Edited by
Saulius Geniusas

Stretching the
Limits of

Productive Imagination

Studies in Kantianism,
Phenomenology, and
Hermeneutics

SOCIAL
IMAGINARIES

Stretching the Limits of Productive Imagination

Social Imaginaries

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Editor's Introduction

Saulius Geniusas

What exactly is productive imagination? Not only is it exceptionally difficult
to answer this question, it is not even clear where the answer is to be looked
for. In the history of philosophy, it is not uncommon to use this term without
defining it clearly, and if we look closer into its implicit meanings, we will
soon recognize that it has been often employed in a large variety of ways,
which not only complement but also conflict with each other. Looking at
the history of this concept, one might very well wonder: to what degree is
this concept *transcendental* or *empirical*? To what degree can one qualify its
function in terms of *creativity* (as with Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and
Christian Wolff), or *reconciliation* (as with Immanuel Kant, for whom it is
meant to reconcile the antagonism between understanding and sensibility),
or in terms of *origination* (as with Martin Heidegger, who equates its mean-
ing with that of original temporalization)? So also, is productive imagina-
tion grounded in poetic language (as the Romantics and, subsequently, Paul
Ricœur maintained especially forcefully), or is it rooted in yet deeper sources
of human and, more broadly, animal existence (as argued by some contem-
porary phenomenologists, whose standpoints are presented in this volume)?
Should productive imagination be understood as productive fantasy (as,
among others, Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Scheler, and Paul Ricœur maintain), or
is it a technical term meant to resolve a technical problem in transcendental
philosophy, namely, establish unity (*Ein-Bildung*) on the grounds of a more
original disharmony and thereby delimit the domain of phenomenality (as
Kant maintained)? The absence of straightforward answers to these ques-
tions clearly indicates that the concept of productive imagination is heavily
overdetermined. In light of its diverse and contradictory qualifications, it
appears senseless to ask straightforwardly, what is productive imagination,
for clearly, the answer to this question will rely on the standpoint from within

which one will engage in it. Such being the case, before asking, what is productive imagination, we need to confront a methodological issue: where are we to search for an answer to this question?

When the question is formulated in this way, we find ourselves at a crossroad, and in principle, there are two paths we can take. On the one hand, one could argue that the concept of productive imagination was defined by Kant and therefore, when we use this notion, we have to use it in the Kantian sense, for otherwise, we just do not know what we are talking about. On the other hand, one could also argue that nobody owns philosophical concepts, not even those with whom the concepts either originate or gain their vital philosophical significance. Such being the case, the meaning of the concept of productive imagination cannot be reduced to how it was employed in any particular philosophical framework. Reflection on the meaning of this concept calls for historical sensitivity, while the meaning of this concept, no matter how broad and fluid it might be, must be derived from the multifaceted ways the concept has been employed in various philosophical frameworks.

The Kantian approach has its distinct advantages, the chief of which lies in its promise to fix the meaning of this concept with some precision. Although Kant was not the first thinker to have used the concept of productive imagination (Wolff and Baumgarten had already done so before him), he is the one who transformed it into a concept of central philosophical importance and who uncovered its genuinely transcendental problematic and significance. Disregarding Kant's precritical employment of this concept (Ferrarin 2018), which largely consists of an uncritical appropriation of how this concept had already been employed by Wolff and Baumgarten, we come across three different frameworks in Kant's critical writings, in which this concept is employed in its new, transcendental sense (Lennon 2015). These three frameworks provide the textual basis that underlies the Kantian approach.

First, in the original version of the transcendental deduction of the pure concepts of understanding in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (the so-called A-Deduction, originally presented in 1781), Kant conceptualizes productive imagination as a faculty of synthesis, whose function is to establish unity in the manifold. In the A-Deduction, Kant argues that experience as such necessarily relies upon the syntheses of apprehension, association (reproduction), and recognition (Kant 1998: A98–A110). This threefold synthesis is the work of productive imagination, by means of which the sensuous manifold of intuition gets to be transformed into a perceptual image. According to Kant, it is only by means of the transcendental function of the imagination that experience as such becomes possible.

The schematism of the pure concepts of understanding constitutes the second framework, within which Kant addresses productive imagination (Kant 1998: A137/B176–A147/B187). The problem Kant confronts here is

that of explaining how intuitions are to be subsumed under the categories of the understanding and thus how categories are to be applied to appearances. In this framework, Kant draws a distinction between the empirical faculty of productive imagination and the pure *a priori* imagination. While the former produces images, the latter produces schemas of sensible concepts. In contrast to images, which are always concrete (e.g., number five, or equilateral triangle of a specific size), schemas are general (e.g., a number in general, or a triangle in general). Schemas themselves are of two fundamentally different kind: there are schemas of sensible concepts (e.g., schema of a dog) as well as schemas of pure concepts of understanding (e.g., schema of substance or of a cause). According to Kant, no image corresponds to the schemas of pure concepts of understanding. Such schemas are to be conceived as determinations of the inner sense in general (time). Kant identifies productive imagination as the power that enables consciousness to subsume intuitions under the concepts of the understanding. In the absence of such subsumption, no experience would be possible. In light of this, one could qualify productive imagination as the power that shapes the field of phenomenality.

Last but not least, we cannot ignore Kant's use of this concept in the *Critique of Judgment* (esp. Kant 2000: Section 1, Book 1, §49 and §59). In his analysis of beauty, Kant provides us with an account of how productive imagination can function in a genuinely creative way, without subsuming the intuitive manifold under the pregiven categorial structure. In the third *Critique*, Kant conceptualizes the experience of beauty as a feeling of pleasure that arises due to imagination's capacity to display the harmonious interplay between reason and sensibility.

What, then, is productive imagination, when conceptualized in the framework of Kant's philosophy? First and foremost, it has an intermediary status and is meant to perform a reconciliatory function. In the first *Critique,* its fundamental function is that of harmonizing two seemingly irreconcilable spheres—those of understanding and sensibility, which one could qualify as proto-structures of experience. In the third *Critique,* it once again performs a reconciliatory function, this time establishing harmony between reason and sensibility. In the first *Critique*, productive imagination realizes the reconciliatory function by means of schematization; in the third *Critique*, by means of symbolization. Productive imagination establishes harmony between different faculties by means of generating both schemas (in the first *Critique*) and symbols (in the third *Critique*), which predelineate the look of things and make experience of them possible. In this regard, the function of productive imagination is fundamentally procreative. In contrast to reproductive imagination, which either replicates or reshapes images out of preexistent materials, productive imagination reconciles the antagonism between different faculties by rendering the intuitive manifold fit for experience. Still, even

though productive imagination does not rely on anything empirical, for Kant, productive imagination is not original in that it relies on understanding and sensibility and serves the function of reconciling the tension between them.

One of the goals of this volume is that of presenting the Kantian conception of productive imagination while remaining sensitive to its diverse functions in different frameworks of analysis. Thus, in chapter 1, Günter Zöller articulates the significantly different ways in which Kant has employed the concept of productive imagination in the first and the third *Critiques*. Zöller demonstrates how, in the third *Critique*, Kant stretches the limits of productive imagination by showing how it produces not only schemata, but also symbols. While schemata make sensible the concepts of the understanding (*Verstand*), symbols provide intuitional counterparts to the concepts of reason (*Vernunft*). On this basis, Zöller further stretches the limits of productive imagination when he investigates how the function of symbolism grounds Kant's political reflections on civil society and the state.

The Kantian approach is not without its drawbacks. Ironically, insofar as we subscribe to the view that the meaning of productive imagination was already fixed by Kant, we also need to contend that Kant is not only the first, but also the last philosopher to have spoken of productive imagination. In this regard, the Kantian conception appears too thin to accommodate how this concept has been employed in post-Kantian philosophies of productive imagination. It is hard to maintain in full seriousness that only those who are committed to the fundamental principles of Kantianism have the right to employ the concept of productive imagination.[1] Even more, one might further object that even Kant himself did not employ the concept of productive imagination in a conceptually unified way and that his use of this term in precritical writings, the first *Critique*, and the third *Critique* is significantly different.[2]

In light of these disadvantages, we are motivated to search for alternative approaches. As mentioned above, the chief alternative would suggest that to understand the meaning of philosophical concepts, it is not only enough to fix their origins, but also necessary to trace their historical development. Sensitivity to the history of the concept of productive imagination invites one to qualify it as a register of Kantian heresies that is marked by a consistent effort to stretch the limits of productive imagination. It is a history that implodes the fundamental distinctions that we come across in Kant's account of this concept: transcendental versus empirical, *Einbildungskraft* versus *Phantasie*, and sensibility versus understanding. So also, it is a history that is marked by an attempt to extend the Kantian problematic in the frameworks that lie beyond its original reach.

Most of the post-Kantian thinkers do not subscribe to the conceptual dualisms that pervade Kant's philosophy: sensibility versus understanding, phenomenon versus noumenon, nature versus freedom, and theoretical versus

practical reason. Yet clearly, insofar as one does not subscribe to these dualisms, one must either give up the concept of productive imagination entirely, or, should one choose to retain it, one must infuse it with a new meaning. Thus, on the one hand, in thinkers such as Hegel we do not come across the concept of productive imagination. Hegel transforms productive imagination into one of the many aspects of the spirit's self-actualizations. By contrast, a large variety of other post-Kantian thinkers—the other main representatives of German Idealism, the central spokespersons of Romanticism, as well as various figures representing phenomenology and hermeneutics—continue to employ the concept of productive imagination as they impart upon it a new life and meaning that is not to be found in Kant's writings.

Reflecting on Kant's concept of productive imagination, one could single out two of its chief characteristics. First, this concept is meant to *reconcile* the antagonism between sensibility, on the one hand, and either understanding (in the first *Critique*) or reason (in the third *Critique*), on the other hand. Second, it is also meant to *constitute* the phenomenal field, conceived as the overall horizon of human experience. While in Kant, the *reconciliatory* and the *constitutive* functions are inseparably bound to each other, their fusion is brought into question in post-Kantian philosophical frameworks. Most of the post-Kantian thinkers do not retain the concept's first chief characteristic but consider it an artificial answer to a no-less artificial problem, which is created by the dualisms that lie at the core of Kant's philosophy. Yet even as they take their distance from Kant, post-Kantian thinkers simultaneously continue to follow him in that they continue to conceive of productive imagination as a power that constitutes the phenomenal field and that makes human experience possible. In short, post-Kantian philosophy of productive imagination is marked by the effort of capitalizing on its constitutive function and purifying it from the reconciliatory function.

The articles collected in this volume show that this general propensity to retain the constitutive function, while abandoning the reconciliatory dimension, has given rise to highly diverse accounts of productive imagination. This should come as small surprise, if only because in post-Kantian philosophy, the constitutive function of productive imagination is understood in highly diverse ways. For some (especially Heidegger or Castoriadis), the purification of the constitutive function from the reconciliatory function comes with the demand to bolster the sharp distinction between transcendental and empirical fields and, by implication, between productive imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) and fantasy (*Phantasie*). Heidegger, for his part, rethinks the distinction between the transcendental and the empirical as the distinction between the ontological and the ontic. As Qingjie James Wang argues in his contribution to this volume, for Heidegger, the power of imagination does not serve as an *intermediary midpoint* between sense and apperception

but is the *original ground* that underlies human cognition and knowledge. As Wang has it, Heidegger understands Kant's power of imagination neither in terms of *Dichtungsvermögen* of the soul in the psychological sense, nor in terms of a "transcendental" power of imagination, conceived epistemologically. Rather, Heidegger argues that productive imagination is distinctly ontological and further interprets it as a primordial grounding that makes both experience and objects of experience possible. By contrast, Castoriadis reinterprets the distinction between the transcendental and the empirical as a distinction between the sociohistorical and the psychological. Conceiving of the radical imaginary as a distinctly sociohistorical force, he identifies it as an anonymous, transsubjective, and unmotivated power that creates *ex nihilo* figures and forms that make the world. As Suzi Adams demonstrates in her contribution, Castoriadis stretches the limits of productive imagination to such a degree that it ends up being synonymous with the creative core of the human condition and conceived as a radically instituting power, which procures figures and forms that make up the social world. Opening a dialogue between Castoriadis and Merleau-Ponty, Adams articulates the main lines of Castoriadis's critique of Merleau-Ponty, reconstructs Castoriadis's elucidation of the imaginary element as the imaginary institution of the real, and presents Castoriadis's changing approach to phenomenology, including the implications that this holds for his elucidation of the imaginary element and human creativity.

While in the hands of the thinkers I have just mentioned, the purification of the constitutive function of productive imagination requires that one reinterpret (and, *mutatis mutandis*, reinforce) the Kantian distinction between the transcendental and the empirical, for a large group of other thinkers the purification of the constitutive function carries the opposite demand, namely, that of imploding the distinction between the transcendental and the empirical. For Wilhelm Dilthey, productive imagination is poetic, historical, and scientific: it is largely conceived as productive fantasy. As Eric Nelson shows in his contribution to this volume, besides playing a constitutive role in the aesthetic realm, Dilthey's imagination also codetermines the processes of understanding and interpretation in ordinary life by enabling humans to form a sense of the whole. One could say that Dilthey's central contribution to the philosophy of productive imagination is that of stretching its limits so as to render it capable of clarifying those fields that remain unexplored in Kant's philosophy. While in Kant, productive imagination served the function of clarifying how we make sense of the natural world, in Dilthey its central function is to expound how we inhabit the human, sociohistorical world. As Nelson shows, Dilthey reinterprets productive imagination as the formative-generative imagination, thereby demonstrating that imagination is productive

in the sense that it shapes the implicit historically embodied orientational contexts, which are presupposed and utilized by the human efforts to reach knowledge and truth.

In his contribution, Claudio Majolino inquires into the distinctively phenomenological use of the concept of productive imagination and the original contribution that the phenomenological movement has made, and could make, to the philosophy of productive imagination. Majolino argues that Heidegger's ontological reinterpretation of Kant's concept of productive imagination has been dominant in the phenomenological literature, largely determining the way that such thinkers as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Paul Ricœur were subsequently developing their respective philosophies of the imagination. In this regard, one should not overlook that Heidegger's *internal* distinction between productive and reproductive imagination is of Kantian origin; that much like Kant, Heidegger conceives of this distinction as the distinction between transcendental and empirical imagination; that, moreover, like Kant, Heidegger emphasizes the foundational role of transcendentally productive imagination by binding it to the question of Being and the openness of its horizons; and, finally, that he conceives of empirical imagination as a derivative form of the imagination, with no genuinely ontological significance. One of the central goals in Majolino's analysis is to spell out an alternative phenomenological approach to productive imagination, which he identifies as a Husserlian alternative. Majolino shows that there are two different frameworks—a psychological and a transcendental framework—in which we come across reflections on the productivity of the imagination in Husserl's writings. Focusing on the psychological context of productive phantasy, conceived as arbitrarily formative phantasy, Majolino demonstrates that, in contrast to the Heideggerian alternative, a Husserlian approach does not subscribe to the distinction between productive and reproductive imagination and that it does not schematize imagination in terms of the Kantian distinction between transcendental and empirical imagination. Rather, Husserl rethinks transcendental imagination in terms of "passive synthesis" and empirical imagination in terms of freely arbitrary formative phantasy, which one could also conceive as "poetic" or "inventive" productive imagination. In the final analysis, the originality of the Husserlian approach lies in the recognition that freely arbitrary formative phantasy mobilizes emotions as it constitutes the variable unities of arbitrary formations, and that it enables the phenomenologist to test the intuitive boundaries of world experience as such, as well as exhibit unworlds.

The implosion of the distinction between the transcendental and the empirical imagination, or more precisely, the recognition that empirical imagination is itself productive insofar as it performs a constitutive function, is to be

found in the thought of many other post-Kantian thinkers, whose voices are represented in this volume—in Sartre and Merleau-Ponty (insofar as one can speak of productive imagination in the framework of their respective philosophies); in Miki Kiyoshi, who more than anyone else has stressed the need to give up all dualisms in the framework of a philosophy of the imagination; and in Paul Ricœur, who, as Richard Kearney demonstrates in his contribution, conceptualizes productive imagination as symbolic, oneiric, poetic, and utopian. As Kearney shows, in Ricœur's hands productive imagination is identified as an indispensable power in the constitution of meaning, which is achieved in and through language, on the basis of what Ricœur calls "semantic innovation." The goal of Kearney's analysis is to identify the key steps in Ricœur's hermeneutic exploration of imagination. According to Kearney, Ricœur's philosophy of the imagination represents the most powerful reorientation of a phenomenology of imagining toward hermeneutics of imagining.

Needless to say, our understanding of any concept, and especially the concept of productive imagination, cannot be reduced to the history of *explicit* analyses of its meaning and significance. We cannot overlook *implicit* reflections, which at first glance appear to be focused on different figures of the imagination, yet at a closer glance prove to be of great importance for our understanding of productive imagination. The present volume includes contributions on such figures as Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, who appear to have little to say—at least explicitly—about productive imagination.

Building her case on the basis of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, Kathleen Lennon interprets productive imagination as a power that constitutes the "imaginary texture of the real." By this, we are to understand that productive imagination weaves together the present and the absent into gestalt-like formations, which the subjects of experience subsequently encounter in the surrounding world. Resisting impositionist readings of Kant and other post-Kantian thinkers, Lennon argues that these formations are neither imposed on the world, nor discovered in it, but rather emerge from a creative interplay between subjects and the world. By interlacing the visible and the invisible, productive imagination provides the world with depth, affective character, salience, and significance.

Taking as her source of inspiration Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenologies of the imagination, Annabelle Dufourcq explores the possibility that images and fantasies are made possible by the very being of things, and not by the arbitrary activity of the subjective faculty that we identify as the imagination. What is at stake here concerns an ontological account of the imaginary that relies upon Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's writings, as well as ethical implications that follow from such an ontology of the imaginary. Stretching the limits of productive imagination by investigating

its ontological roots, Dufourcq argues for the need to overcome the duality of the real and the imaginary as a necessary step toward the disclosure of being that would precede such a distinction.

In his efforts to reconstruct an implicit account of productive imagination in Sartre's early writings on the imagination, Kwok-ying Lau argues against Ricœur's famous (if not infamous) critique, which suggests that Sartre's philosophy of the imagination is a philosophy of *reproductive* imagination. Lau's analysis heavily relies upon the insight that, contra Ricœur, Sartre does not ignore the problematic of fiction, but addresses it in terms of ideality and irreality. According to Lau, careful attention to the different examples employed by Sartre in his analysis provides the evidence needed to maintain that Sartre's understanding of the different kinds of artworks is an implicit conceptualization of productive imagination.

In chapter 5, I focus on Miki Kiyoshi's contribution to the philosophy of productive imagination. Miki's writings including his *magnum opus*, *The Logic of the Imagination*, are still little known in the Western world. Focusing on Miki's account of myth, conceived as a figure of productive imagination, Geniusas argues that Miki conceptualizes productive imagination in three fundamental ways: as a power that shapes the world-understanding, that configures the world-organization, and that generates the world-transformation. Paying special attention to how productive imagination shapes our world-understanding, Geniusas argues that it does so in three fundamental ways: by generating collective representations, symbols, and forms. Within such a framework, Geniusas argues that productive imagination is the power that forms, reforms, and transforms collective representations, symbols, and forms.

Up to a large degree, productive imagination is an umbrella term that covers various forms and figures of the imaginary. So as to highlight the generic nature of productive imagination, the last two chapters of this volume are focused on two highly intriguing and largely ignored themes: prelinguistic imagination and kinesthetic imagination. Dieter Lohmar argues for the continual significance of prelinguistic thinking in human consciousness. Prelinguistic thinking, which is by no means only a human characteristic, is to be conceived in terms of a sudden occurrence of phantasmatic pictures in consciousness, which enable the subject of experience to resolve impasses as well as choose possibilities. Conceived as an "old mode of thinking," such reliance on the productivity of the imagination largely organizes decisions that underlie social relations. In the last chapter, Gediminas Karoblis gives a much called-for account of kinesthetic imagination in light of classical phenomenology of the imagination. Within such a framework, Karoblis explores the significance of productive and reproductive imagination in light of classical phenomenology of the imagination.

The goal of this volume is, then, to investigate the different ways in which the limits of productive imagination have been stretched in Kantianism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. The volume conceptualizes the different ways in which Kant himself has addressed productive imagination; it explores imagination's poetic, historical, and generative dimensions as well as shows its significance for the human and social sciences; it demonstrates its relevance in the formation of political concepts as well as addresses productive imagination's significance at the levels of prelinguistic understanding and kinesthetic experience.

What, then, is productive imagination, when conceptualized in such a large variety of ways? In light of the plurality of voices that it represents, the goal of a volume such as this one cannot be that of fixing the meaning of productive imagination with definite precision. In one sense, the goal of this volume is more modest, while in another sense, more ambitious: the volume strives to articulate the chief ways in which productive imagination has been conceptualized in post-Kantian philosophy, and especially in phenomenology and hermeneutics. One cannot overlook that in post-Kantian philosophy, the concept of productive imagination has been provided not only with complementary, but also with contradictory, determinations. It thus remains to this day an open question whether the concept of productive imagination is transcendental or historical and sociopolitical; it also remains debatable whether productive imagination is grounded in language or rooted in more elementary levels of existence. In light of such a plurality of determinations, it is especially difficult to provide the concept of productive imagination with any kind of conceptual unity. Nonetheless, reflecting on the volume as a whole, one could qualify productive imagination as a constitutive power that shapes the human experience of the actual world by forming the contours of action, intuition, knowledge, and understanding. Confronted with such a guiding definition of productive imagination, one might very well wonder, have we not subscribed imagination too central a role? On what basis rests our contention that it is precisely imagination, and not some other kind of power, that predelineates the general outlines of human experience and of the human world? Insofar as the power that shapes the contours of the human world does so *by means of creating images*, it must be identified as productive imagination. Imagination is productive in that it shapes the way we see our world(s), and this way of seeing largely codetermines human action, intuition, knowledge, and understanding.[3]

Notes

1. For those willing to hold on to the Kantian conception, a possible way out would be to stick to the Kantian definition while at the same time maintaining that what post-Kantian thinkers refer to as productive imagination is in fact a different phenomenon, which one could call either creative imagination or practical imagination. See in this regard, Alfredo Ferrarin (2018).

2. See in this regard Nikulin (2018) and Kathleen Lennon's contribution to this volume.

3. As the editor of this volume, I feel deeply grateful to all of the contributors and to New Asia College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for the financial support it has provided in the preparation of this volume.

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Chapter 1

The Productive Power of the Imagination

Kant on the Schematism of the Understanding and the Symbolism of Reason

Günter Zöller

This world is but a canvas to our imagination.

—Henry David Thoreau*

This contribution examines the role of the power of the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) in Kant's legal and political philosophy by placing the juridico-political function of the imagination into the wider context of Kant's critical epistemology, as chiefly contained in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781 and 1787) and revisited in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790). First, the focus is on the relationship between the power of the imagination and the two main sources of (theoretical) cognition in Kant, namely, sensibility and the understanding. Subsequently, special attention will be devoted to the distinction between schema and symbol, as alternative products of the power of the imagination in the service of rendering discursive concepts intuitive—with schemata serving to make sensible the concepts of the understanding (*Verstand*) and symbols suited to provide intuitional counterparts to the concepts of reason (*Vernunft*). Finally, the contribution will address the status and function of symbolism in Kant's thinking about civil society and the state by exploring the symbolic representation of political concepts informed by analogies from the natural world.

Between Sensibility and the Understanding

Kant is famous—not to say, infamous and notorious—for the dualisms he introduced into his mature philosophy presented in the three *Critiques* and

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the works accompanying them by way of preparation or derivation. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, second, revised edition 1787) Kant contrasts sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) and the understanding (*Verstand*) as the two "stems" (*Stämme*; A15/B29) of cognition. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), he opposes autonomous and heteronomous willing and acting. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), he juxtaposes sensory and intellectual kinds of pleasure. In a further and more general dualist dimension, Kant's entire mature philosophy turns on the "critical distinction" (Kant 1904: B XXVIII)[1] between the things considered in themselves and the things insofar as they appear to us under the sensory conditions of space and time. Moreover, the entire architectonic of Kant's critical systems rests on the basic dual distinction between theoretical reason along with its domain, namely, the cognition of what there is, and practical reason along with its domain, namely, the cognition of what there ought to be.

Kant's pervasive dualism stands in stark contrast to the anti-dualist and, more generally, anti-pluralist approach in first philosophy sought by his predecessors in German school philosophy with their reduction of all mental activity to operations of a single force, the force of representation (*Vorstellungskraft*, *vis repraesentativa*), believed to unify the many mental faculties and capacities under a common real force from which they allegedly originate as from a single source. On Kant's contrary account, the invocation of a single, all-encompassing force amounts to but a nominalist maneuver surreptitiously and superficially gathering the manifest plurality of mental forces under a shared designation ("representing," "representation"; *vorstellen*, *Vorstellung*) to which no real particular force along with its actual exercise can be found to correspond.

But Kant's critical anti-monism seems equally alien to the core concern of his own successors, the German idealists, chiefly among them Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, who—each in their own and different way—aim at overcoming the perceived shortcomings of Kant's pioneering but allegedly incomplete efforts at a radically reformed and rehabilitated form of philosophy. In particular, the German idealists regard the pervasive dualism of Kant's critical philosophy a dogmatic remnant to be overcome by a truly radical, originally unified account of reason, with the latter variously figuring as "the I" (*das Ich*), "spirit" (*der Geist*), or "the absolute" (*das Absolute*).

While Kant was hardly in a position to respond, much less to address in detail, the German-idealist charges against his principled dualism, the critical philosophy is entirely able and well suited to counter the post-Kantian programmatic reduction of duality and plurality to unity and identity. Anyone sufficiently familiar with the letter and the spirit of Kant's critical philosophy will point out the elusiveness, if not the illusionary nature, of the alleged unitary force or faculty underlying the mind's many modes. Moreover, such

a knowledgeable reader of Kant will cite the various ways in which the three *Critiques* themselves address the maintenance of unity and identity over and against plurality in general and duality in particular: from the schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding in the first *Critique*, which introduces transcendental schemata as *a priori* time determinations mediating between the sensual and the intellectual, through the doctrine of the highest good in the second *Critique*, which mediates sensuous desires and moral motivations, to the third *Critique*'s purpose of bridging the gap between nature and freedom by means of the reflective power of judgment.

