveredness and unconcealedness – that is, as the art of seeing things in a certain particular way and to understand them on the basis of themselves.

In Heidegger’s idea of state-of-mind it seems, however, that our understanding of the qualities of things draws also from a previous experience or pre-understanding. Only in such a way is it possible to explain that, on the basis of the experienced or familiarity, somebody sees danger where somebody else no longer sees it (or not yet). Children are not afraid of many things that may harm them and, on the contrary, in adulthood we are often not terrified of that which we found “fearful” in childhood. That is also valid for beauty. Some objects of art or scenery are so fascinating that they appeal to almost everyone and pull us out of our everyday practical interests. Others do not possess such an immediate expressive value so readily obvious at first sight: to see beauty it is often necessary (as for any other forms of visual phenomena) to learn. Somebody sees beauty where another does not – they may be sensitive to nuances and aspects which are hidden from the eyes of another. Others, due to their own pains or interests, may not perceive values which they have right in front of them and which surround them. However, regardless of the need for experience or the beholding of pure phenomena: beholding or feeling is in any case a form of understanding. Feeling, being-attuned and emotions thus have a certain precognitive function.

Heidegger, however, was not inclined towards the epistemic-instrumentalistic role of beauty or art. Beautiful objects (and especially not works of art) are not here to mediate something. They are not intended to represent anything and substitute for something that is hidden behind them. They are not a replacement of facts, but quite the opposite: they are the very fact itself. If we perceive something as beautiful, it is because the beauty of the phenomenon absorbs us. That which is beautiful is beautiful in itself. It shows its own essence. Beautiful things and artwork are in Heidegger’s opinion beautiful because they are true in the sense of their true experience. They show themselves, not the stories behind them. A theatre play or a fairy-tale by the Grimm brothers is beautiful if it gives us a deep experience, if we get lost in it, and not because it is an allusion to some true story. Similarly the beauty of a flower or nature is not an imitation of something, but an

uncovering of reality itself. It is namely in this connection that the relationship of beauty with uncoveredness as *aletheia* is rooted.

In his work *The Origin of the Work of Art* Heidegger solved the dilemma of objectivity and subjectivity of beauty unequivocally to the benefit of antisubjectivism. “Beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs as unconcealment” (Heidegger 1993, 181). “The beautiful is not explained in terms of subjective experience, of how the work affects the subject, but in terms of the openness showing that becomes manifest in a work of art, from the basic phenomenon of uncoveredness” (Biemel 1995, 121). Nevertheless, it is namely the individual experiencing which characterises aesthetic experience.

The essence of aesthetic experience (similar to any other) is its experiencing. Whereas in fear we experience the horrifying uncanniness of the place where danger lurks, which we want to avoid by any means, and due to the impossibility of the identification of this danger, in our anxiety, we cannot even find a safe place to escape from it, in aesthetic experience we usually experience the contrary. The feeling of beauty produces changes in bodily functions: a quickening of the pulse, a change in breathing, a widening of the pupils, etc. The experience of beauty is a physiological, bodily experience – a somatic marker which is accompanied by a number of objectively measurable manifestations. The experience of beauty is, however, characterised especially by its subjectively experienced content – pleasure, a feeling of the pleasant and our effort to remain with it. While for Heidegger anxiety is a land of “uncanniness” (Heidegger 2001, 234), beauty is the exact opposite. It is the Promised Land – a place where we enjoy remaining in our mind, it is something we contemplate, or something we tend towards, where (with which) we want to stay. That is why we surround ourselves with beautiful things, we decorate our homes or escape to real or imaginary lands which produce in us feelings that are good, safe and pleasant – to lands where we do not feel the excruciating uncanniness of being and where the world and we are better than we (it) really are (is). A typical sign of beauty is its potential “liveability”, that is not an intimate and total familiarity that arises from the already lived-in but a certain novelty related to the feeling of suitable living-in. When beholding beauty we do not feel an urge to run *away from* but rather to stay and savour, admire and examine, or an (sometimes passionate) urge to come close (run *towards*) in order to more intensively behold beauty down to its utmost detail.