Among the chief devices deployed by Kant himself to balance the dualism characteristic of the critical philosophy with his equal concern to maintain the overall unity of reason and the thoroughgoing identity of the human mind's principal structure is the power of the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*). The power of the imagination is featured prominently in the first *Critique*, especially in the Transcendental Analytic, and also exercises a significant function in the third *Critique*, specifically in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. In the first *Critique*, the power of the imagination is pointedly introduced to bridge the gap between sensibility and the understanding in the dual constitution of objectively valid theoretical cognition in general and of synthetic *a priori* cognition in particular. The power of the imagination thus is charged with serving as a mediating third between otherwise opposed extremes.

To be sure, introducing a missing link risks to invite the infinite regress of having to insert ever further devices connecting the newly established opposed ends—a fallacy dating back to Aristotle's "third man" argument (*tritos anthropos*). Therefore, the sought conjunction of sensibility and the understanding cannot be externally added but has to be generated from within the opposed duality that is to be unified and integrated. Accordingly, Kant introduces the power of the imagination as a cognitive force akin to sensibility but open to, and expressive of, the exercise of the understanding. On Kant's account, the power of the imagination is preordained to reconcile the obvious opposition between sensibility and the understanding by providing a shared sphere for their meet and match.

As an intermediary faculty between sensibility and the understanding, the faculty of the imagination in Kant partakes in both basic capacities of the finite, human mind. In its most elementary function, the power of the imagination involves images (*Bilder*) as modes of mentation that are both sensory and intellectual: sensory in the presentment of figures in space and time, and intellectual in the determination of spatial-temporal shapes in accordance with concepts. Images in this basic figurative sense are regions of space and stretches of time delineated through conceptual determination.

But Kant's concern in dealing with the power of the imagination as an imaging faculty is not with particular figures involving particular spatiotemporal

arrays determined by particular concepts, such as this plate being round. Kant is not even concerned with general figures involving general spatiotemporal features in accordance with general concepts, such as the visual demonstration of triangles having a sum total of internal angles equaling 180 degrees. Rather, Kant is intent on addressing the absolutely preliminary, "transcendental" issue of the very production of any and all images in the first place or "at all" (*überhaupt*).[2] In the first *Critique*, the faculty of the imagination is introduced as a transcendental function for the very generation of images. Accordingly, the deliverances of the faculty of the imagination under scrutiny are not so much images—not even images of a higher order, such as meta-images or images of images. Rather they are procedures, rules, or techniques for the very production of images.

On Kant's understanding of the matter, the power of the imagination crucially includes and essentially encompasses the absolutely preliminary, transcendental function of making images—particular as well as general images—possible at all by providing a set of procedural devices that predelineate possible figures and configurations in space and time in accordance with most general conceptual determinations. Kant's technical term for the generative source function for possible images is "schema," more specifically "transcendental schema." While ordinary, nontranscendental schemata serve as prototypes of ordinary images, transcendental schemata function as most general generative rules for images of all kinds and hence for images "at all." To cite Kant's own example, the schema of a dog is a generic rendition of all such animals without the specifics that a particular, or any particular kind of dog, might exhibit (Kant 1904: B180; 1911: A141).

By contrast, transcendental schemata as rules for the generation of images of any kind involve an extraordinary power of the imagination that is not just reproductive, as the recollective capacity due to which the mind is able to retain or retrieve past images. Neither does the specifically transcendental function of the power of the imagination remain within the confines of the imagination's productive power manifest in the fabrication of novel images characteristic of artistic invention (Aristotelian *poiesis*). Rather than merely reproducing earlier images or producing new ones by de- and recomposing previous ones, transcendental schemata make images possible in the first place, and they do so by providing rules for the possible concretion of space and time in general into stretches of time and regions of space in particular.

When Kant terms a schema in general and a transcendental schema in particular a "product of the faculty of the imagination" (*Produkt der Einbildungskraft*) (Kant 1904: B179; 1911: A140), also referring to a "transcendental product of the power of the imagination" (Kant 1904: B181; 1911: A142), he employs the word "product" in a specific and even technical sense. Transcendental schemata are products being brought forth

by the faculty of the imagination. They are not just shaped out of preexisting material by means of fixed forms into which that material is brought. Instead, transcendental schemata in Kant are brought about in a genuinely procreative process, modeled on an organism's first generation and subsequent growth on the basis of "germs and dispositions in the human understanding" (Kant 1904: B91; 1911: A66). Kant's familiarity with the conceptuality of organic production dates from his extensive work in natural history in general and in contemporary theory of generation in particular, as evidenced by a series of essays in physical anthropology from the late 1770s and early 1780s, and would find its methodological and doctrinal culmination in the second part of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment.[3]

In producing transcendental schemata, the nonempirically productive power of the imagination, according to Kant, brings forth further features in what is given *a priori* by the senses, namely, "the manifold of pure intuition a priori" (*das Mannigfaltige der reinen Anschauung a priori*) (Kant 1904: B102; 1911: A77). Those features in turn are informed by most general conceptual forms ("categories") that reside, in germinal guise, in the understanding and are first unfolded when being brought to bear on the sensory manifold. The latter, considered in and of itself, is but a virtual complex ("sum-total," *Inbegriff*) (Kant 1904: B220; 1911: A177) of possible regions of space and possible stretches of time, with no determinate space and time being as yet delineated. Moreover, the process of transcendental production—of bringing forth schematic structures in the preempirical, "pure" manifold of space and time—results in proto-structures that reflect both the intuitional formal features of spatiotemporal sensibility and the conceptual formal features of the categorial understanding.

In the systematic architectonic of the first *Critique*, the intermediary status and the joining job of the power of the imagination, in its original function of producing transcendental schemata, form the center of the "schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding" (Kant 1904: B176; 1911: A137), which itself links the two key parts of the Transcendental Analytic, the Analytic of Concepts, and the Analytic of Principles. More specifically, the section so titled follows the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding with its sustained proof that the categories possess, in principle, objective validity with regards to both the experience of objects and the objects of such experience ("appearances," "phenomena"). The section on the transcendental schematism in turn precedes and in fact prepares the presentation and the proofs of the most general principles ("laws") governing material nature as the sum-total of objects in space and time. In addition, the Schematism chapter of the first *Critique* refers back to the initial section of the entire work, the Transcendental Aesthetic, with its exposition and

elucidation of space and time as the two pure forms of sensibility that serve to shape all sensible intuition.

The central position of the Schematism chapter in the first half of the first *Critique* clearly corresponds to the special status and the crucial function of the power of the imagination for bringing together the two sets of principal cognitive conditions distinguished by the first *Critique*: the forms of sensibility (space and time) and the forms of thinking (the twelve categories). In Kant's generative imagery, the two are jointed through their joint product or offspring, the transcendental schemata, in their further functions as basic structural features of possible experience and its objects.

Still the imagist specification of the categories to intuition-laden, sensorily realized covering concepts for possible empirical objects (sometimes termed "schematized categories," a term not to be found in Kant though), introduced by Kant in the first *Critique*, is marked by a peculiar preference for time over space in the categorial uptake of the forms of intuition. According to Kant, the schemata furnished to the categories by means of the original generative power of the imagination involve time rather than space. More specifically, Kant introduces the transcendental schemata provided by the power of the imagination as "a priori determinations of time according to rules" (*Zeitbestimmungen a priori nach Regeln*) (Kant 1904: B185; 1911: A145, emphasis in the original). The technical term, "determinations of time according to rules," is coined by Kant to convey the status of transcendental schemata: they result from categorial determination that is brought to bear on a pure manifold of intuition that, in and of itself, is devoid of any determination—*a priori* as well as *a posteriori* determination—but which is amenable to such subsequent determination and which, moreover, is prepared for it in terms of its general disposition to eventually assume the character of containing specifically formed particular intuitions.

Rather than having both space and time, as the twin conditions of intuition, be the target of categorial schematization through the power of the imagination, Kant limits the transcendental schemata to time determinations at the exclusion of a matching set of schematic determinations of space. The exclusive function of time in the schematism of the categories belongs to the larger context of the primacy of time over space in the account of sensibility and its cognitive deliverance, that is, intuition, throughout the first *Critique*. According to Kant, time is primary and space only secondary with regard to the fundamental constitution of knowledge. While this assessment is not meant to remove space from its unique function as the exclusive form of "outer intuition" (*äußere Anschauung*) (Kant 1904: B42; 1911: A26), it accords to time more than the matching status of being the form of "inner intuition" or of "self-intuition" (*innere Anschauung, Selbstanschauung*) (Kant 1904: B69; 1911: A33). On Kant's view of the matter, time, in addition to being

the inner intuitive form principle, also informs all representations as such—as mental items occurring in cognitive consciousness and under the latter's most general sensible form, namely, time. On Kant's account, spatial intuitions not only involve specifically spatial relations of being outside of one another, but also the essentially temporal relation of being localized in the continuous stream of consciousness under the latter's basic intuitional form, that is, time.

The primacy of time over space in general and of temporal over spatial consciousness in particular is especially prominent in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). Repeated assertions that all appearances are but "mere representations" or "representations in us" lead the work's first readers to assimilate the idealism maintained by Kant ("transcendental idealism") (Kant 1904: B519; 1911: A491) with the immaterialism of George Berkeley, according to which there are no independently existing extended entities or material objects but only perceptions and the minds in which they occur (*esse est percipi*). While the changes entered into the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787), most of which consist in rewritten strategic sections augmented by a number of newly inserted portions of text, do not involve recantations and retractions, they serve to counterbalance the stress on time and temporal conditions with a complementary focus on the specific contribution of space and on the spatial conditions of objectively valid cognition along with its object domain, namely, nature.

More specifically, the additions to the second edition of the first *Critique* explicitly reject and intentionally refute a Berkeleyan idealism, which reduces things to things-in-the-mind, and maintain the essential role of spatial representation as well as spatial objects for the very possibility of the temporally determined consciousness of self and world ("Refutation of Idealism"; "General Remark to the Analytic of Principles"; Kant 1904: B274–79, B288–94). Under those circumstances, it might come as a surprise that Kant did not elect to also revisit and revise the Schematism chapter in the second edition of the first *Critique* with its exclusive linkage of transcendental schemata to *a priori* determinations of time. Instead, he rewrote the Transcendental Deduction preceding the Schematism in such a way that space, taken as determined space and involving spatially determined objects, emerges as a necessary condition of objective consciousness.

In particular, the second edition of the Transcendental Deduction introduces, in addition to the "intellectual synthesis" (*Verstandesverbindung*; *synthesis intellectualis*; see Kant 1904: B151) of the understanding, the "figurative synthesis" (*figürliche Synthesis; synthesis speciose*; see Kant 1904: B151) of the power of the imagination. The former consists in the generic application of the categories to a sensory manifold "in general" (*überhaupt*), regardless of the latter's specific sensory features. By contrast, the latter involves the capacity to determine "our" spatiotemporally (pre)structured

sensibility in advance of any given intuition ("from within") through the understanding but mediated by the schema- and figure-generating "transcendental" function of the power of the imagination.

Kant's account of the figurative synthesis of the imagination in the second-edition version of the Transcendental Deduction is also remarkable for including the preconfiguration of space—its preliminary setup for subsequent specific determination based on specific concepts—among the workings of the power of the imagination. In particular, Kant introduces the productively imagist "inscription of a space" (*Beschreibung eines Raumes*) (Kant 1904: B155)[4] as a principal preparation of previously undetermined space to become formally prestructured space. In his own terminology, Kant marks the difference and development between the two kinds of space or spatial representation by contrasting the as yet undetermined mere "form of intuition" (*Form der Anschauung*), which is but the form for subsequently given intuition, with the conceptually preshaped "formal intuition" (*formale Anschauung*) (Kant 1904: B160), which involves space represented as an object of possible further determination.[5]

The different comparative assessment of the status and function of space and time in the first and in the second edition of the first *Critique*, together with the associated different emphasis on the theory of the subject and the theory of the object in the first and second edition, has given rise to divergent and competing readings of the work depending on the preferred edition. In particular, when considered in its first-edition version, the first *Critique* can seem preoccupied with the theory of subjectivity—the transcendental theory of cognitive subjectivity, to be precise—and invite an overall reading as a work in psychology—in nonempirical, "transcendental" psychology, to be more specific.[6] By contrast, a focus on the work's second edition might lend support to a reading of the first *Critique* as a theory of objectivity— a transcendental theory of cognitive objectivity, to be precise—and suggest a reading as a logic of sorts—a transcendental logic, to be specific.

Moreover, a distinct preference for a time-focused and subjectivity-centered reading of the first *Critique* typically goes together with a decidedly idealist take on Kant's transcendental philosophy, while the space-focused and objectivity-centered readings of the work tend to mitigate Kant's avowed idealism ("transcendental idealism," "formal idealism," "critical idealism") (Kant 1911: 375) with elements and moments of a realist sort attributed to the work in addition to its more obvious idealist commitments.

Both basic readings of the first *Critique* are supported by parts and aspects of the Kantian text, and neither is supported by the Kantian text considered in its entirety, especially upon inclusion of both editions of the work. Not surprisingly, focused and detailed considerations of the power of the imagination are foremost to be found among the subjectivist and psychologist readings

of the work. Classical adherents of a subjectivity-theoretical, transcendental-psychological reading of the first *Critique* are Schopenhauer, who also was the first to document the textual differences between the first and second edition of the work, and Heidegger, who followed Schopenhauer's lead—in the latter's dissertation on the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason—by linking "subjectivity" and "temporality" (*Zeitlichkeit*), two terms not to be found in Kant but used with regard to his views soon thereafter, by G. Chr. Lichtenberg ("subjectivity") and Schopenhauer ("temporality"), respectively.

It was also Heidegger who tied the (pseudo-)Kantian account of subjectivity as temporality to the power of the imagination as the alleged hidden common root of sensibility and the understanding which, in turn, supposedly required reaching to a deeper and darker dimension of origination yet, namely, proto-time qua temporalizing subjectivity.[7] However ingenious and original Heidegger's self-avowed "violent" (*gewaltsam*) chrono-phenomenological reading of the first *Critique* may be, neither the proposed essential identification of the common root of sensibility and the understanding with the power of the imagination nor the latter's radical identification with temporality is supported by sufficient textual evidence and doctrinal details in the text (Henrich 1994). It is radical hermeneutics rather than accurate history of philosophy that can credit the Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason* with almost having written *Being and Time*.

Between Sensibility and Reason

The dualist setup pervading the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not limited to the twofold division of the power of cognition into sensibility and the understanding. In addition to distinguishing the understanding together with its cognitive conveyances (categorial concepts) from sensibility and its input (intuitions), Kant separates the understanding from reason (*Vernunft*) in the narrow sense. To be sure, both "understanding" and "reason" can assume a wider meaning, with "understanding" referring to the intellect (*intellectus*), at the exclusion of the senses, and "reason" designating the entire upper cognitive faculty (*oberes Erkenntnisvermögen*), at the exclusion of the lower cognitive faculty (*niederes Erkenntnisvermögen*) (Kant 1913: 169ff). It is this wider meaning of the term that figures in the very title of *Critique of Pure Reason* as a work combining the critical account of the understanding with that of reason in the narrow sense—of theoretical, "speculative" reason, to be precise.

Within the multiple dualist structure of the first *Critique*, understanding and reason, far from being identified with each other, are contrasted as specifically different upper faculties of cognition and assigned to separate sections of the work, with the understanding featured in the Transcendental

Analytic and reason constituting the subject matter of the Transcendental Dialectic. Together the Analytic of the Understanding and the Dialectic of Reason form the Transcendental Logic and share in the latter's basic disposition informed by logic in the standard sense of the formal doctrine of correct thinking, of "general but pure logic" (Kant 1904: B77; 1911: A53) on Kant's construal. In particular, the Transcendental Analytic is modeled on traditional logic's doctrine of concepts and judgments, while the Transcendental Dialectic corresponds to the doctrine of concatenated judgments (syllogistic inferences) in traditional logic.

On Kant's conception of transcendental logic, with its characteristic concern for the objectivity conditions of cognition in general and those of synthetic cognition *a priori* in particular, the understanding and reason are not only distinguished by the specific logical forms they involve (concepts and judgments; inferences) but also by the objective import each of them possesses—or fails to possess. Moreover, transcendental logic in Kant correlates the different logical forms of judgment and of syllogism with specifically different kinds of concepts underlying each of them. In the case of the understanding, the concepts involved—explicitly termed "pure concepts of the understanding" (*reine Verstandesbegriffe*; A76/B102)—serve to lend meaning ("to understand") to sensible intuitions by determining objects with regard to them of which they can be said to be the intuitions. Given the constitutive restriction of such conceptual objective reference to objects of sensory intuition, hence to objects in space and time, the pure concepts of the understanding turn out to be restricted in their objective cognitive employment to objects of sensibility or "appearances" (*Erscheinungen*).

By contrast, the concepts of reason essentially transgress the limits of spatiotemporal nature and do so on principle: by conceiving of the unconditioned (*das Unbedingte*) (Kant 1904: B365; 1911: A308) behind everything conditioned to be encountered in experience (Zöller 2011). The proper object of the concepts of reason therefore is not the natural world but the supernatural order exceeding the former in terms of origin, extent, cause, and modal status. To be sure, on Kant's critical assessment, the concepts of reason do not really reach the objects they intend, and any inferences built on them turn out to be logically unsound or invalid when taken as determinations of supranatural entities—as in the traditional metaphysical claims about the soul, the world at large, and God.

Kant articulates and assesses the epistemic difference between essentially immanent concepts of the understanding and intentionally transcendent concepts of reason by recourse to two philosophical founders and their different, even opposed, conceptual contributions to the history of philosophy. He names the pure concepts of the understanding "categories" (*Kategorien*) (Kant 1904: B105; 1911: A79f) after Aristotle's term, taken from

Greek legal language, for the forms and objects of linguistic announcement and logical assertion. And he labels the pure concepts of reason "ideas" (*Ideen*; in English, *Forms*) (Kant 1904: B370; 1911: A313) after Plato's coinage, taken from Greek optical language, for the extrasensory thought entities exceeding ordinary vision and common cognition.[8]

Kant's reuse of the Aristotelian and Platonic key terminology is more than a reverential gesture. It forms part of his overall ambition to bridge the gap caused by dualisms of all kind, including opposite philosophical positions going back to antiquity (chiefly, Plato and Aristotle) and to earlier modern times (mainly, Locke and Leibniz), thus setting the stage for his own conciliatory, combinatorial, and compatibilist project—a project that does not consist in the reduction or removal of duality and opposition but in their careful mediation and diligent bridging. In this perspective, the *Critique of Pure Reason* can be seen to join a neo-Aristotelian account of empirical objects as determined, logically as well as ontologically, by categorial concepts with a Platonically inspired account of meta-empirical objects, logically as well as metaphysically, by pure ideas.

To be sure, Kant's combined integration of Aristotelian categories and Platonic ideas into the Transcendental Logic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not a repetitious retrieval of ancient doctrines, but rather involves modification and revision. With respect to Aristotle, Kant critiques his inclusion of space and time among the catalogue of the categories and the lack of an overall principle for deriving the complete and well-ordered set ("system") of pure concepts that originate in the understanding and apply to possible experience. With regard to Plato, Kant takes issue with the appeal to nonsensory as well as nondiscursive, immediate insight ("intellectual intuition," *intellektuelle Anschauung*) (Kant 1904: B72) into the ideas or Forms as the archetypes of all things.

The specific differences between categories and ideas in the *Critique of Pure Reason* notwithstanding, Kant subjects the two kinds of concepts to a strictly parallel treatment by addressing with regard to each of them the manner of their origin, the mode of their employment, as well as the extent and limits of their reach. In particular, the formal assessment of pure theoretical reason ("speculative reason") along with its *a priori* cognitive ideas ("transcendental ideas") (Kant 1904: B377; 1911: A321) follows closely the sequential setup of the critical examination of the understanding and its categories. More specifically, after having furnished the derivation of the categories from the basic forms of judgment (Metaphysical Deduction), the justification of their objective validity (Transcendental Deduction), and the specification of their conditions of applicability (Transcendental Schematism) in the Transcendental Analytic, the Transcendental Dialectic sets out to analogously derive the pure ideas of reason from the logical forms

of (syllogistic) inference, to provide a justification (of sorts) for their objective validity and to detail the terms of their possible application (Kant 1904: B692–96; 1911: A664–92).

To be sure, the validity with regard to objects established for the transcendental ideas is unlike that established for the categories. Critically considered, the former only serve to orient the extended use of the categorial understanding with respect to objects in space and time ("regulative use"), while the latter function as the necessary conditions for any and all empirical objects ("constitutive use") (Kant 1904: B670; 1911: A642). Still the Transcendental Dialectic, for all the fallacious reasoning it details in the erroneous employment of ideas with regard to transcendent or metaphysical objects, vindicates pure theoretical reason as a cognitive capacity of its own right and reach. Like the understanding previously investigated in the Transcendental Analytic, speculative reason scrutinized in the Transcendental Dialectic is essentially limited to possible experience and hence to the world of sense ("nature") for the thorough and purposive "systematic" investigation of which, by means of the categorial understanding, the ideas of reason (soul, world, God) provide the infinitely removed, ideal focal points of sustained research and dedicated investigation.

The parallel treatment of the understanding and of reason in the Transcendental Analytic and its counterpart, the Transcendental Dialectic, even extends to the introduction of a schematism of sorts attributed to reason, based on the analogy to the schematism of the understanding previously probed. In the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, subsequent to the negatively critical, destructive core of that part of the first *Critique*, Kant takes up the positive appraisal of the role of reason from the opening book of the Transcendental Dialectic, entitled "On the Ideas of Pure Reason," by detailing the mode and extent of objective validity to be accorded to supersensory concepts, provided they are not mistaken for valid concepts of supersensory objects ("some, even though undetermined objective validity") (Kant 1904: B697; 1911: A669).

In the same vein, Kant distinguishes between two kinds of object, or two senses of "object": between an object in the standard sense, which is an object given as such for purposes of its further determination ("object absolutely taken"; *Gegenstand schlechthin*), and an object in the attenuated sense of an underdetermined object of thought or a "mere idea," functioning as the ideal reference point for other, ordinary objects and their conceptual determination ("object in the idea"; *Gegenstand in der Idee*) (Kant 1904: B698; 1911: A670).

Kant calls the latter object—a quasi-object that is not an object of its own, subject to cognitive determination, but an ideation in the service of determining other objects—a "mere schema" (Kant 1904: B698, 712; 1911: A670, 684),

in view of its lack of genuine objectivity combined with its serviceability and even requirement for the systematic extension of empirical cognition. Moreover, Kant stresses the fabricated, fictional character of the schematic object of (speculative) reason: the thought entity in question is regarded and treated "as if" (*als ob*) (Kant 1904: B699; 1911: A671) it were an ordinary object susceptible of cognitive determination—when in fact it is not, but is merely a projection and, to that extent, an imaginary object. To be sure, the fictional, imaginary status of reason's quasi-objects—chiefly among them the objects of classical metaphysics, as reconstructed by Kant (soul, world, God)—is not in itself illusionary and void. It only becomes so when confused with the ordinary objectivity involved in the cognitively determinable or determined objects of the categorial understanding.

The linkage between ideas of reason and their imaginary schematic objects, adumbrated in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is further unfolded in the second half of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment. Rather than subsuming the quasi-objects of the ideas of reason under the term "schema," as he had done in the first *Critique*, Kant now resorts to a terminology that conveys the specific difference between a schema, as constitutively correlated with a category of the understanding, and its counterpart, essentially linked to an idea of reason. The novel term and correlated device introduced by Kant in section 59 of the third *Critique* is "symbol" (*Symbol*) (Kant 1913: 352). Like the schema, the symbol fulfills the epistemic function of providing an *a priori* concept with a matching intuitional counterpart.

Kant's covering technical term for the generic function of rendering concepts sensible (*Versinnlichung*), common to schematization and symbolization, is *hypotyposis* (Latinized German *Hypotypose*, ordinary German *Darstellung*, school Latin *subiectio sub adspectum*) (Kant 1913: 351). In the case of schematization, the relation between the *a priori* concept—originally a category, subsequently an empirical concept as the latter's instantiation—and its intuitional counterpart is direct, unmediated by any other entity or device. To be sure, the schema involved, while standing in an unmediated relation to its concept, in turn serves to mediate between the concept's merely intellectual, logical form and features and its possible or actual application to sensory material under the guise and guidance of the forms of intuition.

By contrast, in the case of symbolization, the relation of the concept to its symbol is indirect and mediated by a procedure involving reflection, more precisely, the power of reflective judgment (*reflektierende Urteilskraft*) (Kant 1913: 179f)—the very cognitive power that constitutes the chief concern of the third *Critique*. A symbol does not provide a direct intuitional counterpart to its concept but an indirect one, meditated by yet another concept, which in turn possesses a direct intuitional counterpart under the guise of a schema.

In symbolization, the direct correspondence between one concept and its schema is used to convey an indirect correspondence between another concept and the schema of the first concept, which thus assumes the additional function of rendering sensible the second concept, although only symbolically so (Kant 1913: 352).

On Kant's account in the third *Critique*, the conceptual transition from the first concept and its schema to the second concept and its symbol—the latter being the reused schema of the first one—is effectuated by the power of reflective judgment. The direct relation of an immediate match between the first concept and its schema is reflected upon, or reflectively considered, in order to yield formal features of a relational kind that originally apply to the case at hand, but which then are taken up for an analogous assessment of the relation in which the second concept stands to its indirect, reflectively mediated (quasi)schema or symbol. In Kant, symbolization as an epistemic procedure comes in where schematism fails and a functional substitute is sought. According to Kant, symbolization is the surrogate solution for the sensible presentment (*hypotyposis*) of those concepts that, by definition, elude direct rendition in intuition, namely, concepts of reason or ideas. For Kant, categories allow and even require schematization in order to become validated or realized, while ideas require symbolization for the validation and realization they afford.

Kant's primary example for the symbolization of ideas is the enterprise of philosophical theology. In order to lend sense and meaning to the idea of God—a concept of reason that exceeds all available exemplification or instantiation by means of sensible intuition—theological thinking has to take recourse to the cognitive and conative constitution of the human being, drawing on the latter's endowment with intellect and will, and transfer the pertinent features to a concept and its object to which these features are not applied directly (schematically) but only indirectly (symbolically) and hence in an attenuated sense. Thus, the idea of God is rendered real—given determinate content ("reality")—by being linked indirectly or analogously, through an operation of the power of reflective judgment, with the human features of cognition and volition, suitably modified to convey divine infinity and perfection. Descriptively speaking, the symbolization of the theological idea involves imaging or imagining something supersensible and nonhuman according to human notions, with the proviso, though, that the humanization of the divine is only symbolic, semiotically speaking, and analogous, logically speaking. Any further extension of the anthropo-theological symbolism or analogy would unduly introduce narrowly human features into a nonhuman, in fact superhuman, object-idea or idea-object ("anthropomorphism") (Kant 1913: 353).

Between the Hand Mill and the Animate Body

On Kant's account, the symbolic way of rendering ideas sensible and intuitive, namely, indirectly and by means of analogy, forms a pervasive feature of philosophical discourse, effectively introducing metaphors—more specifically, conceptual metaphors—into the presentation of the core concepts and the chief doctrines of his own philosophical work. A prime area of Kant's analogical thinking in conceptual metaphors is his practical philosophy, which is coextensive with moral philosophy (*Moralphilosophie*) and composed of law and ethics (*Rechtslehre*, *Tugendlehre*) along with their foundational parts (Kant 1914: 205, 217–21). As a form of philosophy based entirely on the idea of freedom, in strict dissociation from the categorial framework of nature, Kant's practical philosophy, which is in essence a philosophy of pure practical reason, lacks any immediate intuitional warrant or direct natural-world exemplification for its moral concepts and doctrines. In order to lend the needed intuitional import to the key concepts and chief doctrines of his practical philosophy, Kant's practical philosophy features functional analogies between moral philosophy and natural philosophy that import images from the latter into the figurative, imaginative conceptual articulation of the former.

To be sure, Kant is not intent on reducing the specifics of practical philosophy to those of theoretical philosophy. Nor is his ambition to erect a foundational philosophy that might underlie the twofold distinction of a first, theoretical and a second, practical philosophy, in the manner of prominent post-Kantian projects—from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and its recourse to an absolute I through Schelling's philosophy of identity and its introduction of an absolute indifference or an indifferent absolute to Hegel's philosophy of spirit and its reliance on an absolute identity of identity and difference. For Kant, by contrast, the opposition between nature and freedom and the associated distinction between the world of sense and the order of reason are, if not ultimate, then at least inscrutable and at most admitting of a final, teleological rather than an original, archaeological architectonic synthesis, undertaken in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and revisited in the *Opus postumum*.

The theoretico-practical symbolism that permeates Kant's practical philosophy is centered around the conception of the idea of freedom as involving a mode of causality specifically different from, but analogically similar to, the category of causality—an extension of this relational category conveyed by Kant's coinage of an alternative "causality . . . from freedom" (*Kausalität aus Freiheit*) (Kant 1904: B560; 1911: A532). The symbolization of the practical through the theoretical extends further to the symbolic rendition of the moral order in terms of the natural order, with practical reason

involving a legislation of moral laws distinct from, though akin to, the legislation of nature through the categorial understanding (Kant 1913: 67–71). Further features of the relationship of symbolism between theoretical and practical philosophy in Kant are manifest in the parallel architectonic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*—from the corresponding distinctions between sensible intuition and thought, on the one hand, and inclination and obligation, on the other hand, through the analogy between the schematism of the categories and the typic of the moral idea to the doctrinal affinity between the solution of the antinomy of pure theoretical reason and that of the antinomy of pure practical reason (Kant 1913: 89–91).[9]

A further field from which Kant draws conceptual metaphors and metaphorical images in order to elucidate matters of his practical philosophy is that of biology, the latter figuring at the time under the heading "natural history" (*historia naturalis*, *Naturgeschichte*). In particular, Kant relies on the conceptions of organism (*Organismus*) and organization (*Organisation*), as developed in his mature account of animate nature in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, to indirectly lend reality—and to imaginatively represent—practical ideas governing human community, especially political society (Kant 1913: 375).

In a remarkable passage in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, inserted to illustrate the operation of analogical thinking in the symbolic representation of ideas of reason, Kant contrasts two basic ways of ruling a state by drawing on alternative symbolic renditions of a state's systematic mode of operation:

> Thus a monarchical state is represented by an animate body, if it is ruled according to inner popular laws, but by a mere machine (such as a hand mill), if it is ruled by a single absolute will—yet in both cases only *symbolically* so represented. (Kant 1913: 352; emphasis in the original)[10]

At the descriptive level, Kant's twin symbolism of the political offers rivaling figurative renditions of political life—one informed by the mechanism constitutive of modern natural science, the other shaped by the organicism of contemporary emerging biology ("natural history"). In a normative perspective, figuring a state as a mechanically moved inert object serves to unmask that state's inherent despotism, while its imaginative presentation as a living body is apt to convey the quasi-physiological functionality of such a state.

Kant's zoomorphic account of social life, especially of the political life form, takes on special significance and intricate meaning given its occurrence in the very work, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, that also contains Kant's mature account of natural organisms in the Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment. According to the third *Critique*, natural organisms

have to be regarded as "natural purposes" (*Naturzwecke*) (Kant 1913: 375), which—upon sustained reflection—exhibit forms of purposiveness akin to, but also dissimilar to, the pursuit of purposes in human action called by Kant "practical purposiveness" (*praktische Zweckmäßigkeit*) (Kant 1913: 181).

In the third *Critique*, the symbolism involved in the figurative presentation of the body politic as an organic being of sorts is complicated by the fact that in the very same work organic beings themselves are in turn subject to analogical thinking, namely, to the contrastive comparison of purposiveness (or finality) in nature, including that of "natural purposes" (*Zweckmäßigkeit in der Natur*; *Naturzwecke*), and purposiveness (or finality) in intelligent agents or "practical purposiveness" (*praktische Zweckmäßigkeit*) (Kant 1913: 366, 369). Not only does Kant transpose the physiological features of living organisms onto social and civic life, thereby treating human civil society as an animal writ large; He also, conceptually prior to the zoo-political transfer in his figurative thinking about the political, accounts for the peculiar properties of animate nature in terms derived from, but also differentiated from, the purposive production of artifacts by human beings.

Moreover, while the analogy between animal life and political life is construed by Kant along the standard lines of analogical thinking, the transposition of the teleological functionality of artificial beings onto animate beings for Kant is marked by disanalogy as much as by analogy. In fact, Kant ultimately outright denies the possibility of figuratively rendering animal being in terms of the workings of a craft product or a work of art (Kant 1913: 374f). Thus, Kant renders the peculiar functionality of political life analogically, by relating it to the basic conception of animal beings ("organized beings"; *organisierte Wesen*) (Kant 1913: 372), but he casts the latter disanalogically, by denying its strict relational similarity with artistic or artisanal production.

The ultimate inscrutability of animate natural beings notwithstanding, Kant still draws on the phenomenon of animate nature to elucidate normative features of human social interaction, especially those concerning the forms and types of political association. This move could be seen as amounting to the introduction of a *qualitas occulta* into legal and political philosophy, which would be a move utterly unfit for Kant's declared goal in drawing the analogy, namely, of bringing greater clarity into the constitution of the juridico-political order. But Kant's critical analysis of animate nature, while negative with regard to the standard and traditional teleological accounts of the origin and constitution of such beings, does not deny the fact of their purposive functioning but rather seeks to describe that functioning in a way that dissociates *purposiveness observed* from *purposiveness intended* (Kant 1913: 382f).

Moreover, the figurative, imaginative move from animate being to sociopolitical being undertaken by Kant does not turn on the absence or presence

of intent behind the purposive constitution of nature or society. Rather, the pertinent point between the zoological and the politological case is the similar, functionally identical relation between the parts and the whole in each case. More specifically, Kant transfers the organic nature of animate beings to the workings of political society or the state (*Staat*). The shared organicity of animate being and political being consists in the respective parts being teleologically subordinated to a whole of which they are at once the constitutive members. In the base case of animate natural beings (plants and animals, including human animals), the parts are the organs (*Organe*), the whole is the organism (*Organismus*), and the teleologically integrated part-whole structure is the organization (*Organisation*).

Kant's transposition of natural organicity to political organicity is based on the normative distinction between two ways of setting up the body politic—mechanically and organically (Kant 1913: 352). On a mechanical account, the state is conceived on the analogy with a machine (*Maschine*), in which one part moves another part, thus contributing cumulatively to the motion of the whole. On an organic account of the state, the parts contribute to the whole by first making it possible and further sustaining it, such that the whole both results from the parts and unites the parts' contributions to the emerging or existing whole. Kant further specifies the somatico-political analogy by distinguishing a mechanic and an organic mode of the state's structure and functioning. A state—more specifically, a monarchical state—is to be regarded as mechanically constituted and operating like a "mere machine" (*bloße Maschine*), if it is governed by a single absolute will (*einzelner absoluter Wille*) (Kant 1913: 352).

By contrast, the organic mode of the state's structure and functioning exchanges the absolutist governance of the social whole by a politically privileged single part against a mode of governance that issues from and within the whole and that involves, ideally, all the parts, in effect constituting a governance by "inner popular laws" (*innere Volksgesetze*) (Kant 1913: 352). Kant likens the alternative, organic mode of statehood to the functioning of an "animate body" (*beseelter Körper*) (Kant 1913: 352), in which the parts are subordinate to the whole, which yet owes its being to the joint workings of the parts.

The contrast established in Kant's political symbolism between the absolute will of a single ruler and a mode of governance according to popular laws clearly draws on Rousseau's conception of the legislative will of the people (*volonté générale*) as the normative basis of state governance. The distinction between mechanism and organism in political rule—between a political machine and a political animate body—also builds on the political-philosophical opposition of monarchical and republican rule and rulers. Yet Kant's specification

that the popular laws involved in the organic constitution of a state are "inner" indicates that he is not thinking of an outwardly republican regime, or at least not limiting the organic functioning mode of the state to that particular "form of statehood" (*Staatsform*) (Kant 1914: 338f, 340f).

In fact, it is amply evident from Kant's professed positions in political philosophy that for him a republican constitution is not necessary for a state to be organized in a republican manner, that is, as a state respectful and reflective of its normative basis in the idealized, "general" will of the people and that popular will's purpose of advancing the common good (commonwealth, *res publica*). What matters, according to Kant, is not the outward form of a state's governance structure—its "letter" (*Buchstabe*)—which may well be monarchical, but the state's inner form or "spirit" (*Geist*), which is to be characterized by the rule of just laws rather than by the reign of arbitrary autocrats. For Kant, the character of an organic state or a living body politic concerns a normative standard rather than the actual practice of legislation (Kant 1914: 340f).

It is worth noting that the organism analogy of the body politic, as employed by Kant, does not follow traditional accounts of the reigning role of one part of that body over the others, such as the precedence of the stomach over the other members in the political symbolism offered by Mennenius Agrippa, as told by Livy and retold by Shakespeare in his *Coriolanus*, or the proverbial distinction of the monarchical ruler as the "head of state." Rather, Kant's somatico-political analogy turns on the equal status of all members of the republicanly minded body politic in their role and function as fictitious co-constitutors of the whole, that is the state—a whole that, paradoxically, precedes them as much as they precede it.

Finally, it also deserves mention that Kant's organic symbolism of the political is decisively distinct from the organicist understanding of human social existence, including political existence, propagated by Kant's one-time student and later meta-critical rival, Johann Gottfried Herder, and by the political romantics along with their romantic politics in his trail, including Hardenberg-Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and Joseph Görres. Kant's recourse to the somatico-political analogy is not restorative and anti-modern, but purposively progressive and emphatically modern. Its critical target is monarchical absolutism. But it also provides the adherents of liberal individualism with a critical perspective on the modernist inclination to sever the newly emancipated individual from the political whole that first lends purpose and public presence to an otherwise merely private and personal existence. Figuratively speaking, Kant's republican body politic is not only opposed to monarchical machines but also to the individualist atomism of political particle physics.

Notes

*A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers [1849].

1. The *Critique of Pure Reason* is cited and quoted by reference to the original pagination of the first and second edition ("A" and "B," respectively). All translations of Kant's writings are my own.

2. On Kant's transcendental project in general and his idea of a transcendental logic in particular, see Zöller (2014).

3. See Kant (1905: 427–43), Kant (1923: 89–106, 157–84), and Kant (1913: 421–24). On Kant's reliance on the epigenetic model in his critical epistemology, see Zöller (1988, 1989). See also Mensch (2013) and Zöller (2015a).

4. The German term, *Beschreibung*, usually translated into English as "description," here retains its older meaning designating the activity of applying writing to some surface.

5. On the difference between "form of intuition" and "formal intuition" in Kant, see Zöller (1987).

6. On the possibilities and limitations of a transcendental-psychological reading of the first *Critique*, see Zöller (1993).

7. See Heidegger (1997). For a Heideggerian reading of Kant on the power of the imagination, see Mörchen (1970). For a focus on the third *Critique*'s account of the power of the imagination, see Makkreel (1990) and Zöller (1992). For an account of the comprehensive function of the power of the imagination, see Gibbons (1994).

8. On Kant's original appropriation of Platonic ideas in general and of the Platonic idea of the perfect state constitution ("republic") in particular, see Zöller (2015b). On the historical and systematic context of Kant's reception of Plato's *Republic*, see Zöller (2015c).

9. On the reverse parallelism between the first and the second *Critique*, see Zöller (2015d).

10. The German original reads: Emphasis in the original: *So wird ein monarchischer Staat durch einen beseelten Körper, wenn er nach inneren Volksgesetzen, durch eine bloße Maschine aber (wie etwa eine Handmühle), wenn er durch einen einzelnen absoluten Willen beherrscht wird, in beiden Fällen aber nur symbolisch vorgestellt.*

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Chapter 2

Wilhelm Dilthey and the Formative-Generative Imagination

Eric S. Nelson

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) is well-known as a philosopher and intellectual historian who prioritized the formative force and significance of the imagination in his popular and philosophical writings, such that he is accordingly identified as an heir to German Idealism and romanticism in a naturalistic and scientistic epoch.[1] His works have been judged by subsequent hermeneutical thinkers, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, as being ambiguously torn between a positivistic empiricism and an intuitive holistic romanticism (Gadamer 1985: 157–82). The position of the formative-generative imagination, the imagination as a constitutive structural element in the dynamic formation of the sense of a whole, in the development of Dilthey's thought clarifies this ostensive inconsistency. Dilthey repeatedly asserted that knowledge is intrinsically experiential and empirical. Forms of knowledge and science proceed from elementary experiences and logical operations, as Dilthey described in diverse ways from his early *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (*Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften: Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte*, 1883) through his middle writings on psychology and aesthetics to his later *Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences* (*Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, 1910).

Dilthey's philosophical works on the nature and limits of the human sciences, descriptive and analytic (interpretive) psychology, and hermeneutical and historical understanding gave the imagination a central systematic role in how subjects understand themselves and others in ordinary common life as well as in how individual and collective subjects—which have a relative and conditional identity and validity yet no substantial essence for Dilthey—are interpreted in human scientific formations. Dilthey's popular writings in intellectual and literary history, particularly his widely

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read biographical sketches of eminent German poets in *Lived-Experience and Poetry* (*Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, 1907), depict and praise—to the point of exaggeration criticized by subsequent thinkers such as Adorno in his aesthetics—the heightened imaginative phantasy (*Phantasie*) and feeling of life (*Lebensgefühl*) expressed through the works of Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, and Hölderlin.[2]

While Dilthey emphasized the priority of experience, accordingly lending support to the claim that he can be categorized in a German tradition of empiricism, elementary experiences occur within contexts of signification that they presuppose and are enacted in a holistic nexus of differentiating structural relations.[3] In the same way as Dilthey's psychological works substituted the Kantian idea of an atemporal transcendental subjectivity with the differentiating development and enactment of a temporally mediated structural whole of the "acquired psychic nexus" (*erworbener seelischer Zusammenhang*), his analysis of the structural-contextual conditions of experience—that Dilthey construed as a transformation of Kant's static intellectualistic *a priori*—stressed the centrality of the imagination within the formation of experience itself and its elucidation.[4]

Dilthey's discourse of the imagination is most appropriately described in its own language as creative (*schaffende* or *schöpferische*) and formative-generative (*gestaltende*). This approach both modifies and presents an alternative to concepts of the productive and transcendental imagination that Dilthey interprets as overly idealistic in his historical portrayals of German Idealism and Romanticism.[5] Dilthey rarely explicitly mentioned the Kantian concept of the productive imagination (*produktive Einbildungskraft*) except in historical discussions of Kant and Fichte, as in his Schleiermacher biography (see Dilthey 1970a: 251; 1997b: 8). Elsewhere, in the manuscript of the "Basel Logic" of 1867–1868, Dilthey explicitly dismissed Fichte's foundationalist argumentation from the ego, including its use of the productive imagination, as erroneous and sophistical (Dilthey 1990: 74). Nonetheless, Dilthey's philosophy of the imagination can be interpreted as a posttranscendental appropriation and reinterpretation of the productive imagination that contextualizes it in relation to worldly receptivity and responsiveness as well as the structural wholes in which it operates. Dilthey's imagination is a related yet distinctive conception of the creativity of the imagination, which he at times describes in terms of a productive freely formative phantasy (*eine produktive freigestaltende Phantasie*).[6] The imagination reconfigures, within the context of its enactment, previously given elements and contents and completes them into new wholes of signification. A rethinking of the imagination and its "productivity" emerges across Dilthey's works in which the constitutive forces of the imagination are reinterpreted in formative-generative and dynamic structural-holistic terms.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe noted in his 1792 essay "The Experiment as a Mediator between Object and Subject" how "although arguments may deal with utterly separate matters, wit and imagination can group them around a single point to create a surprising semblance of right and wrong, true and false" (Goethe 1998: 16). Imagination completes cognition in forming a holistic intuitive perception (*Anschauung*) of the object. Dilthey adopts this interpretive strategy of the formative powers of the imagination that is more indebted to a critical reading of Goethe than to Kant. The imagination is depicted in *Lived-Experience and Poetry* as serving a generative role in human life and understanding as it provides—in structural interaction with perception (*Anschauung*) and memory (*Gedächtnis*)—a sense of the whole (Dilthey 1985: 238–40; 2005: 383–85). The imagination has a structural role in the formation of all experience; it shapes how human beings interpret themselves, intersubjectively given others, and the sense of nature itself in its occurrences and silence (Dilthey 1959a: 36).

As analyzed in this chapter, the imagination is not only an aesthetic concern limited to the creation of fictive entities and pictures in the mind's eye. It does not only play a constitutive role in interpreting art and poetry, as Dilthey's aesthetics is oriented toward disclosing the imaginative processes on both the side of the artist and the audience. The imagination is crucial to clarifying the elementary processes of understanding and interpretation in the midst of ordinary everyday human life, the paradigmatic thinking and radical epoch-changing transformations of thought evident in the natural sciences, and the modes of inquiry found in the historical and human sciences, both on the side of the researchers and the historical subjects who they research.

Dilthey, Transcendental Philosophy, and the Problem of Constitution

To briefly outline Dilthey's historical situation, the idea of the "productive imagination" as a transcendental condition that clarifies the possibility of *a priori* cognition and the imagination's role in transcendental constitution were developed in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The productivity of the imagination with respect to aesthetic and teleological forms of judgment was articulated in his *Critique of the Power of Judgement*.[7] The powerful systematic role given to the imagination in transcendental constitution by Kant inspired a generation of intellectuals, notably Fichte who identified it with spirit itself and conceived of it as completely creative in his 1794 lecture "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy" (Fichte 1993: 193). It would be subsequently downplayed in postidealist German thought, including the neo-Kantian interpretations of Kant's critical

philosophy that dominated late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German academic philosophy. Dilthey's thinking runs contrary to this tendency in retaining the centrality of the imagination albeit in a modified form. He expresses admiration for the emphasis on how mind and imagination are actively involved in shaping and producing the sense and meaningfulness of the world in transcendental philosophy and idealism while seeking to give spirit's activities a more empirical anthropological-psychological and social-historical basis in the human sciences.[8]

The first modification in the concept of the imagination that needs to be considered is Dilthey's relation with transcendental philosophy and idealism to which Dilthey is both an heir and critic. Dilthey's thinking was no doubt inspired and informed by Kant's philosophy of the imagination, as Rudolf Makkreel has emphasized in his Dilthey book (Makkreel 1992). Dilthey, however, sought to substantially revise—in a much more radical way than neo-Kantianism—the Kantian critical paradigm by rethinking precisely the *a priori* and transcendental elements in relation to the empirical natural (such as the biological and physiological study of human nature) and human sciences (encompassing psychology, anthropology, history, linguistics, etc.). As Dilthey argued in his early major work *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (1883), inquiry into the scope and limits of human knowledge and experience demands recourse to the empirical and ontic study of language, history, and culture in which they occur and are enacted (Dilthey 1957a: 180). Accordingly, Kant's "critique of pure reason" would become Dilthey's "critique of historical reason"—that is, the critique of reason as a historically embodied and practiced reality—and Kant's "categories of the understanding" would be reconsidered as the "categories of life" that are inseparable from and modified by how they are lived and enacted (Makkreel 1992: 244).

There is a distinctive element in Dilthey's postmetaphysical reconstruction of epistemology that prevents it from being empiricism as it is normally defined and that distinguishes his analysis from Hume's appeal to study the mind in common life, custom, and history. A philosophy of the synthetic *a priori* either leads to the dead-end of speculative idealism, which Dilthey sees as a movement whose time is past, or a situated and embodied historical *a priori* that requires empirical scientific inquiry and experiential self-reflection to be appropriately interpreted. Dilthey's reliance on and elucidation of dynamic structural wholes of relations that constitute a nexus (*Zusammenhang*) is both a transformation of and an alternative to classical transcendental philosophy and philosophical idealism that relies on constitution through the subject. There are now multiple forms of constitution of individuals, social forms of life, and forms of cognitively valid knowledge of human, organic, and physical relational wholes (*Zusammenhänge*) that are differentiated from one another through their own internal dynamics.[9] Dilthey's approach to individuation has been misconstrued by his critics: even while, for instance,

Dilthey's philosophical project has been criticized for his individualism in the developing field of sociology (Simmel, Weber), Marxist inspired philosophy (Lukács, Benjamin, Adorno), and in philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer); individuality is interpreted as the individuation of a dynamic relational whole that, as such, contains nothing purely unique or singular independent of the relational nexus.[10]

How then does Dilthey conceive of constitution? Dilthey can speak of material, organic, psychological, and "spiritual" constitution and unfolded an account of the fundamentally practical constitution of the world in ways that prefigure and shares affinities with pragmatism.[11] Constitution (*Konstitution*) is not confined to theoretical or philosophical foundations in Dilthey's usage nor does it have a typically idealistic or transcendental character. To consider a few examples: Dilthey speaks of the constitution of psychic life from its own elements, forces, and laws—that parallel and are contentwise distinguished from those of physics or chemistry—in his psychological writings and the material-environmental and spiritual-social (*geistig*) constitution of a people—from which its conditions, needs, and ideals arise—in his writings on education (Dilthey 1960a: 56; 1997b: 253). In his posthumously published notes for the unpublished second volume of the *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, Dilthey distinguishes between logical, practical, and affective constitution of, respectively, knowledge, will, and emotional life (Dilthey 1997a: 79).

Dilthey more frequently deploys the word *Aufbau* than *Konstitution*. It can be translated into English as "constitution," "construction," or—more appropriately in Dilthey's case—as "formation." The term "Aufbau" occurs throughout Dilthey's works. He already uses the expression "formation of the human sciences" (*Aufbau der Geisteswissenschaften*) in the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (Dilthey 1959a: 30). He articulates the idea of ethical life as an "Aufbau einer über das tierische Leben hinausreichenden" (a formation extending beyond animal life) in his *System of Ethics* and elsewhere the formation of worldviews, systematic sciences, and logic (Dilthey 1957b: 371; 1958b: 66; 1970b: 53). His primary late work *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences* clarifies how formation in this context is not purely logical and epistemic (Dilthey 1956; 2002). It is a social-historical formative-generative process involving the prereflective self-relational reflexivity and coming to self-reflection of humans investigating themselves. It is evident that transcendental conditions are reconceived as emergent structural relational wholes that are capable of further prereflectively made and self-conscious modifications such as through the freedom and conditional creativity and productivity of the imagination articulated in works of art, music, and poetry that are interpreted as expressions by audiences, art critics, and aesthetic theorists.

Aufbau as sociohistorical formation is not an achievement of an individual subject (whether understood as a lived or thinking ego) or collective subject

(which is only a heuristic fiction too easily reified) in Dilthey's analysis. The constitution of subjectivity is a structural process occurring through the mediations of history, language, and social-historical life. That is to say, as noted previously above, the subject is formed through intersecting conditions and forces of life: even its singular uniqueness and individuality—which Dilthey claims is an emergent absolute value—in his poetics, pedagogy, and ethics, is due to its being a unique individuating configuration or constellation of these conditions and forces rather than a self in the sense of an underlying soul or substance.[12] Dilthey describes in the *Aufbau* how the sense and identity of the self unfolds in experiential, imaginative, and interpretive relationships to itself in the context of its material-environmental and social-historical (which he calls "objective spirit" adopting Hegel's expression) mediations.