The feeling of a possible home is also related to the need for time and safety that we require for the contemplation of beautiful objects. Unlike the vision of threat and danger, beauty lets us forget the potential risks or expects their absence. Beauty abounds in the feeling of safety and sufficiency of time (or at least demands them), that is what Aristotle would call *θεωζία* – beholding. This is what we go to galleries for, or why we open books and listen

to music without any other intention or need which would limit and disturb us. Frequent looking and contemplation which are a requirement for the examination of things – without any other subsidiary intentions and interests, except the thing itself – are characteristic demands of aesthetic experience. However, this disinterested beholding, sufficiently thorough and liberated from any other intention, is not only about beholding a thing and “gaining” information from it. That which is beautiful about it (and what distinguishes it from the theoretical scientific getting-to-know) is that the contemplation and looking itself fills us with beauty and a pleasant experience. So pleasant that we often want to share it.

Anxiety makes one lonely and forces us to face the factuality of being. With beauty, although we do behold it on our own, we like to share our experience thereof, and especially with those who most belong to our being. The feeling of beauty is one of expansive feelings, that makes us feel that we are fulfilled by something, frequently to such an extent that the impossibility of sharing this feeling may impoverish the quality of the experience. The feeling of beauty or beauty which cannot be shared is not complete. That is why we often talk about their sources, it is due to this in particular that we enjoy sharing these feelings.

When Heidegger speaks about the states-of-mind and feelings as understanding he does not mean only the understanding of things themselves. Aesthetic experience does not only tell us about the qualities of things; it tells us even more about ourselves. It uncovers what we inclined towards, what we long for or what we need, and especially what we like. Maybe that is the essence of subjectivistically oriented aesthetics – understanding beauty as an understanding of oneself, one’s feelings, preferences and needs.

That which we like speaks often more about the subject than about the object of the aesthetic assessment. And that not only in the sense of uncovering the “objectivity” of the individual aesthetic statement. In the case of beauty it is the reflection of one’s subjectivity in the direct ontological sense.

Feeling may generally be considered as uncovering one’s body or mind – to oneself (A. Damasio), doing it through that which we ourselves are not (through things which afflict our senses). For Kant the feeling of liking is essentially connected with the reflection of our own feelings and states. Beauty thus results from the reflection of the effect an object of sensuality has on us. The feeling of liking or not-liking is thus basically understanding ourselves.

Heidegger, however, points out the deeper meaning of self-understanding for any understanding of the world and things in it. He believes that only on the basis of understanding ourselves is it at all possible for things to touch us in any semantic way. If we for example did not understand ourselves as temporarily final and such as may be harmed, it would not be possible for us to be afraid at all. Only thanks to the reflection of oneself (one’s

own needs and desires) is it then possible to understand things in the world in given contexts (as harmful, dangerous, useful ...). And logically only understanding ourselves and our own values and needs allows us to also perceive beauty – that is, whether we like something or not. If we had no needs and desires, if we did not have their reflection, we could not even feel that something saturates us or does not saturate us with the feeling of fancy and satisfaction. Liking – self-reflection – is thus primarily uncovering the understanding of oneself.

From Section 40 of *Being and Time* it follows that what matters to anxiety is its being – to be able to be. It is in particular being and its qualities that also matter to us in the experience of beauty.

Aesthetic experience itself is characterised by pulling us out of a non-authentic existence. Beauty is not a common experience. It is something unique – ecstatic, in a certain sense.

If we are confronted with a beautiful object, it evokes in us not only interest and attention but also the desire or awareness of its value. In this way we transcend the thing and touch something that does not lie only in its form. We touch the being itself. The content of this experience may often be likened to a religious or mystical experience with several of its displays.