Another consequence of Dilthey's structuralism and expressivism—both of which have their roots in Herder and Goethe—is that he cannot be the proponent of direct or immediate introspective intuition as some scholars portray him; we interpret others and ourselves through mediations, objectifications, and expressions that allow the imagination to gain a sense of and interpret a person's subjectivity and interiority (i.e., the first-person perspective).[13] The uses of imagination and phantasy in Dilthey's broadly expressivist account of intersubjectivity do not lock the other out and imprison interpreters in their own first-person perspectives insofar as the imagination operates within an intersubjective nexus rather than produces it from out of itself. The imagination must necessarily work in interaction with others in forming a sense of the whole—that is, in this instance, the sense of their character and personal identity across time—which can be modified across each experience and encounter.

Dilthey's use of *Aufbau* should not be conflated with its deployment in other discourses, such as Rudolf Carnap's *The Logical Construction of the World* (*Der logische Aufbau der Welt,* 1928). *Aufbau* can be appropriately translated in Carnap's context as the construction of a system of constitution (*Konstitutionssystem*). There is a sense, however, in which Carnap's endeavor employs a "formation" echoing Dilthey (as well as others such as Husserl and Driesch) in that Carnap reconstructs in his 1928 work the formation of the experiential world through an analysis of holistically conceived lived experience (*Erlebnis*) in conjunction with the categories of the new formal logic adopted from Frege and Russell.[14]

The Formative-Generative Role of the Imagination

Dilthey's conception of the imagination is not productive in the sense of positing an *a priori* condition of knowing or of creating a subject and a world.

As two dimensions of the same process, the productivity and creativity of the imagination are continuous with its worldly receptivity and responsiveness. Dilthey rejected the priority of the mind and any faculty thereof, in favor of interactive cogivenness (*Mitgegebenheit*), or equiprimordialness, arguing in "The Origin of Our Belief in the Reality of the External World and Its Justification" ("Beiträge zur Lösung der Frage vom Ursprung unseres Glaubens an die Realität der Außenwelt und ihrem Recht," 1890) that self and world—as "being there for me"—are "given with" (*mitgegeben*) one another in a relational nexus that is initially prereflectively experienced through force and resistance.[15] The world is a reflexively felt practical reality rather than an external object that necessitates being cognitively inferred or demonstrated such that it is a metaphysical illusion to believe that there is a need to prove and reconstruct an external world in relation to a separate internal one: there is the differentiation and individuation of a holistic structure into the sense of a self as distinct from the world.

The creativity and responsivity—and these are two aspects of one process in Dilthey's account—of the imagination operate in a worldly relational nexus of elements and conditions that it does not create but with which—in interaction and in the oscillating movement between whole and part, structure and event, general and particular—it generates and produces meaning in its relational context.

In a characteristic passage about the imaginative phantasy, which exposes Dilthey's continuity and discontinuity with earlier idealist conceptions of the imagination, he describes in *Lived-Experience and Poetry* how poetic (aesthetic) phantasy receptively and creatively produces—in interaction with memory and perception that it modifies and transforms—"innumerable new intuitive forms" through "processes of intensification, diminution, arrangement, generalization, typification, formation, and transformation, which are sometimes unconscious and sometimes conscious and intentional" (Dilthey 1985, 241; 2005: 389). These imaginative processes, which creatively and concretely stylize and typify forms rather than abstractly universalize concepts, require the imagination to fuse and animate the "nucleus of the image" with new connections and relations through a process of "positive completion" (Dilthey 1985: 241; 2005: 389). Positive completion results in poetic images and forms that evoke reality while placing it in a different context that can illuminate it in new ways. Aesthetic phantasy, a thinking through images and forms that is a correlate to receptivity and responsiveness, thereby achieves a freedom in relation to its own contents to reconfigure them in meaningful ways. This sense of the imagination's role in the formation of meaningful wholes in exemplary yet uniquely differentiated types, images, forms, and figures offers a clue to the function of the imagination as a whole.

As will be examined in further detail below, Dilthey distinguished varieties of the enactment of the imagination and phantasy. He introduces a distinction

between three forms of the imagination in his *Poetics*: the imagination as active in the formation of scientific hypotheses, practical moral-political ideals, and artistic images (Dilthey 1958a: 145–47; 1985, 75–77). Each form of the imagination is in this description active—and to this extent productive within a structural nexus—in the formation of coherent exemplary images and distinctive typical forms that transcend ordinary given reality in order to orient inquiry, action, and affective fulfillment. In Kantian language, the imagination provides a medium to pursue regulative ideas. But the imagination is not limited to a realm of orienting ideals. "Fixed forms of social life, festivity, and art," according to Dilthey, disclose the function and prevalence of imagination in everyday human life (Dilthey 1958a: 147; 1985: 77). In all of these arenas of human life, the imagination is perceived as offering a sense of the whole that makes the social form, the popular festival, the work of art or music meaningful for me.

Showing an affinity with Hume, Mill, and associationist psychology on this point, the imagination is not productive in the sense of creating and producing new content or elements in Dilthey: the "new creation of contents (*Neuschöpfung von Inhalten*) . . . were nowhere experienced" (Dilthey 1958a: 142; see also Makkreel 1992: 163). Revealing his proximity to the empiricist tradition, and his commitment to the thesis of the primacy of experience, Dilthey maintained that imagination inherently operates from "out of elements of experience and based on analogies with experience" (Dilthey 1958a: 139; 1985: 68). Nonetheless, this affinity with British empiricism is itself limited, as the imagination is "free" in relation to the elements of experience and is not simply a form of reproductive association (Dilthey 1958a: 139; 1985: 68). Dilthey's structural interpretation of the freedom and productivity of the imagination can well be portrayed as occupying a middle point between the empiricist account of imagination as a form of reproductive association and the idealist understanding of its *a priori* constitutive power. The imagination can be described as productive in another important sense in Dilthey: to the extent that it borrows, adopts, and creates meaning from an already existing nexus of life elements to form new meaningful types and wholes. The imagination is stylistically active within the conditions of its milieu in the formation of images, forms, and types. It can freely yet not limitlessly modify previously generated images and types or it can creatively form new images and types from previous elements and experiences.

The imagination is, furthermore, involved in the generative formation of world-pictures and worldviews through which individuals and collectives interpret the world and make it meaningful for themselves. Dilthey's account of the formation of world-pictures echoes older ideas of the productive imagination in a modified structural and expansively naturalistic form. A world-picture (*Weltbild*) shapes the determination of value of life for itself, not as a

pregiven *a priori* reality or value but through the dynamic structural interaction of elements.[16] A world-picture offers an experiential sense of the whole. The sense of the whole exhibited in a world-picture is not a fixed or static determination. Dilthey describes how it is the enactment and expression of subjectivity in interaction with the world, as it is confronted by internal contradictions and external conflicts, including the "conflicts of world-pictures" (*Widerstreit der Weltbilder*) that cannot be conceptually resolved in favor of one particular world-picture or integrated in an ultimate unifying "final" synthesis.[17]

It is in this context that Dilthey, evoking Goethe's imaginative experimentalism more than Kant's philosophy of the imagination, calls on his readers to engage in experiments in imagination to creatively understand and interpret the human condition. While cognitive-conceptual thinking aiming at universal validity claims and "brings forth concepts," the freedom of the imagination responsively, creatively, and reflectively "brings forth types" (1958a: 136). The imagination is accordingly productive within a relational-structural nexus in producing images, forms, and types through its receptivity to the world and its free creative interaction with it.

In what way then can the imagination be productive in the revised sense of being structurally formative-generative? The imagination is a capacity to reconfigure experience by recombining experiential elements into new relations (new types) of wholes and parts and the general and the particular (1958a 139; 1985: 118). The images, types, and forms of the formative-generative (*gestaltende*) imagination are constitutively productive of the expression and interpretation of expression. These relational wholes immanently emerge from within experience and give experience sense and meaning. Imagination is a constitutive—albeit socially and historically enacted and conditioned—dimension to all knowing in Dilthey's epistemology.

Imagination, Lived-Experience, and Reconstructive Experience

The imagination is a mediated yet not a derivative feature of human life and knowledge in Dilthey's account. Dilthey is of course not the only philosopher who has argued that the imagination has a constitutive structural role in experience and its understanding. Dilthey's work offers a unique and significant elucidation of the formative-generative force of how the imagination is operative—and productive in a conditional structural sense—in all forms of experiencing and knowing. As the relational sense of the whole, it is structurally operative in the formation of the most concrete sensations (which are more typically interpreted as preimaginative) and, as will be argued later in the discussion of

scientific imagination and phantasy, the most abstract and formal of concepts (which are more typically construed as transcending the imagination).

According to Dilthey's articulation of lived-experience (*Erlebnis*), which is the primary form of first-person experience from which objectively reproducible third-person experience (*Erfahrung*) is derived, imagination is presupposed in both *Erleben* (lived-experiencing) and how it is understood and interpreted in reconstructive experience (*Nach-Erleben*; literally, "after-experiencing") that inevitably occurs "afterward." This "after" is the interval in which understanding seeks to respond to and interpret the other. As the self cannot itself immediately live or "relive" (the popular translation of *Nacherleben* that misses its very point) the other's lived-experiencing, or even the self's own experience in an unmediated or noninterpretive intuitive manner, the encounters and relations between self and other presuppose the mediating role of the imagination in ordinary life, history, and poetry. The poet and the historian are depicted as understanding the lived-experience of the other through practices of re-creation and reconstruction that require the imagination for "completion" in gaining a sense of the other as an independent and autonomous whole—who is distinct from myself—with its own intrinsic first-person perspective and value as a person. Dilthey's use of the term *Nacherleben* indicates the acknowledgment and recognition of the internal first-person character of the other's lived-experiencing: that is, it is the reenactment of an experience that is not one's own at a distance, one that is spaced by difference itself, through processes of perception, memory, and imagination. *Nach-erleben*—which is one element of interpretive understanding (*Verstehen*)—can consequently be interpreted as a self-transformation of one's understanding toward the position of the other (Dilthey 1977: 66).

It should be stressed that the mere use of the imagination, imaginative empathy, and transposition cannot reveal the immediate concrete psychological or mental life of myself much less of others. One cannot rely purely on imagination to understand the life of others. Instead, rather, the imagination generates images, types, and forms through which we comprehend others and ourselves through what is generalizable (typical) and singular (atypical) rather than in and of itself. This interpretation runs counter to and corrects misinterpretations of Dilthey as a subjectivist relying on intuitive empathy that have missed the entire structural and morphological dimensions of Dilthey's philosophy that has been articulated particularly well in Frithjof Rodi's works on Dilthey (Rodi 2003). The emphasis on the structuring-structured whole is fairly clear from Dilthey's own writings. As a result, for instance, Dilthey describes the scope and limits of imaginative processes of reconstruction and completion in the following way in a passage worth quoting as a whole:

> When I do not understand someone else, I cannot relive the state of the other in myself. Thus all understanding involves a re-creation in my psyche. Where is

this human capacity of re-creation to be located? Not in the capacity for abstract thought, but in an imaginative process. Scientific operations have their basis in the creative imagination [*schöperische Phantasie*]. Imagination is an intuitive process in which I add to intuitive moments that are given some that are not. The intensity of the human imagination will differ. The power to complete what is given varies greatly in different people; even for the same person it will vary in different circumstances. The imagination is limited to a certain sphere. It is an illusion to think that nothing human is alien to me. Let us apply this to literature. The poetic capacity must contain a sympathy with everything human. This sympathy is also essential for the historian. Reconstruction is a moment in the poetic capacity. The greater the range of what he can re-create, the greater is the poet. (Dilthey 1990: 100; 1996: 229)

The Formative Role of the Imagination in Knowledge and Science

Imagination and phantasy play a formative-generative role in understanding. As Makkreel has noted, emphasizing the Kantian character of the imagination in Dilthey's discourse, "Understanding is never just a matter of abstract thought. Instead, it requires the imagination to exhibit the universal in the particular, the whole in the part."[18] Dilthey's argumentation for the significance of the imagination and phantasy in understanding has a number of important consequences.

All understanding (*Verstehen*), even self-understanding, presupposes elementary and complex interpretive activities of understanding and consequently encompasses formative processes of the imagination that grasp how the universal is indicated in a particular and the whole is evident in the part. The imagination offers a sense of the whole not as an abstract universal concept but through particularity itself from elementary sensation, which requires a sense of a whole to be understood, to abstract concepts, which are likewise comprehensible through the work of the imagination. Dilthey's "formative-generative imagination," as a structurally modified form of the productive imagination, is practically and performatively enacted and lived in processes of understanding and interpretation within the midst of routinized ordinary everyday life, with all of the social forms it encompasses, and in the realm of complex theoretical and scientific knowledge.

Dilthey's discourse of the imagination is a step between the classic conception of the productive imagination and twentieth-century discourses of the imagination. He anticipated themes—evident in Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricœur—of twentieth-century phenomenology and hermeneutics in illuminating the affective and imaginative grounds of experience, understanding, and cognitive-conceptual knowledge. Dilthey was furthermore prescient of the historically informed anti-positivism of Thomas Kuhn and Paul

Feyerabend in repeatedly illustrating, in his underappreciated writings on the historical development of the modern sciences, the import of the imagination, affective life, and social-historical conditions in the formation and progress of the sciences, including the physical, organic, and human sciences. Even the most formalized theoretical knowledge and scientific theories practically presuppose the dynamic and interactive enactment and practice of the imagination that is capable of systematically integrating and differentiating (as two aspects of the same process) the whole and the part and the universal and the particular.

Dilthey's relationship with naturalism and his philosophy of the natural sciences are underappreciated facets of his complex philosophical project.[19] Dilthey's philosophy of science requires the recognition of the formative-generative character of the imagination. The sciences are not historically a result of a method of neutrally collecting facts, assessing purely given objectivities, and inductively inferring universal theories. Dilthey stresses how natural sciences such as physics and chemistry, as much as the human sciences, require the receptive and creative practice of the scientific imagination (*wissenschaftliche Einbildungskraft*) (Dilthey 1959a: 51) and scientific phantasy (*wissenschaftliche Phantasie*) (Dilthey, 1997b: 382).

Even in epochs that appear to be ones of ordinary nonrevolutionary science, to adopt Thomas Kuhn's distinction between normal and revolutionary paradigm-shifting science (Kuhn 2012), the sciences have not developed through the rigid following and mechanical application of predetermined rules. Normal scientific research relies, Dilthey contends, on an "art" (*Kunst*) of appropriately and at times creatively applying scientific rules and mediating empirical data and conceptual theories, as the imagination correlates the whole and the part and the universal and the particular in scientific knowing. Dilthey accordingly concludes (to return to a passage quoted in full at the conclusion of section 4), "Scientific operations have their basis in the creative phantasy [*schöperische Phantasie*]" and notes how this phantasy, which operates as a force of expansion and completion (*Kraft des Hinzuergänzens*), is limited (Dilthey 1985: 229; 1990: 100).

Akin to the artist, who shares an imaginative experimental sensibility, the scientist has a particular historically enacted and situated form of a cultivated and "disciplined" imagination that leads to the reproduction of previous results and at times revolutionary transformations (Dilthey 1958a: 185; 1985: 115). The poetic and scientific imagination are akin in that they both step beyond the bounds of empirical experience to encompass and elucidate experience in more fundamental ways in their artistic and theoretical works. The poetic imagination accomplishes this by heightening and transforming affects and feelings, while hypothesis formation is an imaginative and voluntary use of logic and existing scientific theories in creative

theorizing (Dilthey 1958a: 145; 1985: 75). Science is to this extent itself an art. The art of science, like all art (*Kunst*), presupposes the cultivation of an appropriate, in this case scientific and logical, imagination (Dilthey 1959b: 11, 174).

Science is one form of responsively and creatively grasping the natural world through the interaction of—structurally reconceived—the receptivity and productivity of the imagination, perception, and memory. Nature in Dilthey's thought is not directly given or immediately intuitively accessible. Nor is it a construct of pure imagination. The human understanding of nature is interpretively and social-historically conditioned and demands the use of imagination in its various scientific and artistic forms. It is in this sense that nature is "silent" and "foreign" to humans, as hermeneutical socially and historically mediated beings, and nature demands the employment of human imaginative powers to perceive it as meaningful (Dilthey 1959a: 36).

Dilthey maintained the systematic role of the productive—as meaning creative—imagination, arguing for the analogous operation of the imagination and phantasy of the poet, the philosopher, the politician, and the scientist (Dilthey 1958a: 185; 1985: 115). Further, imagination is part of the enactment of historically situated reason that operates through the formative and generative imagination and the orientation of the feeling of life in the context of social-historical conditions. Having established the significance of the imagination for reason, he analyzed the central role that art—as the sense of appropriateness and creative application—plays in human knowing as a practice.

History and the Historical Imagination

History is another form of an art and practice that is concerned with the bond between the singular and the universal (Dilthey 1959a: 90–91; 1989: 140–41). It faces intrinsic limits in that it can only partially narrate and reflect on aspects of a complex fabric and vast totality, as it can recover fragments and remnants of a stratified, yet in significant ways, invisible past (Dilthey 1959a: 25; 1989: 76).

History is a science insofar as it deploys scientific-empirical means of studying the past through documents and statistics (Dilthey 1959a: 15; 1989: 77). The study of history is artistic since—like the arts—it demands the resourceful employment of the imagination and the ingenuity of the historian (Dilthey 1959a: 40; 1989: 91). Dilthey claimed in the *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, "History was an art for us because there, as in the imagination of the artist, the universal is intuited in the particular and is not yet separated from it by abstraction and expressed directly, which first occurs in theory"

(Dilthey 1959a: 40; 1989: 91; compare 1958a: 218; 1985: 218). The historian cannot proceed through historical materials and facticities solely through conceptual cognition, since "there is no understanding apart from a feeling of value," and the enactment and artful practice of historical science "requires a feeling for the power of the unique and a sense for inner connections among ideas."[20] The historical imagination does not intentionally create or produce new worlds; it creatively/responsively encompasses and illuminates historical worlds in their facticity.[21]

We find once again in the text that there is no sense of a whole—this time of a historical person, epoch, or form of life—without the participation of the imagination that brings individual facts together and makes them meaningful to the historian and the historian's audience. A sense of a whole is a necessary yet potentially changing and moving point in the hermeneutical oscillation of understanding and interpretation that reconfigures that very whole. The process of understanding requires the interpreter participating in it by the activity of his or her own imagination. There are pathologies of the imagination in which one can be lost in imagery and phantasy. The historian can distort and misuse sources through the imaginative projection of a limited or distorting whole. However, without the imagination, as Dilthey critically wrote of the historian Schlosser in his early 1862 essay "Friedrich Christoph Schlosser and the Problem of Universal History," one "does not do justice to the rich life of the spirit, not even to the forces that actually influence human political action" (Dilthey 1960c: 161; 1996: 321).

As Makkreel notes, Dilthey "treats the poetic imagination and the historical imagination, not merely as parallel, but as basically akin" (Makkreel 1992: 26). Let us now turn to this exemplary incarnation of the receptivity and creativity of the imagination.

The Poetic Imagination

Adopting a thesis from Schleiermacher, Dilthey maintained that imagination and art characterize all knowing, even as the aim of knowledge is truth: "The production of an individual combination is art in the narrower sense, and its faculty is the imagination. In all knowing there is art and in all art there is knowing" (Dilthey 1996: 695). Whereas the imagination finds its proper scope in both scientific inquiry and artistic expression, the theoretical imagination exceeds its bounds when it becomes speculative or metaphysical and claims to cognitively comprehend the whole as a systematic totality (Dilthey 1959a: 359). It is in this sense that Dilthey's project of a critique of historical reason is a transformation of epistemology and the question arises, "How

does a contingent and conditional subject relying on its affective, cognitive, and voluntary capacities, and faced with its dispersion and exteriority in the world, achieve 'truth'?"

As art, history, religion, and the sciences themselves show, truths appear in conditional ways without an accessible ultimate foundational principle or criterion. Here again we see the extent to which Dilthey shares affinities with the empiricism and psychological concerns of Hume and Mill rather than German transcendentalism and Idealism.

As long noted in the reception of Dilthey, his poetic-aesthetic and psychological works are closely intertwined. His writings on poetry and poets focus on the imagination of the poet in relationship to contemporary "historical, psychological, and psycho-physical" inquiry in projects such as the systematic work *The Imagination of the Poet: Elements for a Poetics* (*Die Einbildungskraft des Dichters: Bausteine für eine Poetik*, 1887). In his 1886 lecture "Poetic Imagination and Madness" ("Dichterische Einbildungskraft und Wahnsinn"), he rejected the traditional identification between the poetic and madness, contrasting it with the healthy and balanced creativity of Goethe and Schiller. Dilthey differentiates in this lecture how the imagination includes, excludes, heightens, diminishes, and integrates the play of feelings: the artist engages in a "free play" of the forces and images of the imagination, forming and expressing a new work. Dilthey's popular account of poets likewise focused on the imaginative process: for example, "Goethe and the Poetic Phantasy" ("Goethe und die dichterische Phantasie," 1910), in which Goethe is interpreted as the exemplary modern example of the type of the healthy balanced creative imagination that can create exemplary lasting characters and types. The poet does not merely express life and the forces of life but receptively and productively reconfigures them into meaningful value-giving wholes that illuminate and orient that life (Dilthey 1985, 237–38; 2005, 382–83).

Dilthey against Psychologism and Subjectivism

The close proximity between psychology and poetics in Dilthey's aesthetic writings, in which psychology operates as a foundational human science for other human sciences such as aesthetics, has led critics such as Adorno, particularly based on Dilthey's popular aesthetic writings, to argue that Dilthey conflated the image in the work of art with the psychological image in the mind of the artist. Dilthey's aesthetics is often portrayed as a continuation of Romanticism in life-philosophical form that—due to the emphasis on feeling, imagination, phantasy, and the free responsiveness of the self—is

incompatible with the social critical realism and naturalism that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. Theodor Adorno argues against Diltheyian aesthetics in his *Aesthetic Theory*:

> Aesthetic images are not fixed, archaic invariants: Artworks become images in that the processes that have congealed in them as objectivity become eloquent. Bourgeois art-religion of Diltheyian provenance confuses the imagery of art with its opposite: with the artist's psychological repository of representations. But this repository is itself an element of the raw material forged into the artwork. (Adorno 2014: 118)

Already in Dilthey's *Poetics*, which posits the poetic imagination as the point of departure for poetics, Dilthey describes how this imagination is subject to its own structural conditions: "The poet's imagination is historically conditioned, not only in its material, but also in its technique" (Dilthey 1958a: 127; 1985: 54). *The Three Epochs of Modern Aesthetics and Its Present Task* (*Die drei Epochen der modernen Aesthetik und ihre heutige Aufgabe*, 1892) further indicates how problematic Adorno's assessment is even within aesthetics. Dilthey articulated the character and scope of the human science of aesthetics as an exemplary science of such structural relations. In this context, aesthetic imagination, in a limited sense, is defined as the capacity for artistic production and the capacity to re-create the other's (the artist's) lived experience through the exteriority of its expression.

Dilthey rejected "aestheticism," "art for art's sake," as it separated beauty from historically embodied lived experience.[22] Nonetheless, poetry and art provide the most vivid and poignant insights of life and expression. They are closest to and most expressive of the self-presentation of life in its textures, fullness, and complexity (Dilthey 1960b: 26).

Artistic works do not merely express the psychological intention or subjective interiority of the artist as Adorno inaccurately contends against Dilthey. They are dynamic structural relational wholes, in which the imagination plays a role: it can, within the possibilities and limits of its social-historical world, heighten and intensify life and disclose further possibilities that are invisible and unheeded in ordinary conventional life. The writer can challenge the existing order or bring its injustices into question as Dilthey notes of the idealist poet of freedom Schiller to later naturalistic writers, such as Charles Dickens, in his own time. Although literary naturalism preferred to present itself as an empirical scientific description of the facts of the world, Dilthey recognizes how naturalistic authors employ the imagination to productively stylize and typify experiences and the world. Whether it is Schiller or Dickens, the literary author can receptively encounter and trace phenomena in order to creatively modify, enliven, and complete an image from the elements given by the world (Dilthey 1958a, 212–13; 1985: 142–43). Art is the

strongest expression of the freedom and productivity of the imagination, as it can address and encounter the singular without destroying it in a noncoercive juxtaposition of singulars such that art is higher than any science.[23]

Aesthetics serves as an exemplary model for the human sciences. Dilthey clarifies why aesthetics is a model human science in *The Imagination of the Poet: Elements for a Poetics*:

> The poetic formative process, its psychological structure, and its historical variability can be studied especially well. The hope arises that the role of psychological processes in historical products will be explained in detail through poetics. Our philosophical conception of history was developed from literary history. Perhaps poetics will have a similar significance for the systematic study of historical expressions of life. (Dilthey 1958a: 109; 1985: 36)

Dilthey's writings on poetics indicate how idealist and romantic conceptions of the creative and productive imagination of artists and artistic genius can be redescribed through the experientially descriptive and structural-relational analytic psychology of the imagination. It is an example of the imagination in general, as it varies psychological, logical, and other structures rather than being different in kind. Nonetheless, despite this scientific psychological dimension, this is not a reductive naturalistic approach to artistic imagination. It is a phenomenologically descriptive and structurally analytic psychology rather than purely causal-explanatory, that is to say, a psychology appropriate to social-historical individuals and the use of types, norms, and intentions that require the work and freedom of the imagination in their formulation and application.[24] Dilthey's works can still be appreciated for how they intertwine the structural study of the creative and productive powers of the imagination—and its cultivation through forms, rules, and techniques—with the intimacy of biographically understanding the hermeneutical situation and life of the artist.[25]

Conclusion

Stanley Corngold has portrayed Dilthey's approach as unfolding a poetics of force and forces (Corngold 1981: 301–37). The forces and conditions of life play no doubt a crucial role, as do their intensification and diminishment, exclusion and inclusion. But Dilthey is clear that the factical forces of life by themselves lead to an impoverished poetics. The poet leaps beyond and ahead of the forces and conditions of life as a seer and visionary of humanity (*Seher der Menschheit*, which is used in the title of the unfinished planned work from 1895 eventually published as Dilthey 2006). The poet interpretively integrates and creatively reimagines social-historical forces and conditions,

both real and unreal, painful and joyous. The poet can receptively and productively reconfigure elements into new meaningful relational wholes. In this sense, there is an analogy between poetry and pedagogy, as the education of the forces of life. A poetics of self-formation in self-cultivation and educational formation (*Bildung*) is developed in Dilthey's *Pedagogy* (Dilthey 1960a). There is in this context a significant connection between *Bildung* and *Einbildung* that clarifies the vital yet conditional role of the imagination in life and in its cultivation.

Dilthey established the systematic exemplary role that aesthetics and poetics play in articulating the character, scope, and boundaries of the human sciences (see Makkreel 1992: 15, 78). As we have seen, the imagination is neither limited to the aesthetics of nature and artworks nor to a merely subjective realm. It is structurally crucial to understanding the modes of inquiry found in history and the human sciences, the rethinking of paradigms and radical epoch-changing transformations of thought evident in the historical development of the natural sciences, and the elementary processes of understanding and interpreting others in ordinary mundane human life.

Recognizing the significance of the formative-generative imagination—as a transformation of and an alternative to classic transcendental and idealist theories of the productive imagination—for an adequate conception and appropriate employment of reason, Dilthey critically situated reason in relation to the imagination, which forms its very freedom and creativity beyond the repetition of concepts and rules, and explored how rationality is oriented by the feeling of life, and its extension and heightening through the imagination, in the nexus of its social-historical conditions. As argued in this chapter, Dilthey articulated the theoretical significance of imaginative experience and the primary role of the receptive/creative processes of the imagination in the construction/formation of the world. His exploration of the varying incarnations of the imagination—in its receptivity and productivity and in a structural-relational nexus—indicates its formative-generative form.

Notes

1. Rudolf Makkreel in particular has emphasized the key role of the imagination in Dilthey's thought in Makkreel (1992).

2. Dilthey's most popular work *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* went through a number of editions and is now available in Dilthey (2005). Adorno mentions the problematic character of Dilthey's use of language, for instance, in his lecture course on aesthetics without adequately distinguishing Dilthey's popular and philosophical writings in Adorno (2009: 33, 334–35). On Dilthey's conception of the feeling of life, see Makkreel (1985: 83–104) and Nelson (2014: 263–87).

3. On Dilthey's relation to empiricism, see Dambock (2016) and Nelson (2007b: 108–28). On Dilthey's conception of structurally differentiated wholes, see Rodi (2003) and Rodi (2016: 51–69).

4. On the notion of the "acquired psychic nexus," see Dilthey (1957: 217).

5. This approach unfolded here is informed in part by the interpretation of generativity in Dilthey in Makkreel (2011: 17–31).

6. Dilthey applies this expression to Shakespeare's tragedies in Dilthey (2006: 45), where he emphasizes how the free productive-formative activity of phantasy relies on an established context of contents, materials, and memory.

7. For a fuller account of the imagination in Kant, see Makkreel (1990).

8. Compare Makkreel and Rodi, Introduction to Dilthey (1985: 14). In addition, it should be noted how Dilthey's discourse of the imagination serves as a bridge between earlier and twentieth-century conceptions of the imagination in German philosophy, including Heidegger's interpretation of Kantian imagination (compare Schalow 2016: 377–94).

9. On Dilthey's structural holism, see in particular Rodi (2003) and Rodi (2016: 51–69).

10. This important yet neglected point is carefully developed in Marom (2014: 1–13). Dilthey's oft-cited statement from the Schleiermacher biography that the "individual is ineffable" (Dilthey 1970: 1; 1996: 249) indicates the complexity of this relational whole rather than an unknowable substance.

11. I argue for the priority of practice and practical constitution, see Nelson (2008: 105–22). On Dilthey and pragmatism concerning the interconnection of knowledge and practical interests, see Habermas (1986).

12. Note again the analysis in Marom (2014: 1–13).

13. On Dilthey's indebtedness to the German expressivist transmission, see Forster (2010: 107–9) and Forster (2011: 195).

14. See Carnap (1998). For an historical analysis of Dilthey's significance for Carnap, and their different conceptions of *Aufbau*, see Nelson (2017).

15. See Dilthey (1957: 90–138) and Dilthey (2010: 8–57). Dilthey describes how the sense of self and world are reflexively interwoven: "The root of self-consciousness, self-feeling, is primitively co-given with consciousness of the world" (Dilthey 1997a: 171; 1989: 350).

16. On this point, compare Horowitz (1989: 28–29).

17. Concerning Dilthey's conception of world-picture and the conflict of world-views, in contrast to the idea of world in Husserl and Heidegger, see Nelson (2015: 378–89).

18. See Makkreel and Rodi, Introduction to Dilthey (1996: 12).

19. On Dilthey's interpretation of nature and relationship with naturalism, see Nelson (2013: 141–60).

20. See Dilthey (1957: 336), Dilthey (1996: 255), Dilthey (1966: 638), and Dilthey (1996: 77). On the distinction between cognition and knowledge in Dilthey, see Makkreel (2003, 149–64).

21. Dilthey describes this in the following terms: "die geschichtliche Einbildungskraft . . . die ganze geschichtliche Welt in ihrer Tatsächlichkeit zu umfassen" (Dilthey 1970b: 281).

22. Note the argument developed against the critique of Dilthey's ostensive aestheticism in Nelson (2007a: 121–42).

23. See Dilthey (1960b: 26–27). Concerning the exemplary character of aesthetics for the human sciences in Dilthey, compare the analysis in Makkreel (1986: 73–85).

24. On psychology as an interpretive human science, see Nelson (2010: 19–44) and Nelson (2014: 263–87).

25. "Zu dem Literarhistoriker tritt der Ästhetiker, und auch er macht seine Ansprüche auf diese Handschriften geltend. Er möchte die Natur der Einbildungskraft, ihre Formen, die Regeln des Schaffens und die Entwicklung der Technik erkennen. Das erfordert den intimsten Einblick in das Leben des Dichters: er muß bei ihm in seiner Werkstatt sitzen" (Dilthey 1970b: 6).

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Within and Beyond Productive Imagination

A Historical-Critical Inquiry into Phenomenology

Claudio Majolino

The main question of the present study will be the following: in what sense can be said that there is something like a *distinctively phenomenological turn* in the concept of "productive imagination" (henceforth, PI)? Or, differently put, what is—if any—the truly original contribution of phenomenology to the history of this concept?

I will begin with some historical remarks (§§2–3) as to show how PI finds its way into phenomenology—or, at least, into a certain kind of phenomenology that, for lack of a better word, I would label as "hermeneutical" (§§4–5).[1] I will then turn to Husserl, as to examine a somehow alternative view (§§6–7).

The Empirical Core

Christian Wolff's *Psychologia empirica* operates with the following set of definitions:

> The faculty to produce perceptions of absent sensible things is called *faculty of imaging* or *imagination*. . . . The faculty to produce, by division or composition of phantasms, the phantasm of a thing never perceived by the senses is called *faculty of feigning*. (Wolff 1732: 54, 97)

Wolff uses the notion of "production" to define *both* the "facultas imaginandi" and the "facultas fingendi." By contrast, the opposition between "production" and "reproduction" *stricto sensu* is meant to distinguish imagination and fiction, on the one hand, from memory on the other—defined as "the faculty to recognize the reproduced ideas (and, consequently, the things represented by them)" (Wolff 1732: 123). Thanks to memory, a "phantasm," *produced* by imagination, is *recognized as* the reproduction of a *previous* perception.

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Accordingly, it is only from the standpoint of memory that Wolff's faculty to "produce perceptions of *absent things*" (*res absentes*) can equally be defined, as in Baumgarten (Wolff 1779: 198), as the faculty to provide "perceptions of things that *were formerly present*" (*perceptiones rerum, quae olim praesentes fuerunt*).

Wolff's definitions thus set apart the notion of "productivity"—used to define imagination *and* fiction—from the strictly "reproductive" nature of memory in its different forms, be it "sensible" (where reproduced ideas are recognized only "confusedly") or "intellectual" (where reproduced ideas are recognized "distinctly") (Wolff 1734: 233). More specifically, in Wolff's account of the "powers of the soul," *only* imagination and fiction are explicitly defined as "productive."[2]

facultas percipiendi

pars inferior animae ⟵ *(facultas **producendi**)* ⟨ *facultas imaginandi* / *facultas fingendi*

facultas ideas reproductas recognoscendi
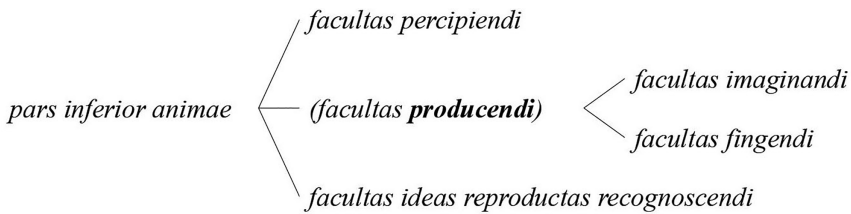
Figure 3.1 Productive faculties according to Wolff.

Now, since *pro-ducere* literally means "to bring forward," *imaginatio* is the power to "bring forward" a cluster of sensations without any external stimulus or bodily affection (Wolff 1732: 22–23). As for *fictio*, what it "brings forward" is a *divisio* without destruction and a *compositio* without construction. This explains why both faculties are equally "productive": "imagination" *produces* phantasms (i.e., ideas of sensible objects that are not actually caused by the affection of sense organs) (Wolff 1734: 55) and "fiction," quite literally, *performs experiments* on phantasms.

The experimental-productive faculty of feigning carries out compositions and divisions of phantasms in a way that is characterized by Wolff as "arbitrary" (*pro arbitrio*), that is, submitted to the sole law of association (Wolff 1732: 98). As a result, in arbitrarily making and unmaking phantasms, new ideas of sensible things are finally crafted. And it is precisely in this way that one can succeed in "feigning an entity never seen before" (98).

But there is more. When the arbitrary *divisio/compositio phantasmatum* is *totally* unrestricted and follows *only* the unpredictable rule of whatever comes to mind by association, what obtains is the phantasm of an *ens fictum*, something that "repels existence" (*existentia repugnant*) and only *appears to be* (although is not and cannot be) *an actual or a possible entity*. An *ens fictum*, combining phantasms of ontologically incompatible features, can only be

seen "at distance," as it were, and would literally "fall apart" once measured to the principles of ontology (Wolff 1732: 95–96). Mermaids and angels, for instance, are examples of "fictional entities," fashioned by the sole "force to invent" (*Kraft zu erdichten*). They are, as Wolff puts it, "empty imageries" (1720: 134–35). Yet the power of feigning can also bring forward "things never seen before" that nevertheless *could or could have* existed—provided that the law of association is *limited* by the principles of contradiction and sufficient reason (1720: 136; 1732: 103).

Now, *random fictions of impossible and "existence unfriendly" entities* and *well-ordered fictions of "existence-friendly" possible entities*, despite their different attitudes toward existence, have another common defining feature: they are both "brought forward" to appear as "one" (*unum*) (1732: 94). To put it in Baumgarten's terms, the only general "rule of fiction" (*facultas fingendi regula*) is to bring many phantasms—be it mutually compatible or incompatible, existence friendly or unfriendly—into "one total unity":

> Since a combination is a representation of many as one, and is thus actualized by the faculty of perceiving the identities of things, the faculty of feigning is actualized by the power of the soul to represent the universe. This is the rule of the faculty of feigning: *parts of phantasms are perceived as one total unity*. Hence the perceptions that have arisen are called FICTIONS (figments), and those which are false are called CHIMERAS, or empty phantasms. (Baumgarten 1779: 211–12)

The faculty of feigning rests entirely on and is actualized by the very power of the soul responsible for the "representation of the universe as a whole" (*facultas fingendi per vim animae repraesentativam, universi actuator*), that is, the power to "represent the many as one" (*repraesentatio plurum, ut unius*) (576).

In a nutshell, in Wolff's account (1) both imagination and fiction produce "perceptions" *in absentia* of sensible things; (2) as memory will retrospectively show, the unity of the phantasm brought forward by the power of *imagination* is secretly ruled by the unity of a previously perceived sensible thing, and therefore refers back to the latter's *actual* existence; (3) by contrast, the power of *fiction* brings forward an arbitrarily assembled multiplicity (of phantasms) whose unity *could* but *does not have to* comply with the constraints of any actually existing thing, nor with the general principles of ontology ruling over any *possible* being; (4) *if* this happens, and the centrifugal force of association is bound by the centripetal laws of ontology, we have fictions of "possible entities"; (5) if this doesn't happen and multiplicities appear as unities *despite the fact that they* "repel existence"—we have empty "chimaeras"; and (6) in both cases, a possible lion (never seen before) and an impossible chimaera (never to be seen), would nevertheless *appear as one*,

notwithstanding their radically different ontological status. This is the "only rule of fiction": *let the many be perceived as one beyond existence (factual, possible) and nonexistence*.

The Transcendental Turn

It will not be necessary to dwell into the incredible amount of details, tensions, and—be it apparent or substantial—inconsistencies of Kant's account of imagination.[3] As far as we are concerned, it suffices to remind what follows. If compared to Wolff's, Kant's famous definition of imagination, at least at first sight, does not seem to be particularly original:

> *Imagination* is the faculty for representing an object even *without its presence* in intuition. (Kant 1904: 151; 1917: 167)

Yet unlike Wolff's, such general definition (a) does not rest on the notion of "production," and (b) replaces the idea of "producing perceptions of sensible absent things" (*producendi perceptiones rerum sensibilium absentium*) with that of "intuiting even without the presence of the object" (*Vermögen der Anschauung auch ohne die Gegenwart des Gegenstandes*) (Kant 1904: 153).

One side effect of this apparently slight change is that Wolff's relatively sharp boundaries between imagination (productive) and memory (reproductive or, at least, reproduction-recognizing) seem now to be blurred. In fact, one way of intuiting something absent is precisely the intuition of what is absent *now* but *was* present in the past (Kant 1917: 182–85) (another is the intuition of what is absent *now* and *will* be present in the future; 185–89). As a result, if we take as a guiding clue Kant's set of *empirical* distinctions sketched in the *Anthropology* (§15, §28, §§34–35), we end up with the following alternative diagram:
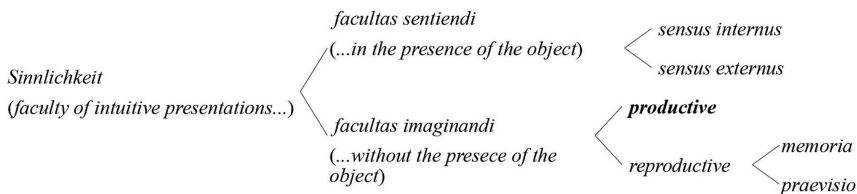
Figure 3.2 The place of productive imagination in Kant's *Anthropology*.

The difference between "reproduction" and "production" is now displaced *within* the broader concept of imagination itself, as to disentangle two distinctive forms of intuition without the presence of the object. And if we compare

diagram 1 and diagram 2, Wolff's *facultas producendi* clearly appears to be more general and includes the *facultas imaginandi*, while Kant presents the *facultas imaginandi* as the *genus* concept, of which the feature of being "productive" plays the role of the *differentia specifica*.

But how can the once generic concept of "production" now work as a *differentia*? Part of the answer can be found in another famous passage of the *Anthropology*:

> The power of imagination (*facultas imaginandi*), as a faculty of intuition without the presence of the object, is either *productive*, that is, a faculty of the original exhibition of the object (*exhibitio originaria*), which thus precedes experience; or *reproductive*, a faculty of the derivative exhibition of the object (*exhibitio derivativa*), which brings back to the mind an empirical intuition that it had previously. Pure intuitions of space and time belong to the productive faculty; all others presuppose empirical intuition, which, that, if they are combined with *concepts* of the object and so are empirical cognition, are called *experience*. (Kant 1917: 167)

"Productive imagination" is qua "imagination" (*genus*) the power to intuit something absent in general; qua "productive" (*differentia*), it is the power to intuit something radically absent, because nonempirical. Granted, *in some sense*, space and time are always "present" in the intuition of the objects as their transcendental conditions, but they are not present as objects of empirical intuition. This explains the change occurring in Wolff's definition, for intuitions of space and time cannot be suitably described as *perceptiones rerum sensibilium absentium*, since, although "absent" and related to sensibility, neither space nor time are "sensible things." PI is thus a "pure" intuition, that is, an intuition "in which there is nothing that belongs to sensation" (Kant 1904: 34; 1911: 20).

But there is more. If we put away the empirical standpoint of the *Anthropology* and turn to the first *Critique*, the difference between "productive" and "reproductive" imagination intersects with a second equally significant distinction, that is, that between an "empirical" and a "transcendental" *synthesis* of imagination. Despite the difficult issue of a "reproductive" and yet "transcendental" synthesis of imagination (Kant 1911: 102), Kant's texts constantly insist on the general opposition between "a reproductive imagination, which is then also merely empirical" (121) and an *a priori* "productive synthesis of the imagination" playing a transcendental role (117):

> Only the productive synthesis of the imagination can take place *a priori*; for the reproductive synthesis rests on conditions of experience. The principle of the necessary unity of the pure (productive) synthesis of the imagination prior to apperception is thus the ground of the possibility of all cognition, especially that of experience. (Kant 1911: 117)

> The imagination is therefore also a faculty of a synthesis *a priori*, on account of which we give it the name of productive imagination, and, insofar as its aim in regard to all the manifold of appearance is nothing further than the necessary unity in their synthesis, this can be called the transcendental function of the imagination. (Kant 1911: 123)

> Now insofar as the imagination is spontaneity, I also occasionally call it the *productive* imagination, and thereby distinguish it from *reproductive* imagination, whose synthesis is subject solely to empirical laws, namely those of association, and therefore contributes nothing to the explanation of the possibility of cognition *a priori,* and on that account belongs not in transcendental philosophy but in psychology. (Kant 1904: 152)

PI is therefore *a priori* and "spontaneous"; it "grounds" or "explains" the possibility of cognition *a priori*; it accounts for the necessary unity of the synthesis; it belongs not to psychology but *transcendental* philosophy—and nothing even remotely similar appears in Wolff's *empirical* account. As a result, PI is not simply different from and on a par with its "reproductive" counterpart, like two equal species of one common genus, it is *more original* and, quite literally, *more fundamental*. Whenever "reproductive" imagination is at work, following the empirical laws of association, PI has already performed its *transcendental* synthetic function.

In this sense, Kant's PI as discussed in the *Critique* is not empirical—it is *experience constitutive*; it does not "bring forward" any absent phantasm or fictional entity—it provides the necessary *synthesis of phenomena as such* (and eventually operates as the *a priori* principle of all knowledge) (Kant 1904: 103; Kant 1911, 78); it is not an inferior faculty of the soul distinguished and indirectly derived from perception—it operates already *within perception itself* (Kant 1911: 120n). Kant's *productive-transcendental and experience constitutive power of synthesis* and Wolff's *productive-empirical and arbitrarily experimental power of feigning entities never seen before, beyond existence and nonexistence*, are thus two very different and quite incomparable concepts.

By contrast, what can soundly be compared with Wolff's distinctions are some of Kant's empirical remarks in the *Anthropology*, where PI, understood as "belonging to sensibility according to its different forms" (Kant 1917: 174) is said to be "inventive" (*dichtend*):

> The power of imagination (in other words) is either *inventive* (productive) or merely *recollective* (reproductive). (167)

Before the actual realization of a material piece, the artist's imagination is engaged in the activity of "figuring" (*Bildung*), that is, producing sensibly filled spatial forms intuited *in absentia* (what Kant also calls *imaginatio*

plastica) (Kant 1911: 174). Such "inventive power," however, is governed by the unrestricted will of the artist (*durch Willkür regiert*) and does not occur "wildly" and "unwillingly" (*unwillkürlich*), as in a dream. Artistic invention is not random "fantasy" (*Phantasie*), Kant says, but "composition" and "fabrication" (*Composition, Erfindung*) and often follows the very rules of experience (175).

But when wilful PI literally goes wild and turns "vicious," its inventions can be either "unbridled" (*züghellos*) or "ruleless" (*regellos*):

> The former inventions could still find their place in a possible world (the world of fable); but ruleless inventions have no place in any world at all, because they are self-contradictory. (181)

In all these empirical cases PI can still be soundly described as the intuition of an absent object that is more radical than the mere absence of the past or the future—an object that, at least *somehow*, eschews experience. Chimaeras and space/time are both impossible to experience—but not for the same reason. If from a transcendental-constitutive and *a priori* viewpoint, pure PI exhibits something that is "absent" because *in principle* cannot be experienced at all (for it transcendentally grounds and makes experience possible); empirical-artistic invention exhibits something that is "absent" in quite a different sense—something that, just like in Wolff, *in fact* is not/has not been/will not or *could* not be *possibly* experienced. And this holds not only for the composition of imaginary figures that still resemble natural entities, but also for the free, arbitrary, and yet voluntary activity of figuring "images that cannot be found in experience" (Kant 1917: 175) or as in the case of "perverted" compositions of utterly impossible objects (181).
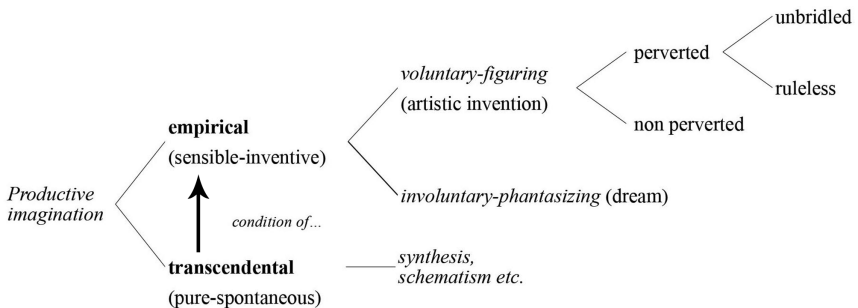
Figure 3.3   Empirical and transcendental productive imagination in Kant.

With respect to Wolff, Kant's position can thus be characterized according to the following fourfold shift: (1) The explicit *dislocation* of the reproductive/productive distinction from the external opposition between memory and

imagination to an internal split within imagination itself, (2) its *intersection* with the distinction empirical/transcendental, (3) the *asymmetry* between productive-transcendental and reproductive-empirical imagination, with the former being *fundamental* and *experience constitutive*, and (4) the *parallel* established between (*i*) the pure intuition of the radical and constitutive absence of something fundamental *that is not an entity*, and (*ii*) the empirical intuition of artistic invention figuring *an entity that is not* (actually or possibly).

The First Way to Phenomenology

It is my contention that this fourfold shift (dislocation, intersection, asymmetry, and parallel) is responsible for both the invention of a strict concept of PI (as distinguished from that of an arbitrary experimenting and inventive phantasy) *and* its impact on a certain strand of phenomenology.

The label "phenomenology" is often used in a quite broad sense. Applied to a very large spectrum of authors (as different as Ingarden, Derrida, Reinach, Trần Đức Thảo, etc.), it seems to refer more to a composite array of loosely related themes and concepts than to a homogeneous "movement" or "methodology." Given such a diversity, it would be safe to assume that not every actual or putative "phenomenologist" having talked, by near or by far, of PI had to be committed to Kant's putative fourfold shift. It could be soundly maintained, however, that by (1) overlapping Kant's fourfold shift with the idea of "ontological difference" and "ontological truth" and (2) understanding Being as the "phenomenon" in its most eminent sense (Heidegger 1927: 31/35), Heidegger has *paved the way* for a very particular "phenomenological approach" of PI.

In the *Kantbuch*, Heidegger reminds of Kant's famous definition of imagination as the power to intuit something that is not present. He then hastens to add that, "first of all" (*zunächst*) "intuition" means "empirical intuition of beings" (*des Seienden*), concluding that imagination *in general* can be suitably characterized by its "peculiar unboundedness to beings" (*Nichtgebundenheit an das Seiende*) (Heidegger 1929: 135/28). Kant's imagination thus appears as the only power of the soul capable to provide a "view" (*Anblick, Aussehen*) of something that—even in its less original forms—"does not show itself as a being" or as "actually on-hand" (128/135).

This holds, of course, "first of all," for the *empirical* noninventive (reproductive) imagination of a previously-but-no-longer-present object, but also, and more importantly, for the *empirical* inventive (productive) imagination "of a possible object, which under certain conditions may also be realizable, that is, capable of being made present" (130/137). But more than anything

else, Heidegger continues, this power to intuit something that is *absent*, *not on-hand*, and *not a being* also eminently holds for the "more original" (*ursprünglicher*) and "fundamental" account of pure imagination in the first *Critique*—an account in which, as we have seen, imagination is "pure," *a priori*, "transcendental," and does not form images of absent (real past, real future; possible) *beings*, but "makes possible the essence of transcendence" as such (Heidegger 1929: 134/141), that is, unfolds the constitutive absence from and within which any transcendent being is experienced and known.

> The imagination forms in advance, and before all experience of beings, the aspect of the horizon of objectivity as such. This formation of the view in the pure form of time not only precedes this or that experience of beings but is also prior to any such possible experience. In offering a pure view in this way, the imagination is in no case and in no wise dependent on the presence of a being. (131/139)

> The productive imagination with which anthropology is concerned has to do only with the formation of the views of objects considered as empirically possible or impossible. On the other hand, in the *Critique*, the pure productive imagination is never concerned with the imaginative formation of objects but with the pure view of objectivity in general. . . . Insofar as it forms transcendence, this imagination is rightly termed transcendental. In general, anthropology does not raise the question of transcendence. Nevertheless, the vain effort on the part of anthropology to interpret the imagination in a more original way shows that in the empirical interpretation of the faculties of the soul, which interpretation, by the way, can never be purely empirical, there is always a reference to transcendental structures. But these structures can neither be firmly established in anthropology nor derived from it through mere assumptions. But what is the nature of that mode of knowledge which effects the disclosure of transcendence (*Enthüllung der Transzendenz*), i.e., which reveals the pure synthesis and thereby completes the explication of the imagination? (132/140)

As we can see, Heidegger recasts Kant's "fourfold shift" within the broader framework of the question of Being and the openness of its horizon (Heidegger 1929: 127/134). The internal distinction reproductive/productive imagination is intersected with the asymmetric difference empirical/transcendental (127–32/133–41); and the "foundational" role of transcendentally pure "productive" and truly spontaneous imagination is reinterpreted as the "ground of the intrinsic possibility of the ontological synthesis," establishing the essential unity of transcendence as a whole, being the "root" of other faculties, and granting the preliminary openness of the horizon of objectivity previous to any experience of beings (134/141).