On the simplest level – we aspire to beautiful things, we want to be in their proximity, and we want to contemplate them. We are aware of their qualities, rarity and value. That is why we often spend a great deal of energy and means in order to be able to spend as much time as possible with them, or even to affect ourselves and others with their qualities. The desire to affect others with beautiful things or appearances is a proof that we realise their value and assume that our own value (attractiveness) increases in the eyes of others (Schiller 1992). Nevertheless, aspiring for beauty for others' sakes is hypocritical and unsatisfactory by definition because it does not deal with the true values of the being itself but only their appearance.

As far as we yearn for beauty for our own pleasure, we long for beautiful objects and forms because we want them to belong to us and for us to be able to take pleasure in them at any time. Such a possessive understanding of beauty reveals that we realise the value of beauty itself, but the object of beauty is not the same as our being; it is the being of something else (which we want to behold). That is true even when the object of beauty is for instance our own body or our creation. Surrounding ourselves with beautiful things in order to look at them, however, tells us that what really matters to us is not even their possession but the option to behold them as much as possible.

The attractiveness and value of beautiful things evokes enthusiasm in us, frequently even obsession and lust. Their importance is so great that other phenomena (almost) fade next to them, ceding to the background, and we only

perceive their value. There are a number of objects we cannot and do not want to possess (a starry sky, a landscape, the blush of dawn ...). Their beauty lies in their ungraspable existence. And that, even when we realise that the greatest aesthetic (and existential) value comes from our own experiencing of beauty (Goethe's *Verweile doch, du bist so schön!*). It is namely in the experiencing of beauty and beautiful moments that we contemplate the value of being itself. Whether it is the being of a beautiful object or "merely" our own experiencing of this experience.

Naturally, at the same time, we respect, care for and protect beautiful things. We perceive that which is beautiful as valuable and worthy of care. We tend to protect beautiful things and not only when we own them. It is often beauty that prevents us from harming or destroying things, it is beauty that fills us with a certain respect and awe. And maybe here we are at the core of the issue.

We perceive beautiful things as more valuable than non-beautiful ones. Their beauty is an expression of the qualities of their being. That is why beauty uncovers being. It draws our attention to it. Not only to the being of things but, again in the Heidegger spirit: it points out to us our own being and its quality. In the same way as without knowledge of the temporality of being-in-the-world (*Dasein*) it would not be possible to understand things as harmful, and without a limited horizon of being our actions would not have meaning due to their possible revocability, thus without an understanding of the value of the being itself it is not possible to assess the qualities of the being of other things. Beautiful things are valuable but only because they improve or emphasise the quality of our own being-in-the-world. Thus they represent the value of being, either of being-in-the-world or of the world itself. And it is in beauty that we transcend being itself.

It can be argued that beauty is beauty per se and its instrumental understanding is incorrect. The abovementioned understanding does not subjectivise or instrumentalise beauty as a cognitive instrument for grasping being, although it is undoubtedly unawaredly that. Heidegger considers beauty as one of the means of how the truth about being reveals itself. It is a way of that being steps out of hiding, how it is possible to become aware of it. The purpose of beauty (if we can even contemplate a purpose), and especially then the role of art, which is supposed to produce beauty, is the manifestation of being and the world and even in such a way that the individual historical or cultural forms of art may be understood as specific articulations of the cultural understanding of being (Dreyfus 2005). That is, however, another question – a question of Heidegger's understanding of the essence and role of art.

Summary

Aesthetic experience and the perception of beauty represents, for several philosophers, one of the classical existentials in which it is possible to see and feel the value of being. The presented contribution has attempted to draw attention to beauty through Heidegger's structure of the issue of state-of-mind. It thus points out a topic in which Heidegger was no doubt extremely interested, but which he did not approach using the method he offered in his *Being and Time*. Using his approach the text offers a possible wording of a Heideggerian answer to the questions: 1) what beautiful things have in common, 2) what characterises an aesthetic experience, and at the same time and especially, 3) what is uncovered for us in the experiencing of beauty. And as experts already knew, the answer lies in the unity of beauty and aletheia and in the unique (and pleasantly experienced, unlike anxiety or worry) mediation of uncoveredness and the sense of being. Because beauty uncovers being and in particular uncovers its value.

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