Obviously, since Being is not a being, it comes not as a surprise that imagination (presented from the outset as "unbounded to beings") shows a

certain solidarity with the main issue of ontology, that is, Being qua being—especially if it is suitably freed from any further ontic commitment and understood as "pure," "productive," and *truly* creative, that is, " 'creative' only on the ontological level and never on the ontic" (Heidegger 1929: 124/128).

As a result, understood in its derived, empirical, and "preliminary" sense—which includes artistic invention—productive imagination is simply the view of possible or impossible entities; despite its dedication to absence, it is still ontic. By contrast, taken in its original, transcendental, and fundamental sense, PI fulfills the ontological task of having transcendence "as a theme" and, ultimately, "disclosing transcendence" (*Enthüllung der Transzendenz*) (133/140).

Now, whereas ontic productive imagination is always false—in the strict cognitive sense of the "agreement to the object" (Heidegger 1929: 118/122; Kant 1904: 196; 1911: 157)—ontological productive imagination is always *true*. But it is "true" in the sense of an *ursprüngliche Wahrheit*:

> Ontological knowledge "figures" transcendence, and this figure is nothing other than the holding open of the horizon within which the Being of beings can be viewed in advance. Provided that truth means: the unconcealment of . . . then transcendence is original truth. But truth itself must be understood both as disclosure of Being and overtness of the entity. If ontological knowledge discloses the horizon, its truth lies in letting beings be encountered within this horizon. (Heidegger 1929: 123–24/128)

The λόγος of "productive imagination" is ontologically *true* beyond (and before) any ontic criteria of truth and falseness. It "reveals," "discloses," "uncovers," "opens," and "lets open" what Heidegger calls the "horizon" within which "the Being of beings can be viewed in advance." It is "true" in the strict "phenomenological" sense spelled out in *Sein und Zeit* §7: "it lets what is seen to be seen as something unconcealed" (Heidegger 1927: 29/33).

Thanks to this move, Heidegger literally invents the first "hermeneutical-phenomenological" concept of PI. More precisely, when (1) the radical (not relative) absence, originally (not derivatively) figured by pure transcendental (not empirical) power of imagination *meets* (2) the idea of an ontological (not ontic) truth, *a priori* (not *a posteriori*), revealing, disclosing, and uncovering (not being in agreement with) the horizon of Being (not beings)—"productive imagination" is finally ready to turn into a "phenomenological" concept.

And it counts as "phenomenological" for one simple reason. As Heidegger explicitly puts it, "phenomenology" does not actually deal with the "vulgar concept phenomenon" but with the "phenomenological concept of phenomenon." "Vulgar" (*vulgäre*) phenomena are simply encountered in the world; they "show themselves" initially and for the most part as worldly beings. By

contrast, a "phenomenological" phenomenon is "something that is *concealed* (*verborgen*), in contrast to what initially and for the most part does show itself" (Heidegger 1927: 31/35).

Interestingly enough, *Sein und Zeit* illustrates the two concepts of "phenomenon" by means of Kantian examples:

> If by the self-showing we understand those beings that are accessible, for example *in* Kant's sense of empirical intuition, the formal concept of phenomenon can be used legitimately. In this usage phenomenon has the meaning of the *vulgar* concept of phenomenon. But this vulgar one is not the phenomenological concept of phenomenon. In the horizon of the Kantian problem what is understood phenomenologically by the term phenomenon (disregarding other differences) can be illustrated when we say that what already shows itself in appearances prior to and always accompanying what we vulgarly understand as phenomena, though unthematically can be brought thematically to self-showing. What thus shows itself in itself ("the forms of intuition") are the phenomena of phenomenology. For, clearly, space and time must be able to show themselves in this way. They must be able to become phenomena. (Heidegger 1927: 28/31)

For Heidegger, pure intuitions of space and time—that, as we have shown, Kant relates to PI—are clear examples *of phenomenological phenomena*, for they show themselves as initially concealed and "essentially belong to what initially and for the most part shows itself in such a way that it constitutes its meaning and ground" (Heidegger 1927: 31/35). By contrast, Kant's objects of empirical intuition, showing themselves from the outset, are examples of "vulgar" phenomena. The bond between PI and "phenomenology" is finally tied: *what is originally exhibited by the former is precisely the theme of the latter, that is, a "phenomenological phenomenon."*

All painstaking empirical-psychological distinctions established by Wolff or Baumgarten, still operating in the background of Kant's *Anthropology*, are now plainly and simply out of the "phenomenological" picture. No further diagrams, articulating faculties, or powers of the soul will be found in any phenomenological treatment of productive imagination. Recast and rephrased as "empirical," "ontic," or "derived"—bound to a concept of truth as agreement with the object—any attempt to articulate what shows itself as mundane, only refer to "vulgar phenomena." And, taken in this sense, even inventive imagination, no matter if productive, turns out to be *merely* a matter of empirical psychology or anthropology—not philosophy.

On the other hand, absorbed by the centripetal force of a phenomenology whose sole task is to account for "phenomenological phenomena" and ultimately to the "phenomenological phenomenon" *par excellence*, that is, Being; assigned to an original concept of truth as "unconcealment"; taken in its "pure" and "original" sense—imagination can now play a deep ontological

role. As soon as (1) Kant's objects of pure intuition, space, and time (2) are interpreted from the standpoint of the question of Being, and (3) Being is phenomenologically recast as *the* "phenomenological phenomenon," showing itself qua concealed in a "distinctive" and "exceptional" sense (*in einem ausgezeichneten, ausnehmende Sinne*), then (4) PI—intended as the power to exhibit and reveal something that is not a being (not a mundane entity, not an empirical object of intuition, not something present in any sense and hence nothing that shows itself as a vulgar phenomenon) but *a radical absence constitutive of but irreducible to beings*—can finally turn into a core concept of phenomenology.

Following the Lead

If we are not mistaken, *any variation on Heidegger's original theme*—bringing together Kant's fourfold shift with the ontological difference and endowing transcendental imagination with the power to be "originally" true in a nonontic sense, "revealing" or "disclosing" a radical unprecedented and yet constitutive and pervasive lack of presence—*should count as a variety of a distinctively "hermeneutical-phenomenological" account of PI.*

Both an example and an original development of Heidegger's "phenomenological" transformation of PI can be found in Paul Ricœur's studies on imagination.[4]

Ricœur's studies deserve to be mentioned for at least three reasons. (1) They entirely revolve around the distinction reproductive/productive imagination; (2) by confronting the history of Western philosophy as a whole, they show with great precision what happens to such a distinction once seen from a phenomenological angle; and (3) they tackle the difference productive/reproductive imagination not as a mere distinction between two faculties, but as a way to "problematize" and "make teeter" (*problematiser, faire vaciller*) our understanding of words such as "reality, world, and truth" (Ricœur 1975: 279/261, 288/270).

According to Ricœur, the traditional philosophical understanding of imagination has mainly been focused on "reproductive" imagination. From Plato to Wittgenstein, Western philosophy is held captive of the treacherous "original/copy paradigm," that is, the assumption according to which imagination is essentially the present reproduction of something that is absent (Ricœur 1973–1974: 3–6).

Intended in this rather broad sense, any "reproductive" account of imagination follows the same path: (1) it starts with the idea of an original presence (the model) turned into an absence; (2) such an original missing presence is illustrated or replicated by the debased and yet actual presence of something

that resembles, more or less faithfully, to the original (the copy); and (3) the absent original turned into a model—and whose originality is both presupposed and lost, referred to and deflected, represented and distorted—is therefore the only way to measure the truth of imagination (for it is the model that is always presented-as-absent by the analogical surrogate of the image).

On the basis of this general set of assumptions, imagination is traditionally described as (1) the power to "represent" or reconvey *in absentia* something like an original presence; (2) qua psychological faculty, it is something "intermediary," for its truth claims have to be assessed with respect to the truth claims of cognitively stronger powers correlated to the original presence itself (like perception or understanding); and (3) it is a "deceptive" power, for it gives the impression to be in front of something that "seems" to be present but is not. As a result, an "image" can only be *true* insofar as it accurately "reproduces"—resembles, is in agreement with, corresponds to, and so forth—the (absent) original; and yet the more it is "true," the more it is "deceptive." Needless to say, according to this general paradigm, a "fiction" is nothing but a "false image."

> Thus, measured against the ideal of truth-adequacy, imagination structurally lacks of truth. (Ricœur 1973–1974: 3)

> The backlash on the phenomenology of image . . . is the following: within the spectrum of contradictory descriptive features, it is the function of deception and illusion that is privileged. Imagination is essentially a misleading power. (4)

Now, this overall quite dismissive appraisal of imagination (reproductive, derived, ancillary, illusory, etc.) is not something fortuitous. According to Ricœur, this traditional view has deep ontological reasons, for it entirely rests on the secret commitment of the Western philosophical tradition to a "metaphysics of the full presence."

> At the end of the day, it is a philosophy of the fullness of Being that rules out any originary character to something that is a function of absence. (4)

PI, on the other hand—intended as the driving force acting behind the production of metaphors in general and political, scientific, or poetical fictions in particular (Ricœur 1973–1974: 4; 1975, 1981)—is not "duplicative" but "creative." Understood within the iconic paradigm of the metaphysics of presence, its fictional outcomes are necessarily false and deceptive. Consequently, in order to restore the very idea of a "true" fiction, one has to take the concept of "truth" in an entirely new and different sense—a sense that has nothing to do with adequacy, correspondence, or agreement.

It is noteworthy to remind that, at this point, Ricœur emphatically presents Kant as having literally inaugurated a new era, rejecting altogether "the *onto-logical* primacy of presence, the *epistemic* primacy of perception, the *phe-nomenological* primacy of representation, and the *critical* primacy of illusion" (Ricœur 1973–1974: 9). Kant, Ricœur says, made "pure" imagination qua orig-inal production prior to imagination as a derivative form of reproduction (10) and focused on the transcendental power to synthesize and schematize (9–10).

Now, how is Ricœur's distinctive reading of PI related to Heidegger? Certainly not in the sense that he is "inspired" by, repeats, or refers to Heidegger's particular way of interpreting Kant in the *Kantbuch*. It rather depends, more fundamentally, on the characteristic and unique gesture of assigning to PI a form of "ontological truth" (as opposed to a merely "ontic truth" qua agreement with the facts).

This more substantial point of agreement is especially noticeable in Ricœur's critical assessment of the limits of Kant's otherwise momentous "breakthrough" (6, 24–30). In Ricœur's view, Kant's PI is in fact still phe-nomenologically inadequate because of its *lack of truth*. It has no "mundane or cosmic dimension" (13); it does not "disclose any new dimension of the real" (11). As a result,

> it prevents the possibility of endowing imagination with some revealing power (*pouvoir révélant*) with respect to some experience of the world. Imagination does not "reveal" anything (*ne 'révèle' rien*). (11)

The real issue lurking behind Ricœur's phenomenological-hermeneutical appraisal of PI—as stated also in *The Rule of Metaphor*—is that of "the truth of the imaginary," its "ontological power" (Ricœur 1975: 61/48). Once freed from the constraints (ontological, epistemological, psychological, and criti-cal) of the metaphysics of the full presence, PI finally appears *not* as the mere *ontic-factual* power to fabricate from scratch some (false) images of the actual state of the world, but as the *ontological-fundamental* power to "reveal" or "unconceal" something "true" of the world—something that is structurally and vitally concealed. PI shows itself as the power in which "creation and revelation coincide" (*créer et révéler coincident*) (Ricœur 1975: 310/291).

The original move of Ricœur with respect to Heidegger's *Kantbuch* is to endow the "inventive" aspect of what Kant considered as empirical PI, with the ontological power to "project and reveal a world" proper to transcendental PI (120/108). And it is precisely in this sense—that is, insofar as it has the "revealing" power to "liberate an ontological potency, the power to say Being" (Ricœur 1973–1974: 72)—that productive imagination in general and poetical fictions in particular can finally be said to be "true"—true in a more original, ontological—not derived, ontic—sense (Ricœur 1983).

"Fictions" are certainly *ontically* false, for no actual entity or state of the world (past, present, or future) is the "original" of which they are "copies" or "reproductions"; and yet, they can be *ontologically* true. By suspending the ontic reference to the actual world, they gain the power to "open new dimensions" (Ricœur 1973–1974: 7–8) and "unconceal (*désocculation*) that layer of reality that phenomenology calls pre-objective and that, according to Heidegger, constitutes the horizon of all our manners to inhabit the world" (Ricœur 1981: 10). And, as Ricœur openly admits,

> The Heideggerian tone of these remarks is undeniable; the opposition between truth-as-manifestation and truth-as-agreement, familiar to us since the exposition in *Sein und Zeit*, is easily recognized here. (Ricœur 1975: 388/430)

> We reach, although from a different path, the Kantian concept of *Darstellung*, i.e., the power of imagination to "present" the ideas of reason. Yet there is an immense difference: what are so "presented" are not ideas but manners of being-in-the-world. Shouldn't imagination be that by means of which I "figure," "schematize," "present" manners to inhabit the world? It is in such a way that it "gives more" (Kant) to conceive; for there would be more in the being-in-the-world and its existential virtualities, in its potencies to inhabit, than in our discourses. (Ricœur 1973–1974: 8)

> If there is something in Heidegger gesturing toward this, it is the affinity between the *Ereignis* of the *logos* and the *Ereignis* of the *physis*. The discourse happens (*advient*) and says what it undiscloses. (72)

Ricœur's example neatly illustrates—with great originality indeed—the first "hermeneutical" way in which PI turns into a full-fledged phenomenological concept. (1) The schematizing power of pure transcendental productive imagination to "present" the ideas of reason is now recast in terms of modes of being-in-the-world; (2) it is paralleled with artistic invention, suitably reformulated in nonsubjective terms as the creative force of poetical fiction (rooted in the *logos*, not in the soul or in the human psyche); and (3) it is also subordinated to the distinction between ontic (adequacy, agreement, etc.) and ontological truth (unconcealment, revelation). Accordingly, PI now appears to be the power to bring forward (4) something original, unprecedented, and "experience constitutive" (now "manner of being-in-the-world unfolding"); (5) it is still more fundamental ("ontological") than mere reproductive (now "ontic" or "onto-theological") imagination; and (6) it still plays a somehow transcendental role (although, again, such a role is now no longer understood as subjective but *logos*-related). (7) Finally, all these "transcendental" features are ascribed by Ricœur to the once merely "empirical" inventive-poetical variety of PI, that is, to the artistic power to freely shape and reshape

something given in manifold alternative ways, despite any actual or possible "ontic" constraint. (8) However, what is now shaped and reshaped is not a complex phantasm, an object, or an entity, but "reality" as a whole, the "world" as it actually is, our actual "manner-of-being in the world." And such a form of making and unmaking is, again, (9) assigned to the ontological-original concept of truth.

Although expressed with different jargons and elaborated in different frameworks, Cassirer's theory of "symbolic forms" or Nelson Goodman's idea of "world making" certainly shows some striking similarities with Ricœur's account of PI. Yet what singles out Ricœur's "phenomenological" treatment from its nonphenomenological siblings is precisely its reliance on Heidegger's idea of "phenomenology," built on the contrast between Being as retreat and Truth as disclosure *versus* Being as presence and Truth as adequacy. For the crucial point, made explicit by Ricœur, *is the phenomenological connection between imagination and truth*.

If truth is understood as adequacy, according to the original/copy model, then only certain cases of reproductive imagination can be said to be true, namely those in which the image actually resembles that to which it is supposed to resemble (true but misleading). Correlatively, PI, presenting something that is itself "original" (and not something pointing at an "original" of which it is the image), is never true (although still misleading). It can be inspiring, thought-provoking, and even heuristically useful—but not true.

By contrast, if one leaves truth as adequacy behind and understands it in a more "original" way, as Heidegger suggested, that is, as "ἀλήθεια," "disclosure," and so forth, the whole picture appears to be completely reversed. "Productive imagination" now (1) has something to do with truth (and is no longer considered as essentially false); (2) its relation to truth is even more fundamental than truth in the sense of *adæquatio*; and (3) its power is no longer limited to the "psychological" (individual or collective) instigation or establishment of feelings, opinions, and so forth, but is now extended to the "hermeneutical" reshaping of reality as such. It is not just, as Goodman would have said, a "way of world making" but a way to have "the truth of Being" revealed.

If this is correct, Ricœur's endorsement of the traditional talk opposing "productive" and "reproductive" imagination is not even binding, for it could suitably be replaced by the language of the ontological difference: a difference between an *ontological imagination* (Being-revealing, transcendentally world-shaping), as it were, and an *ontic imagination* (entity-referring and world-picturing). And despite a whole host of undeniable similarities, both local and global, one cannot find anything not even remotely similar in either Cassirer or Goodman.

The Second Way to Phenomenology

If we now turn to Husserl, the picture of PI appears as entirely different—and not only because we find no trace of any distinction between "ontic" and "ontological" truth.

To begin with, it has to be reminded that Husserl's texts use the language of "productivity" in connection with "imagination" in two remarkably different contexts.

The first context is explicitly dubbed as "psychological" and singles out one of the many ways in which the word "phantasy" is usually employed in ordinary language (Husserl 1980: 1–7/1–5). What "psychology" calls "productive phantasy" (*produktive Phantasie*) is, in fact, a concept "coming from the ordinary life"—a concept of which phenomenology has to provide a careful descriptive account and eidetic clarification (1/1). Properly described, what is ordinarily called "productive phantasy" is more suitably dubbed as "arbitrarily formative phantasy" (*willkürlich gestaltende Phantasie*) (3/3).

The second context is even more explicitly called "transcendental" and openly refers to Kant (Husserl 1966: 275–76/410, 392/486). In this specific sense, "productive imagination" (*produktive Einbildungskraft*) is *not* an "ordinary" concept to be descriptively clarified. It is a full-fledged technical-philosophical concept, to be discussed and questioned as for its phenomenological soundness. And once recast in strictly phenomenological terms, Kant's "profound, but obscure doctrine of the synthesis of productive imagination," Husserl claims, disappears and turns out to be "nothing other than what we call passive constitution" (275/410).

Thus, Husserl separates the treatment of the *empirical-psychological* phenomenon of the "arbitrarily formative phantasy" from the *transcendental* problem of the synthesis—the latter being more general and fundamental than the former. And one might have noticed that he also terminologically disconnects what is *ordinarily* called "productive *phantasy*" (*Phantasie*) from what Kant *specifically* calls "productive *imagination"* (*Einbildungskraft*), as to distinguish two quite different issues that should not be conflated. Husserl thus already separates what Kant's fourfold shift brought under one common heading.

More precisely, within Husserl's account, Kant's pure PI (with its remarkable power to synthesize the manifold, determine the form of sensibility *a priori* in accordance with the unity of apperception, schematize the categories, etc.) has literally *nothing to do* with what is ordinarily called "productive phantasy." The latter is a structurally "vague" first-order concept, coming from ordinary life, and used to refer to some specific lived experiences; the

former is a second-order "technical" concept, elaborated within a theoretical-philosophical framework as to indicate the "universal theme, which is alluded to under the obscure Kantian rubric of 'synthesis'" (Husserl 1966: 392/486). Thus, *productive imagination* as the "imaging force" to synthesize *a priori* (Kant 1904: 103; 1911: 78) and *productive phantasy* as the ordinary name for a particular "formative" kind of lived experience, as the one exemplified—paradigmatically, although not exclusively—in artistic experience, have to be sharply separated.

This separation, however, is not meant to reintroduce the distinction between *transcendental* and *empirical* imagination. For, as already pointed out, in Husserl's view, the transcendental function of synthesis is *not* a matter of "imagination" at all. The role Kant ascribed to the synthesis of "imagination" has in fact to be played by the concept of "passive constitution":

> Kant was not in the position to recognize the essence of passive production as intentional constitution. (Husserl 1966: 276/410)

Accordingly, "passive association" has now an increasingly important and constitutive role than PI itself. Taken in its broadest sense, association is "one of the most important of all and completely universal functioning shapes of passive genesis" (76/119), "a primordial phenomenon and form of order within passive synthesis" (117/162), and the most general form of "universal unification of the life of an ego" (405/505). All experience and knowledge, as such, ultimately rest on the constitutive passive synthesis of association—not on the purely spontaneous and *a priori* activity of pure transcendental PI.

Interestingly enough, Husserl does not see this dismissal of transcendental PI as a departure from Kant. Unfortunately, we will not be able to address this issue in detail here. Suffices to remind however that, by explicitly praising Kant's "brilliant doctrine of the transcendental necessity of association" (118–19/163–64), Husserl considers passive association—not PI—as the power to operate the most fundamental "transcendental synthesis (. . .) necessary for the genesis of a subjectivity" (123/171).

This brings us back to the first "psychological" context. What does Husserl mean by "productive *phantasy*" (henceforth: PPh)?

As all "ordinary terms," the word "phantasy" is according to Husserl "vague and ambiguous" (Husserl 1980: 1/1) and harbors several meanings that should be disentangled. One of these meanings is the following:

> At least, a *narrower* and, to be sure, very common concept of phantasy, which psychology has taken up under the title of *productive phantasy*, stands in close relation to this sphere. Productive phantasy is arbitrarily formative phantasy; it is precisely phantasy in this sense that the artist particularly has to use.

However, one must distinguish two further concepts here, one wider and one narrower, depending on whether or not one understands the arbitrariness of the forming (*Willkürlichkeit des Gestaltens*) in the sense of free *poetically inventing* (feigning) (*freien* Erdichtens (*Fingierens*)). Certainly the historian also uses productive phantasy, phantasy that gives form arbitrarily. But he does not invent. By means of form-giving phantasy on the basis of secured data, he seeks to outline an overall intuition of personalities, destinies, eras—an intuition of actual realities, not of imaginations. (Husserl 1980: 3/3)

Although Husserl will not follow this narrow-use equating phantasy as such with productive phantasy, the core intuition of the "popular concept" (*populäre Begriff*) expressed by this narrow "ordinary talk" (*gewöhnliche Rede*) appears to be correct. What phenomenology has to do is suitably describe the eidetic features of this specific form of "phantasy consciousness" that is both "formative" (*gestaltend*) and "arbitrary" (*willkürlich*).

Just as any other form of phantasy consciousness, PPh is an objectifying act whose object is intuitively "brought to appearance" as "hovering in front of us" (*vorschwebend*) in a nonperceptual or quasi-perceptual way and a positionally neutralized mode. What is distinctive, however, is that its correlate has the two following additional features:

(1) It appears not just as a complex object but as a "configuration" or a "unitary formation" (*Gestaltung, einheitliche Gestaltung*) (Husserl 1980: 547/660). The notion of *Gestaltung* employed here by Husserl has two noticeable traits. On the one hand, *Gestalt* indicates a structured unity whose constitutive multiplicity is apprehended as *variable*, but whose mutual relations are somehow maintained; on the other, the suffix *-ung* indicates that the unity obtained is the result of a process, by means of which what was not factually or necessarily connected now happens to appear as brought together. Hence a "phantasy formation" (*Phantasiegestaltung*) is nothing but the *appearing provisional configuration of a necessarily varying intuitive manifold*.

(2) The configuration brought to appearance is also "arbitrary" (*willkürliche Gestaltung, willkürliche Sinngestaltung*) (547–48/660–61). The relations bringing together the various and varying elements of the manifold in a contingent unity are in fact not *necessarily* determined by any constraints, be it ontological or experiential (258/314). In perception, for instance, one should expect that the temporal intentions are restricted by some *a priori necessities* so as to unfold the appearance of one and the same actual object—in PPh, they don't. A "phantasy enduring unity" qua arbitrary formation has exactly the features it displays, as many features it displays, and for as long as it displays them (283/342).

Now, traits (1) and (2), defining PPh, are indifferent with respect to the well-known drastic changes undergone by Husserl's overall treatment of "phantasy presentations." Whether phantasy is thought as an image consciousness without physical basis (as in Husserl's early account) or as a quasi-perception (as in Husserl's mature account), its "productivity" is always and consistently understood by means of the concepts of "formation/ configuration of sense" and "arbitrariness."

One should further observe that all these traits manifestly reenact the *empirical* features of Wolff's account of "fictions" and Kant's account of "invention" (their being "compositions/decompositions," arranged "pro arbitrio," appearing as unities, not bound to the factual/possible constraints of ontology, unconcerned by the principles of contradiction and sufficient reason, etc.). "Reenact" and not simply "repeat"—for Husserl removes such features from their "empirical-psychological" context and recasts them within the general framework of a phenomenological-eidetic inquiry. Thus, by adding the adjective "productive" to the word "phantasy," the ordinary language of psychology signals what in phenomenological terms should rather be described as an *eidetic change in the rules of appearance in general*: what is "hovering in front of us" in a neutralized way and so forth are manifold appearances that shouldn't have been together, do not have to be together, and will eventually fall apart—and yet, nevertheless appear as one, mutually related in one intuition, for no reason except the fact that they appear so. Not unlike Baumgarten, Husserl's "rule of PPh" is nothing but the *a priori* rule of appearance as such.

Now, although Husserl's own technical terminology is far from being fixed on this specific point, some texts as the one just quoted clearly draw a line between "arbitrary" (*willkürlich*) and "free" (*frei*) "formative phantasy." Moreover, while Husserl often affirms that, "phenomenologically" speaking, all correlates or "primary objects" of phantasy have to be dubbed as "figments" (*Fikta*) (Husserl 1980: 67–68/72–73), he also recognizes the legitimacy of "ordinarily" distinguishing between a fictional and a nonfictional form of "productive phantasy." In fact, as we have seen, he explicitly points out that, according to the "popular concept," the historian brings to intuitive appearance "arbitrary formations" no less than the artist—and yet only the latter is somehow "free"—and produces "fictions."

The historian does not merely "recollect" the past, he or she "reconstructs" it. "Understanding" history is not a matter of memory but of *bound* PPh (Husserl 1959: 234). Accordingly, what binds the PPh of the historian is precisely the will to understand the reality of the past so that all arbitrary variations of the "formation" occur within such a restricted scope. The historian (a) operates within the "theoretical attitude," is bound to "truth" and "being," and looks for a "cognitive" intuition; (b) tries to draw an "overall *coherent* view" (*zusammenhängende Anschauung*) the overall view is meant to present facts

(c) appearing as they actually are (or were); and it does so (d) out of *secured data* (Husserl 1959: 101, 279–82). Its "theme" is *the actual world as it was*, and phantasy formations are means by which such theme is brought to intuitive appearance. Husserl (280) calls them "historical pictures" (*gechichtliche Gebilde*).

Historical pictures are arbitrarily but not entirely free "formed," for they have to be *not in contrast but in harmony with everything else we know or might eventually know about the actual world*. If a "phantasy object" in general is literally impossible as a "unity of coexistence" with what is present (Husserl 1980: 68/73), "historical pictures" represent the paradoxical case of a "phantasy object" that is nowhere to be found in the actual world and nevertheless has to "match" with our factual knowledge of the actual world; it is something that *is* not *in* the actual past and nevertheless *makes sense of* the actual past. Differently put, a "historical picture" is a full-fledged cognitive arrangement based on productive phantasy in order to provide a "fitting" and therefore "overall coherent" intuition of (past) actual realities (3/3).

Thus, if all objects of phantasy should be called "figments," then the *bound* arbitrary phantasy formations called "historical pictures" are nothing but "centripetal figments" or "harmonizing figments," that is, "figments" that, despite their conflicting status with the actual state of the world (present-past), aim at providing an overall "unity of concordance" (*Einheit der Einstimmung*) with it.

They are contrasted with the "centrifugal figments" brought to appearance by the artist. "Fictional figments," as it were, escalate the "unity of conflict" (*Einheit der Widerstreit*) characterizing every figment as such. The artist's "*free* arbitrary formations," have in fact a different structure: (a) they occur within the "esthetical attitude" (Husserl 1959: 101)—an attitude that is affective and not cognitive, refers not to "being" but "values," and looks for an "axiological intuition" (*axiologische Anschauung*) (Husserl 1952: 9/10); (b) they try to draw a "non-overall-coherent-view" of something (c) that is *just as it appears*, (d) out of *anything whatsoever* (*beliebig*).

Thus "feigning," intended in this narrow sense as "poetic invention" (*erdichten*), is a form of arbitrary formation that is "free" at least in three very different senses.

First, it is "free" with respect to *truth and knowledge*. Not because poetical fictions are structurally false, but because free arbitrary formations—as all objects of axiological constitution and esthetical attitude—have to be "felt" (not known, not assumed to be, etc.) as holding together. Such a feeling (*Gefühl*) is not a merely subjective psychological event. It is rather a constitutive-intentional performance. It is, quite literally, a way to "make sense" of what is brought to appearance by bringing it to appearance. What unites the

various and varying bits and pieces of the arbitrary formation is nothing but *the feeling of their unity*. Despite its constitutive variations and contingent configuration, the arbitrarily formed manifold now appears as "one" only because it is *felt as "one"* (not because it is actually known to be, could be, or might be or has been "one").

Hence, asking for the "truth" or the "cognitive content" of poetic fictions is tantamount as missing or downplaying the intentional role of the "affective synthesis" (*Gefühlssynthesis*) (Husserl 1980: 461/550) responsible for the constitution of free phantasy "poetic" formations. Poetical fictions are *free* from any cognitive constraint and commitment to truth, and nevertheless they are not *unrelated* with the latter. They are neither "false" because their appearance does not cognitively "fit" with our knowledge of the actual world (as in the case of the historical pictures), nor "true" in any ontological-original or transcendental sense. They are simply beyond truth and falsity. They do "fit" with our knowledge of the actual world—but affectively, not cognitively; they hold together—thanks to the sole feeling of their togetherness, the same feeling involved in the mundane constitution of values.

Free artistic PPh is thus better described as intuitive-affective: it does not intentionally and intuitively exhibit what is *known to be* (or could be, or might be, or has been, etc.), but what *is affectively valuable*. It is, as Husserl puts it, a *Wertnehmen* (Husserl 1952, 8/10). The very same feelings constantly and intersubjectively constituting the value of mundane objects, experiences, and so forth, are now mobilized to bring together an arbitrary formation despite its unstable "hovering," its unpredictable contingency and variability, and its manifest conflict with these very same mundane objects, experiences, and so forth.

Second, it is "free" with respect to *Being*, for what is affectively valuable in poetical fictions is their simple *Appearance* (*Erscheinen*).

Again, free arbitrary formations do not need to "fit" with what is real or possibly real, for they appear precisely as being in conflict with the former and sometimes, as even with the latter. On the contrary, as every other correlates of phantasy consciousness, free arbitrary formations are also characterized by multiple forms of "conflict" (Husserl 1980: 152–53/180). But poetical fictions do more than this. And they are not to be conflated with the "mere playful" (*rein spielerisch*) activity of daydreaming either. Although in some sense, "free," "random," and "freely arising," phantasies or "absolutely free phantasies" are not PPh in the inventive-poetic sense (6/6, 236/288). For only in the latter case, freedom with respect to truth and Being is supplemented by the *affective value of appearance*. This is precisely the reason why, as Husserl puts it, "the phantasy attitude itself belongs to the esthetic" (514/615).

If we contrast this view to Ricœur's, PPh does not refer to the world in a biased or metaphorical way, breaking the reference to actual beings as to

reveal the overflowing retreat of Being. It rather exhibits, in a nonbiased and straightforward way, the *affective consistency of Appearance*.

Third and finally, poetical fictions are "free" with respect to the *World* as well. And I would like to conclude on this point.

On Destructive Imagination and Its Virtues

In the section devoted to Ricœur, we have asked the following question: what does PI actually *produce*, once understood phenomenologically? Not phantasms, noncausally induced perceptions to be further decomposed and recomposed, and not even synthesis, schemes, or symbols. PI "produces a world of its own which enlarges our world"; it "creates nonexistent worlds" whose broken reference to the actual existing world "discloses new dimensions of being" (quoted in Geniusas 2016: 114).

Thus, according to Ricœur, the talk of "producing" a nonexisting world "enlarging our world" ultimately boils down to the idea that delivering alternative "descriptions"—or even better: "versions"—of the factual world may transform the way in which we refer to, perceive, and feel about the factual world itself and could therefore modify the way we experience, desire, act, and so forth, within the latter. Thus, "producing" a different nonexisting world means transcending the actually existing one and revealing its ontological ground (*Grund*), that is, its "un-grounded" (*Ab-gründige*) contingency and inner possibilities. In sum, once bound to the ontological difference, *what PI can certainly do* is transcend actual entities and facts as to reveal their ontological contingency by producing alternative "fictional" worlds—both different and similar to the factual world in which actual entities and existing facts are located.

Now, Ricœur's PI can certainly put the actual world at some distance and even perform a kind of critical *epochê*—but what it is *not* supposed to do is to sever the bond *with the world as such*. It is meant to reveal the contingency of this actual state of the world here and now, by suspending its position of existence, but it should not and cannot make known the *contingency of the world itself qua world*. In sum, Ricœur's PI (and more generally, any phenomenological-hermeneutical account of productive imagination) can transcend entities, reveal Being, have original truth claims, constitute reality, enlarge the *factual* world, and so forth, but should *not* destitute the primacy of the world as such; it can transgress the boundaries of the world as it actually is; invent in-existing persons, things, situations, and events; but *not* transgress the world itself. Having an ontologically "unveiling" role and not a merely ontic "referential" task, hermeneutically conceived PI can be at best "other-worldly"—as Goodman would have put it—but never "unworldly."

The concept of "Unworld" (*Unwelt*), I have just alluded to, is in fact Husserlian. As we can read in *Ideas I*, §47,

> the actual world—he says—is only one special case among a multitude of possible worlds and non-worlds, which, for their part, are nothing else but the correlates of *essentially possible variants of the idea "an experiencing consciousness,"* with more or less orderly concatenations of experience. (Husserl 1977: 88/105)

The claim is quite unusual: the actual world is only a special case of a multitude of worlds (so far, so good)—and *nonworlds*! What is a "nonworld" then?[5]

As Husserl puts it, taken within the natural attitude, the "actual world"—the only one we are constantly aware of—might look like this:

> I am conscious of a world endlessly spread out in space, endlessly becoming and having endlessly become in time. I am conscious of it: that signifies, above all, that intuitively I find it immediately, that I experience it. By my seeing, touching, hearing, and so forth, and in the different modes of sense-perception. . . . Animate beings too—human beings, let us say—are immediately there for me: I look up, I see them; I hear their approach; I grasp their hands. . . . They are also present as actualities in my field of intuition even when I do not heed them. But it is not necessary that they, and likewise that other objects, be found directly in my *field of perception*. Along with the ones now perceived, other actual objects are there for me as determinate, as more or less well known, without being themselves perceived or, indeed, present in any other mode of intuition. . . . Moreover this world is there for me not only as an object of mere things, but also with the same immediacy as a *world of objects with values, a world of goals, a practical world*. (48–50/52–53)

Now, whatever is presented, pictured, and referred to as something *like this*— something being or pretending to be the inexhaustible correlate of mutually related and "complex systems of harmonizing synthesis" of intersubjectively granted "perceptions" and "evaluations," transcending my own experience as well as the experience of any empirical concrete subjects, and yet fitting together—deserves to be posited or quasi-posited as "worldly."

More precisely, the appearance of an actual world rests *at least* on what might be called the "six synthesis of experience," variously spelled out in Husserl's corpus, starting from *Thing and space* (Husserl 1973): (1) the synthesis of *fulfillment*, thanks to which pro-tensional adumbrations are filled by novel impressions (the perceptual object unfolds itself temporally); (2) the synthesis of *concordance*, thanks to which adumbrations hold together in the unity of *one* object, unfolding itself temporally; (3) the synthesis of *identification*, thanks to which the object is experienced as the *same*, only variously perceived; (4) the *synthesis between perceptions*, thanks to which one can

perceive one object, then another object, previously pregiven in its external horizon, than move back to the previous one in one single *coherent and temporally self-displaying experience*; (5) the *synthesis of memory*, thanks to which *what is actually experienced can be recollected* as having been actually experienced; and (6) the *synthesis of imagination*, where what is factually experienced can be counterfactually conceived as being otherwise as it is or even as not being at all. *Mutatis mutandis*, all these features can be generalized to the experience of the spiritual world.

Thus, whatever is referred to or appears (1) through an experience in which manifold adumbrations (sensible or affective) consistently "hold together" into *one and the same posited* object, and (2) manifold objects consistently hold together in their mutual and *perceivable relations* into one and the same posited empirical environment, (3) an experience that, in turn, consistently "holds together" with other past and eventually future experiences of a progressively unfolding posited "empirical world" that can be counterfactually be imagined otherwise—whatever appears *this way*, with such a "style," can be safely posited as actually existing "in the world." Even the imaginary worlds may count as "possible worlds" with reference to this core sense.

And here is how Husserl describes a "un-world":

> It is instead quite conceivable that experience, because of conflict, might dissolve into an appearance not only in detail, and that it may not be the case, as it is de facto, that every appearance (*Schein*) manifests a deeper truth and that every conflict, in the place where it occurs, is precisely what is demanded by their inclusive contextures in order to preserve the total harmony; in our experience is conceivable that there might be a host of irreconcilable conflicts not just for us but in themselves, that experience might suddenly show itself to be refractory to the demand that it carry on its positings of physical things harmoniously, that its context might lose its fixed regular organizations of adumbrations, apprehensions, and appearances—in short, that there might no longer be any world. (Husserl 1977: 92/110–11)

Instead of harmonic and mutually consistent unities of experience, there are ongoing conflictual "concatenations of experiences," whose correlates dissolve into mere Appearances without Being, that is, without being either actually or possibly or even quasi-posited:

> transient supports for intuitions which were mere analogues of intuitions of physical things because quite incapable of constituting conservable "realities" or enduring unities which exist in themselves, whether or not they are perceived. (92/110–11)

An "un-world," Husserl says, *appears* as a manifold of "crude unity formations" (*rohe Einheitsbildungen*) suggesting intuitions of things that cannot

hold, objects that do not endure, for some or all of the six synthesis fail to be achieved. What "un-mades" a world, as it were, is thus the conflictual inconsistency of its empirical style, bringing us back and forth from *Seztung* to *Schein*. An *Erfahrungszusammenhang* whose correlate displays, quite paradoxically, no empirical laws *at all*: objects that irregularly collapse into their presenting adumbrations, sensible and emotional; relations between objects that do not hold; nothing that could be named or judged anymore; nothing to act upon or assess; nothing to compare and contrast with the actual world either.

It is hard not to think here of Kant's famous example of the "red cinnabar"—an example Husserl had probably in mind while discussing Kant's "brilliant idea" of a "transcendental necessity of association" (Husserl 1966: 118–19/163–64).

> If cinnabar were now red, now black, now light now heavy, if a human being were now changed into this animal shape, now into that one, if on the longest day the land were covered now with fruits, now with ice and snow, then my empirical imagination would never even get the opportunity to think of heavy cinnabar on the occasion of the representation of the color red; or if a certain word were attributed now to this thing, now to that, or if one and the same thing were sometimes called this, sometimes that, without the governance of a certain rule to which the appearances are already subjected in themselves, then no empirical synthesis of reproduction could take place. (Kant 1911: 100–1)

Now, *this* is precisely the momentous power of *unrestricted free arbitrary formative phantasy*: the power to *show what happens when the fundamental synthesis of association is undone. The power to intuit an un-world*. Husserl's free PPh is even more "exorbitant" than Wolff's or Kant's "ruleless" inventive PI gone wild, for it is precisely the power to "undo" the fundamental synthesis upon which the style of the world ultimately rests. For the "rules to which the appearances are already subjected in themselves" and upon which the very possibility of the synthesis of reproduction relies are, according to Husserl, *contingent as well*—unlike Kant, they are not *a priori*, but *a posteriori*—confirmed by the passive and "habitualized" repetition of the six synthesis of experience (Husserl 1966: XVI, 285 ff.).

This brings us to the last point. There is indeed a specific form of intuitive act that, unlike any other, has precisely the power to bring forward intuitively *one of the manifold conceivable nonworlds that might be given to an intentional consciousness for which the empirical style of a world—contingent according to its a priori eidetic laws—falls apart*. The intuition of a conceivable nonworld, of a universal "*Schein*," can only be provided thanks to a very specific intuitive act: an act of "free arbitrary formative phantasy," not unlike the one ordinarily carried on by the artist.

Coda

The difference between the two original ways in which PI is tackled within phenomenology is definitively striking.

Is PI free to "produce" imaginary objects, never perceived, experienced, or cognized before? New nonexisting fictional quasi-worlds—disclosing Being and revealing the inner possibilities of the world itself? Or is it "free" in Husserl's third strong sense? A sense in which, again, Wolff's idea of an *exhorbitans* phantasy and Kant's idea of a *regellos* invention somehow reach their paroxysm. For in Husserl's framework, "freedom" is precisely intended as *freedom to undo the constitutive synthesis of world-experience, to transgress the empirical style of a world as to deliver, intuitively, what happens after the end of the world*. The empirical, free PPh has the power to reverse the work of the transcendental synthesis of experience (what replaces Kant's transcendental PI) and show what would happen if the latter were not at work. "Crude unity formations" (*rohe Einheitsbildungen*) *might* appear as adumbrations of objects—if they could only be stabilized as such, hold together: unstable transcendences, as it were—more than merely subjective impressions and phantasms, and less than worldly objects (things or values).

Husserl's free PPh, *free to transgress the style of appearing of a world*, can thus be as free as "world destructive" (*Weltvernichtend*). It is not just a matter of figuring mermaids or angels, worlds with ivory towers or spaceships. PPh is rather the only chance to bring to intuitive appearance, hovering in front of us, *the eidetic possibility of the end of the world*.

Husserl does not follow Kant's fourfold shift nor he contaminates it with the ontological difference: (1) he does not follow the distinction between productive and reproductive imagination, (2) he does not dwell on the asymmetric "fundamental" difference between pure transcendental and empirical imagination, (3) he rejects the former and takes over the problem of the synthesis it fosters by means of a phenomenology of "passive synthesis," and (4) he reformulates the latter in terms of "arbitrary formative phantasy." Thus, the measure of the true power of "free arbitrary formative phantasy" or "poetic" or "inventive" productive imagination should not be found in the fact of "producing" fictional or possible worlds, nor by simply contributing to the constitution of the actual world. Husserl's view does not charge art with the power to be "true" in a more fundamental sense than ordinary truth, ontic and bound to "vulgar" phenomena. Thus, the originality of Husserl's picture is rather in the fact that free phantasy's "fictional figments" mobilize *emotions* to constitute the contingent and variable unity of arbitrary formations, stating the affective consistency and intrinsic value of *appearance* as such,

and have the power to test and provide the intuitive evidence of the boundaries of world experience as such by *originally exhibiting un-worlds*.

While the "hermeneutical" way inaugurated by Heidegger has already seduced many authors, the "destructive" way of Husserl is still widely unexplored.

Notes

1. The reasons of this label are explained in Majolino and Djian (2018).
2. Sensation is the *facultas percipiendi* (Wolff 1732: 38); imagination and fiction are *facultates producendi* (54, 97); memory is the *facultas recognoscendi idea reproductas* (123); attention is a *facultas efficiendi* (241); intellect and acumen are *facultates distinguendi* (197, 241); and, finally, reason is the *facultas intuendi seu perspiciendi*, that is, more precisely, "the faculty to intuit and examine the connection among universal truths" (372).
3. For an instructive overview of such tensions and inconsistencies, see Ferrarin (2009: 7–14).
4. I would like to thank George Taylor for helping me finding the original transcripts of Ricœur's lectures. For an instructive overall view of Ricœur's lectures on imagination, see Taylor (2006).
5. On this point, see Majolino (2010) and (2016: 321). The following analysis rests on the work established in Majolino (2013).

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Chapter 4

Two Starting Points
in Heidegger's Critical Interpretation
of Kant's Transcendental Imagination

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In the traditional interpretation of Kant's philosophy, Kant's concept of the transcendental imagination and its role in Transcendental Deduction as well as its relations with the notorious schematism are often seen as the most ambiguous and obscure part of the whole Kantian philosophy.[1] In his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Heidegger 1997b/1998), Heidegger attempts to provide a unique, consistent, and critical interpretation of the concept from a transcendental-ontological perspective. This new interpretation itself, immediately after it has come out, has caused troubles and debates in understanding and interpretation of Kant among scholars, Kantian or non-Kantian.[2] In this chapter, I would like to argue that there are mainly two problems in our traditional interpretation of Kant's concept of transcendental imagination, and that a critical discussion of these two problems constitutes the two starting points of Heidegger's critical interpretation of Kant's concept of the transcendental imagination as well as of Kant's whole philosophy. The first problem is that people focus their interpretations more or less on the concept of the *imagination* (productive and reproductive) rather than on the *transcendental* imagination. Thus, this traditional interpretation takes Kant's concept of imagination primarily as an ontic, that is, an anthropological and psychological conception while Heidegger's new interpretation takes the concept to be a transcendental-ontological or an existential-phenomenological one.

Different from but also related to the first misunderstanding, the second one sees the transcendental power of imagination serving merely as an *intermediary mid-point* and the third faculty of the human soul between the two other capacities or faculties like sense and apperception. In comparison with this understanding and interpretation, which according to Heidegger would cause a problem leading to an inevitable tension between "duality thesis" and "triad thesis" within Kant's own interpretation of the nature of the transcendental

power of imagination, Heidegger sees the transcendental power of imagination in Kant as *an original central ground* or the transcendental-ontological "hidden source" of our human cognition and knowledge itself. In Heidegger's own words, the transcendental power of imagination "is not just the mid-point 'between' pure intuition and pure thinking, but rather the mid-point in the sense of center and root" (Heidegger 1997a: 195).

Kant's *Anthropology* Definition and the Productive Imagination

Let us discuss the first "misunderstanding" first. As many scholars do today, Heidegger starts his discussion by quoting the famous Kantian definition which he borrows roughly from Wolff and Baumgarten. The traditional definition of imagination says, "The power of imagination (*facultas imaginadi*) [is] a faculty of intuition, even without the presence of the object" (Kant 1964: 466).

Unlike many interpreters of Kant, Heidegger pays careful attention here to small details in his reading of Kant's texts. He notices that Kant quoted this definition of the power of imagination twice in his published works. One is here in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Perspective* while the other in the B-deduction part of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (*CPR*) where Kant says, "*Imagination* is the power of presenting an object in intuition even *without the object's being present*" (Kant 1996: B151).[3] When we read these two passages, we may find that they are almost the same. However, if we read these two passages within their contexts, we will see big philosophical differences, which show different ways in understanding the very nature of Kant's conception of the power of imagination.

According to Heidegger, there should be three important elements that belong to "the essential part of what the *Anthropology* tells us about the power of imagination in general and the productive power of imagination in particular" (Heidegger 1997b: 92; 1998: 131). First, the general definition in *Anthropology* tells us that the power of imagination is

(a) *a power* of forming (*Vermoegen/Dichtungsvermoegen*),
(b) a capacity or a faculty *of intuition* (*Anschauungen/das Sinnliche Dichtungsvermoegen der Bildung*), and
(c) *even without* the presence of the object (*auch ohne Gegenwart des Gegenstandes*).

I think that Heidegger puts his first emphasis here on the concept of *Vermoegen* or "capacity of forming." He takes the power of imagination as

a creatively formative power or capacity of human nature. Then, he says that the power "is formative in the sense of providing the image (*Bild- [Anblick-] Beschaffen*)" (Heidegger 1997b: 91; 1998: 129). It is not only formative but also receptive, or receptively formative. Because of these two related aspects of the power of imagination, Heidegger calls it "a capacity of forming in a peculiar double sense" (Heidegger 1997b: 91; 1998: 129). This peculiar *double sense* of the forming power of imagination indicates that the power of imagination is "simultaneously" "spontaneous" and "receptive" as in Kant's discussion of its "mediating" role as the mid-point between the spontaneous understanding and the receptive sensibility in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1996: A94, A78/B104, A115, A138/B177, A155/B194, A158/B197).

As for "even without the presence of the object," Heidegger interprets it as "without showing the intuited . . . itself as a being; and without getting the look from this power itself alone" (Heidegger 1997b: 90–91; 1998: 128). By this interpretation, Heidegger, on the one hand, wants to show that in the forming intuition, our power of imagination does not first of all deal with a being as a present-at-hand entity; it deals with Being itself, which makes forming of all beings or different kinds of entities possible. On the other hand, our power of imagination as a power of finite human being is not omnipotent and thus it cannot create any image by itself alone. It works only within the region of Being and in consonance with the violent forces of Being itself.

Second, besides providing a general definition of the power of imagination, Kant's *Anthropology* makes a clear distinction between the productive and the reproductive power of imagination. It also gives a priority to the productive power of imagination in thinking of the original nature of the power of the imagination by calling the productive power of imagination "original presenting" (*exhibitio originaria*) while the reproductive power of imagination the "derivative presenting" (*exhibitio derivativa*) (Kant 1964: 466).

Third, in *Anthropology* Kant clarifies the finite nature of the human power of imagination by distinguishing between the human "original presenting" (*exhibitio originaria*) and the "creative intuition" of God as *intuitus oiginarius*. According to Heidegger, "The productive forming of the power of imagination is never even 'creative' in the sense that it can likewise form just the content of the image simply from out of the nothing, i.e., from out of that which has never before and nowhere being experienced" (Heidegger 1997b: 92; 1998: 131).

Productive or Transcendental Imagination?

Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's definition of the power of imagination in his *Anthropology* is very precise, and there seems to be no doubt that it

hits the point. However, Heidegger is not satisfied either with Kant's general definition or with his psychological and anthropological interpretation here. What's the problem then? I can see that there are at least two serious problems as explained by Heidegger.

Heidegger won't argue against the *Anthropology* definition in its claim of a "peculiar double sense of the forming power of imagination," or of "the intermediate capacity" (*Zwischenvermoegen*) to be part of the very nature of the power of imagination. Rather, what Heidegger wants to argue is that the philosophical meaning of the definition should be explored in *a different depth of clarification* within different textual contexts and horizons of the problematic.[4]

As we have seen above, the *Anthropology* definition of the power of imagination and its understanding are put into a context of the investigation of philosophical anthropology and psychology where the arts, functions, properties, as well as other features of the power of imagination are investigated. It is also studied as a faculty of human soul or psyche compared with other psychological faculties of human being and/or animals, and so forth. Because of this, Heidegger says, "The *Anthropology* shows that the productive power of imagination as well is still dependent upon the representations of the sense" (Heidegger 1997b: 93; 1998: 132).

In comparison with the *Anthropology* definition, which was put within an anthropological and psychological context or horizon, the CPR definition finds itself within a very different pure philosophical context, that is, upon a pure philosophical ground of transcendental deduction as well as the *Schematism* of the pure concepts of understanding. According to Heidegger, with this *fundamental switch* from an anthropological and psychological horizon to a pure transcendental horizon, the very nature of the power of imagination could be "enlightened in a much more original way" (93; 1998: 131).

Here, we may use Kant's analysis of the concept of transcendental aesthetic as an example to further illustrate this point. As we know, when Kant talks about the idea of a transcendental logic in his introduction to Transcendental Logic, he uses the example of Euclid's geometry, an *a priori* mathematical science. According to Kant, any *a priori* geometric determination of space cannot be called a transcendental presentation. It is so not only because these presentations are still of empirical origins, but also because these sciences, though *a priori*, do not involve in asking the pure philosophical questions such as those about the possibilities and the grounds of that science itself (Kant 1996: A56/B80–81). In this way, Kant distinguishes between Euclid's geometry as *a priori* science and transcendental aesthetics as its transcendental grounding.

Let us now come back to the *Anthropology* definition. It just tells us that the power of imagination practices its forming power "even without the

presence of the object." However, it does not ask and tell us why it is so in a pure and philosophical sense. It just says an empirical fact and appeals to our everyday experiences. However, in the *CPR* definition, this "*without the object's being present*" was in italics and got a transcendental investigation and explanation, which belong to the transcendental deduction of the pure concepts of understanding and to the transcendental *Schematism*. Heidegger describes the process of this transcendental deduction into two steps. First, when an imagination is presenting an object in intuition, it "forms the look of the horizon of objectivity as such in advance" (Heidegger 1997b: 92; 1998: 131). This "in advance," says Heidegger, "is not just prior to this or that experience of the being, but rather always is in advance, prior to any possible [experience]" (131). Thus understood, this objectivity as such does not depend on any this or that possible experience when having look-forming (*Anblickbilden*). It is absolute pure and *a priori*, and it is thus "even without the presence of the object." Second, this look-forming runs though pure images of time. "Hence in the Transcendental *Schematism*, the essence of the power of imagination, . . ., is grasped in a way that is fundamentally more original" (132). This *Schematism* also indicates the original free and creative essence of the power of imagination. Therefore, Heidegger comes to his conclusion that "the *Anthropology* shows that the productive power of imagination as well is still dependent upon the representations of the senses. In the Transcendental *Schematism*, however, the power of imagination is originally pictorial in the pure image of time. It simply does not need an empirical intuition. Hence, the CPR shows both the intuitive character and the spontaneity in a more original sense" (132).

Another serious problem with the *Anthropology* definition of the power of imagination observed by Heidegger is its ambiguity in dealing with the relationship between the productive imagination and its experience-able beings or objects, including both the empirically possible or even impossible objects. If productive imagination cannot be really free of experience, that is, free of this or that particular experience, it cannot be called "productive" truly. Here, Heidegger makes a distinction between the productive imagination and the *pure* productive imagination. Not all productive imaginings are "pure," but any pure imagination must be productive. By the term "pure," Heidegger means (1) to be "free of experience" and (2) "[to] make experience possible or the first time." This sense of "pure," as we have known, is almost the same as what Kant calls "transcendental" (Wang 2014: 25–28). Therefore, we should rightly call this pure productive imagination "transcendental imagination," which, as we have explored above, is one of the main themes of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Comparing the *CPR* definition's taking the power of imagination as an issue of transcendental imagination, *Anthropology*, says Heidegger, "does not pose the question of transcendence at all. All the

same, the abortive attempt to want to interpret the power of imagination in a more original way in light of *Anthropology* proved that a reference to transcendental structure always already lies in the empirical interpretation of the faculties of the soul, which, properly speaking, can never simply be purely empirical themselves. But these can neither be grounded in *Anthropology* nor in general can they come to be created from it by means of mere assumptions" (Heidegger 1997b: 93–94; 1998: 133). To sum up, an appropriate reading and understanding of the nature of Kant's concept of the power of imagination should start from the *CPR* definition rather than the *Anthropology* definition. In other words, a true philosophical understanding and interpretation of the productive imagination should be grounded and founded in the concept of his transcendental imagination but not vice versa.

A Harsh Opposition between the "Triad Thesis" and the "Duality Thesis"

The second ambiguity in our traditional understanding and interpretation of Kant's concept of the power of imagination comes from our recognition of the relationship of the thus defined power of imagination to our other important cognitive faculties such as, most notably, the receptive sensation and the spontaneous understanding.

In the interpretation of Kant's position on this issue in his *Kantbook*, Heidegger points out first of all that the ambiguity comes from Kant himself. Kant switched back and forth between the two opposite positions, identified later as "the triad of basic faculties of cognition" and "the duality of basic sources and stems of cognition," respectively. For example, in the beginning of Transcendental Logic of Kant's *CPR*, he says clearly that "our knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) arises from two basic sources (*Grundquellen*) of the mind. The first is [our ability] to receive presentations (and in our receptivity for impressions); the second is our ability to cognize an object through these presentations (and is the spontaneity of concepts). . . . Intuition and concepts, therefore, constitute the elements of all our cognition" (Kant 1996: A50/B74). In another place of the same book, Kant also mentions that senses and understanding are the "only two sources" (A294/B350) of our cognition. These two passages provide firm textual evidences for the so-called "duality thesis." Besides these, Heidegger also points out that bifurcation of the structure of the whole transcendental investigation into a Transcendental Aesthetic and a Transcendental Logic supports this thesis.

In comparison with the "duality thesis," the "triad thesis" refers to other passages in the same book of Kant. A well-known passage Heidegger quotes for this thesis is in *CPR* A94 where Kant says, "Now there are three original

sources (capacities or powers of the soul) that contain the conditions for the possibility of all experience, and that cannot themselves be derived from any other power of the mind: viz., *sense, imagination, and apperception*. On them are based (1) the *a priori synopsis* of the manifold through sense; (2) the *synthesis* of this manifold though imagination; and finally, (3) the *unity* of this synthesis through original apperception. All these *powers*, besides having their empirical use, have in addition a transcendental use that deals solely with form and is possible *a priori*" (Kant 1996: A94). A couple of pages later, Kant continues to talk about these three subjective sources of our cognition as sense, imagination, and apperception and argues that "the possibility of an experience as such and of cognition of its objects" should be completely grounded on these "sources" (A115). As for the structure of the book of *CPR*, we could also find that the well-known tripartite analysis of the transcendental synthesis of apprehension in intuition, of production in imagination, and of recognition in the concept in the first edition of the book perfectly correspond to these three original sources of human cognition.

Some may argue in saying that all above evidences used here to support the triad thesis may only be found in the first edition of *CPR*, which Kant abandoned later in his second edition of the book. This objection sounds reasonable. However, if we read the whole book of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, we may still easily find other passages that appear in both the first and the second edition of the book but support the triad thesis. For example, in A78/B104 of the *CPR* when Kant discusses the possibility of the essential unity of the transcendental knowledge, that is, how to bring the pure synthesis of presentations, *to* a concept rather than *under* a concept, he lists three elements as pure intuition, pure synthesis by means of the power of imagination, and the pure concepts of pure apperception. One other strong evidence we could have to support the triad thesis can be found in the chapter on the *Schematism* of the pure concepts of understanding. Kant talks there about the problem of homogeneousness, that is, how it is possible for pure concepts of understanding to be applied to appearances as such if they are not homogeneous in nature? In order to answer this question, Kant comes to his conclusion of transcendental *Schematism*. "Now clearly there must be something that is third, something that must be homogeneous with the category, on the one hand, and with the appearance, on the other hand, and that thus makes possible the application of the category to the appearance. This mediating presentation must be pure (i.e., without anything empirical), and yet must be both *intellectual*, on the one hand, and *sensible*, on the other hand. Such presentation is the *transcendental schema*" (Kant 1996: A138/B177). In another place of the book, Kant says further that this third something, that is, the transcendental schema as "the medium of all synthetic judgments" (A155/B194), is nothing but time, the imagination, and the unity of apperception. Moreover, "since

all the three contain the sources for *a priori* presentations, the possibility of pure synthetic judgments will also have to be sought in them" (Kant 1996: A158/B197).

According to Heidegger's interpretation, we now seem to face a harsh opposition between this triad of basic faculties and the duality of basic sources and stems of knowledge. One option is to choose to stand on the side of the duality thesis. We eliminate the transcendental power of imagination with regard to its central function as a basic faculty of human soul and subordinate it either to understanding or to sensibility. Henry E. Allison, for example, though admitting that the essential function of the transcendental synthesis of the imagination is somewhat obscured if we follow Kant's denial of any ultimate distinction between the imagination and understanding, insists still on seeing the transcendental synthesis of the imagination merely as an "action [Wirkung] of the understanding on the sensibility." (Allison 1983: 163) Hartmut Boehme and Gernot Boehme in their book *The Other of the Reason* take a shift to an opposite direction and argue that Kant's unwillingness to grant the imagination an autonomous status was rooted in psychological misapprehensions and subconscious fears of the close association of the imagination with feeling and the body (Boehme and Boehme 1996: 106). But a way of the subordination of imagination either to understanding or to sensation would drive the transcendental power of imagination into an awkward situation of homelessness. More seriously, along with this subordination, claims Heidegger, "the possibility that precisely it [the transcendental power of imagination] could be the essential ground for ontological knowledge has apparently been topped of" (Heidegger 1997b: 113; 1998: 162). That is, according to Heidegger, it is exactly Kant who, in the second edition of the *CPR*, transformed the transcendental power of imagination to a mere "function," conceived "as a proficiency of the faculty of the understanding. While in the first edition all synthesis, i.e., synthesis as such, sprang forth from the power of imagination as a faculty which is not reducible to sensibility or understanding, in the second edition the understanding alone now assumes the role of origin for all synthesis" (114; 1998: 163).

Imagination as the Intermediary "Mid-Point" or as the "Central-Grounding" and a "Hidden" Source?

Another option is to choose to stand on the side of the triad thesis. This would be the position the traditional Kantian scholarship had taken before (Makkreel 1990, 26–29; Smith 1962: 246; Strawson 1966: 97). According to this interpretation, the transcendental power of imagination is characterized as the third basic capacity of human soul. It is parallel to our other two basic

capacities such as receptive sensibility and spontaneous understanding, and it functions as an intermediating mid-point between them. As we have discussed above, Kant commentators often refer to "the *synopsis* of the manifold through sense"; "the *synthesis* of this manifold through imagination"; and the *unity* of this synthesis through original apperception" in A94 and to "pure intuition," "imagination," and "unity" in A79/B104 of *CPR* to show that they are parallel and cannot be reduced to each other. Each has its own peculiar function and cannot be simply replaced. Although many scholars hold this position in interpretation of Kant, the question still remains as how we really understand the intermediary status of the power of imagination, especially when dealing with this issue in our real cognition.

The problematic of the intermediateness of the power of imagination can be traced as far back as Aristotle's philosophy of the imagination or *phantasia*. It is well-known that Aristotle defines *phantasia*, later translated into Latin as "imagination," as "a psychological process through which an image (*phantasma*) is presented to us" (Aristotle 2016: 428 a1–4). According to Aristotle's interpretation, *phantasia/*imagination is responsible mainly for binding the deliverances of different individual sense organs into a coherent and intelligible representation, and thus for the initial apprehending that Aristotle calls "common sensible" (*sensus communis*). As a faculty of the human soul or *psyche*, it has two basic functions here. On the one hand, it is "sensible" and always receptive as an image that presents itself. On the other hand, it is "common" so as to help in binding or connecting others that are not actually or currently present to my senses. These two primary functions of the imagination, as we will soon see, constitute the main characteristics of the imagination, conceived as the "mediator" between two other faculties, that is, receptive sensibility and spontaneous thinking, of our human cognition discussed in modern philosophical epistemology. This is why Aristotle says, "The soul never thinks without *Phantasma*" (431 a15–50). Interesting enough, in *xiang* (想象），the Chinese translation of this Western concept *phantasia/*imagination/*Einbildung*, we can also find the two Chinese characters 象（image）and 想（thinking）as the two constituents of the term. This strongly indicates that neither thinking without images nor imagining without thinking would be productive, if not impossible at all.

Robert Pippin once called this problem a "fundamental problem," that is, "how a concept can claim to be a 'one-over-many' and thus serve as 'knowledge'" (Pippin 1976: 156–71). In his essay, "What Is the Productive Imagination?," Dmitri Nikulin puts this issue in a still clearer way. He says, "Because our intuitions are sensible for Kant, imagination belongs to sensibility; but because synthesis is an exercise of spontaneity, imagination as the *a priori* synthesis (figurative synthesis, *synthesis speciosa*) is also the expression of understanding. This is the imagination as the transcendental, which has affinity with sensation (intuition), on the one hand, and with understanding, on

the other" (Nikulin 2018: 19). Both Pippin and Nikulin use examples from geometry to illustrate the intermediate position of the power of imagination. While Pippin borrows the example of a triangle used by Kant in A141/B180 of *CPR*, Nikulin traces it back to neo-Platonist Roman philosopher Proclus's example of a Euclid circle (Nikulin 2018: 5; Pippin 1976: 169).

However, now we have a new problem. What is the real nature of a Kantian transcendental schema? How is one to distinguish the *transcendental* schema as exemplified by a "triangle" or a "circle" from an *empirical* schema? Remember that Kant does not only take a "triangle" as a transcendental schema, he sees "dog" as a transcendental schema as well. For Kant, the schemata for such "pure sensible concepts" really *mean* or *are* rules or laws. What does Kant mean by this *to mean* or *to be*? This is where the ambiguity lies, not only for Kant, but also for philosophers after Kant such as Heidegger. I think that it should be one of the real questions driving Heidegger and others to look for a new solution to the problem in their critical interpretation of Kant.[5]

So as to overcome the "harsh opposition" between the triad thesis and the duality thesis, Heidegger suggests that we pay close attention to a passage of *CPR* where Kant says, "This schematism regarding appearances and their mere form, is a secret art residing in the depths of the human soul, an art whose true stratagems we shall hardly ever divine from nature and lay bare before ourselves" (Kant 1996: A141/B181). On the one hand, here Heidegger strongly endorses the triad thesis by introducing the third type of *a priori* "synthesis," that is, schematism as transcendental imagination, along with pure sensation and understanding. On the other hand, he does not simply abandon the duality thesis when he calls this third source of our soul a "secret art residing in the depth." It is not "parallel" to other two faculties of our mind, but "deeply" rooted and thus a "hidden" source of human cognition and knowledge. In order to establish this new interpretation of Kant, Heidegger calls our attention again to Kant's well-known claim, which we find at by the end of his introduction of *CPR*: "Human cognition has two stems, viz., sensibility and understanding, which perhaps spring from a common root, though one is unknown to us. Through sensibility, objects are given to us; through understanding, they are thought" (A15/B29).

Conclusion:
Heidegger's Transcendental Imagination
as a Schematic-Temporalizing Entspringenlassen
(Letting-Spring-Forth) of Dasein

Thus understood, Heidegger's critical interpretation of Kant's transcendental power of imagination belongs neither to the triad thesis camp nor to the

duality thesis camp. It understands the very nature of Kant's transcendental power of imagination as transcendental schematism, that is, as schematization of pure concepts within a transcendental horizon of temporality. In this way, Kant's transcendental imagination in Heidegger's interpretation becomes not only the third "parallel" source as an intermediate "mid-point" between two other sources of human soul or mind, but also, and more importantly, as the central ground or "the common root" out of which the other two "stems" grow. Thus, Heidegger writes,

> Now the interpretation of the ground-laying, however, shows: the transcendental power of imagination is not just an external bond which fastens together two ends. It is originally unifying, i.e., as a particular faculty it forms the unity of both of the others, which themselves have an essential structural relation to it. (Heidegger 1997b: 96; 1998: 137)

How should we have a proper understanding of this so-called "ground-laying" power of imagination in Heidegger's sense? As we have discussed above, this power of imagination is not only psychologically or anthropologically productive and reproductive as a faculty of the soul, but also, and more importantly, a *transcendental* power of imagination, which is ontologically prior to the other two "faculties of soul" and also makes them "scientifically," for example, psychologically and anthropologically possible. In Heidegger's own words, the power of imagination does not merely have a character of "at hand"; rather, it is a "root" that could "grow up" or let the two "stems grow out." "If the established ground does not have the character of a floor or a base which is at hand, but if instead it has the character of a root, then it must be grounded in such a way that it lets the stems grow out from itself, lending them support and stability" (Heidegger 1998: 138). The metaphor of a "root" and its "growing out" distinguishes Heidegger's interpretation of the transcendental power of imagination not only from those psychologists' and anthropologists' conception of power of imagination, but also from the Kantian epistemologically transcendental conception of the power of imagination, because this "transcendental" power of imagination, in Heidegger's eyes, is first of all, not simply a "common root" of human cognition or knowledge. It is an "existential" and "ontological" root that does not only make our cognition or the cognitive phenomenon possible, but it also enables our existence, our life, as well as "the objects of phenomenon."

The other advantage of Heidegger's critical and ontological interpretation of Kant's transcendental power of imagination consists in that it provides for the first time a genuine clue and light for a meaningful understanding and interpretation of Kant's schematism chapter in his *CPR* that, according to Heidegger, was identified once by Kant himself as one of the most "difficult"

but "the most important chapters of the book" (Heidegger 1997b: 80; 1998: 113). I may also use Heidegger's own comment on this point to complete my chapter here: "If the transcendental power of imagination could be shown as the root of transcendence, then the problematic of the transcendental deduction and the Schematism first achieves its transparency. . . . Hence, the character of the already-laid ground as root first makes the originality of the pure synthesis, i.e., its letting-spring-forth, understandable" (98–99; 1998: 141).[6]

Notes

1. For example, in his *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, Henry E. Allison sees the issue being "central to the whole program of the *Critique*." But "unfortunately," claims Allison, "Kant seems to beg rather than to answer this question." See Allison (1983: 161).

2. See Ernst Cassier and Martin Heidegger (Heidegger 1997b: 193–207; 1998: 274–296), Ernst Cassirer (Cassirer 2004: 221–52), and Dieter Henrich (Henrich 1994: 17–54).

3. I follow Werner S. Pluhar's translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1996). All references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the standard first (A) and second (B) edition pagination and are included in the text following the citation.

4. In the *Introduction* of his book on *Kant's Power of Imagination* (Moerchen 1970: 1–6), Hermann Moerchen makes this Heideggerian point in a clearer way.

5. Dieter Henrich tried to dissolve the problem by introducing his concept of intrasubjectivity and put the whole problematic into a larger context of German idealism and its prehistory. I will discuss Henrich's project and his criticism of Heidegger in the next section, but I will focus on my discussion of Heidegger's solution here. See Henrich (1994: 48–54).

6. The early draft of this article was presented first at *The International Conference on "Productive Imagination: Its History, Meaning and Significance,"* held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, May 24–26, 2016, and then as an invited talk at the Philosophy Department Symposium of Tsinghua University, Beijing, May 12, 2017. My gratitude goes especially to Saulius Geniusas, Guenter Zoeller, Jijie Song, Yusheng Huang, and Rong Zhang for their critical comments, helpful suggestions, and kindness, which made the chapter improved and completed.

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Chapter 5

Miki Kiyoshi and the Logic
of the Imagination

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Miki Kiyoshi (三木清) (1897–1945) was a multifaceted thinker. He was prominent member of the Kyoto School, an advocate and a critic of Japanese Marxism, a model for comparative philosophy, and an early representative of philosophy of technology and of philosophy of culture. Here I will interpret Miki's contribution to the phenomenological tradition. I will focus on his *magnum opus*, *The Logic of the Imagination*, and especially on "Myth," which was originally published as a separate piece and subsequently incorporated as the first chapter of this larger study. My goal is to show why *The Logic of the Imagination* is of great significance for phenomenology—the phenomenology of imagination in general and the phenomenology of productive imagination in particular. Few phenomenologically oriented thinkers have provided explicit analyses of productive imagination.[1] For this reason alone, it is regrettable that in this framework Miki's contribution is so severely underappreciated. My goal here is to rectify this situation and demonstrate why, in the framework of the phenomenological tradition, Miki's name deserves a much greater recognition.

Miki began writing *The Logic of the Imagination* in 1937 and continued working on it until his untimely death, which he met in the detention center of the Toyotama prison in late September of 1945, six weeks after World War II had ended in Japan. Part I was published in 1939 and Part II after Miki's death, in 1946. *The Logic of the Imagination* is an experimental and programmatic study, not a comprehensive and conclusive investigation.[2] Still, despite its fragmentary nature, it is often qualified as Miki's *magnum opus* (Fujita 2011).

Broadly speaking, one could qualify productive imagination as a transcendental power that shapes the human experience of the actual world by forming the contours of action, intuition, knowledge, and understanding. In

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phenomenology, the concept of productive imagination is understood as the capacity of experience to augment and transfigure the surrounding world (Scheler 1977, 2012, and especially Ricœur 1978; 1979; 1986; 1991).[3] Miki conceives of imagination along such phenomenological lines. His philosophy of the imagination is not the philosophy of fancy (*sōzō* 想像), but of productive imagination (*kōsōryoku* 構想力). By *kōsōryoku*, Miki understands a power more original than reason, which is constitutive of the sociocultural world, conceived as a horizon of shared meanings (Krummel 2017, 256). Miki conceptualizes productive imagination in three fundamental ways: as a power that shapes our world-understanding, that configures our world-organization, and that generates the world-transformation.[4] Driven by such a threefold goal, Miki articulates his philosophy of the imagination in three domains, those of myth, institutions, and technics (Curley 2015; Krummel 2017).

Here I will focus on how productive imagination shapes our world-understanding and I will argue that it does so in three fundamental ways: by generating collective representations, symbols, and forms. I will contend that in all these frameworks we can identify one and the same logic of the imagination, conceived in terms of *formation, reformation, and transformation*.

Miki as a Phenomenologist

At the end of the first section of "Myth," Miki writes, "What then is the imagination and what sort of thing is the logic of imagination itself? Leaving a generalizing answer for later, we shall instead proceed with a phenomenological investigation" (Miki 2016: 28). As Miki further explains, "Following the path Hegel took from phenomenology to logic, we shall pursue logic amidst the analysis of phenomena" (28). Thus, much like Ernst Cassirer before him,[5] Miki identifies his approach as phenomenological in the Hegelian sense of the term.

Hegel conceives of phenomenology as a science of appearances. For Hegel, a phenomenological analysis modifies the Kantian conception of the transcendental, since it addresses phenomena as they manifest themselves in the social and historical contexts. As Tom Rockmore once put it, "Hegel relativizes the distinctions between falsity, appearance, and truth in calling attention to false appearance as a stage on the way to truth. Mere falsity, which is not truth, is replaced by appearance (*Schein*) that, under the right circumstances, becomes true appearance (*Erscheinung*), or truth" (Rockmore, 2018). Within such a phenomenological framework, Hegel demonstrates that cognition does not need to be grounded, but that it can justify itself in the process of its unfolding. For Hegel, it is precisely in the process of its cognitive extension that phenomenology reaches its justification.

In a Hegelian spirit, Miki proceeds in his *The Logic of the Imagination* by offering a series of *progressive approximations*. Taken in their totality (which, in light of the fragmentary nature of this study, is necessarily an *open* totality), these approximations provide us with Miki's conception of the logic of the imagination. Miki's analysis is phenomenological in the Hegelian sense of the term, insofar as his analysis is a matter of a progressive series of approximations, which justify themselves in their unfolding. Thus, in "Myth," the logic of the imagination is said to be a logic of emotions, a logic of action, a logic of creation, a logic of history and historical creation, a logic that takes the standpoint of the subject, a logic of symbols, a logic of forms, a logic of individuals, a logic of formed images (dynamic and developmental), and a logic of love. Insofar these approximations form an open totality, they provide us with an understanding of the logic of the imagination.

There is, however, yet another sense in which one can identify Miki's approach as phenomenological. This second, implicit, sense refers to the classical phenomenological tradition. This tradition constitutes the background that Miki's own analysis both relies upon and which it also aims to transgress. Using a Husserlian expression, one could say that Miki's philosophy of the imagination is an implicit phenomenology of the lifeworld; using a Heideggerian expression, one could also say that it offers us an implicit phenomenology of the practical everyday world.[6]

To read Miki's *Logic of the Imagination* as a phenomenological study in this second sense is to contend that it offers an implicit phenomenology of the world of experience. Miki conceives of the world of experience not as an object of contemplation, but as a sphere of action—a distinctly human world, which human actions continuously transform and enrich.[7] Put in phenomenological terms, Miki conceives of the human world as a constitutive accomplishment and of the logic of the imagination as a logic of world-constitution.

Miki's unique contribution to phenomenology of logic lies in his explicit identification of the logic of experience as the logic of imagination. Indeed, while some phenomenologists (Scheler and Ricœur) have recognized imagination as a fundamental and irreducible component of everyday experience, none have gone as far as to suggest that the logic of everyday experience is the logic of the imagination. Herein lies Miki's unique and highly significant contribution to phenomenology of logic and the phenomenology of productive imagination. Consider, in this regard, the following claims: "The reality of this world must be founded by means of the logic of the imagination" (Miki 2016: 39); "We seek to conceive the imagination at the root of the historical world" (48); "What is really creative is actuality itself, and it is within the actual itself that we recognize the imagination" (63); and "We must conceive the imagination at the root of the world's creation" (Miki 2016: 64). Much is

to be said about these highly provocative claims. At the moment, I only wish to stress that no other phenomenologist has ever explicitly qualified the logic of everyday experience as the logic of the imagination. Only if we acknowledge the phenomenological orientation of Miki's *Logic of the Imagination* can we recognize his unique contribution to this philosophical tradition.

In *The Logic of the Imagination*, Miki's methodological approach is based on a creative fusion of these two phenomenological strategies. On the one hand, Miki consistently speaks in the voice of others and presents his arguments by means of detours and approximations. On the other hand, all these detours and approximations have one and the same goal—that of deepening our understanding of the world of experience.

The Standpoint of Contemplation and the Standpoint of Action

It would seem only natural to begin a philosophical analysis of the imagination with the question, "What is imagination?" Yet for Miki, this is exactly the question with which philosophy of the imagination should *not* begin. This question is too straightforward; it leads one astray. One should recognize two other questions as more fundamental, the first of which concerns the context of analysis, while the second one—the critical standpoint. For Miki, the question concerning the critical standpoint is the most fundamental.

We face here methodological considerations, which concern the significance of *Einstellung*—a concept that plays such a central role in classical phenomenology. At the outset of his analysis, Miki draws a distinction between the *standpoint of contemplation* and the *standpoint of action*. Besides drawing a distinction between these attitudes, Miki also contends that the standpoint of contemplation is ill-suited to address imagination. For Miki, even though the essence of imagination cannot be disclosed from within the standpoint of contemplation, it can nonetheless be studied from within such a standpoint. For Miki, the logic of the imagination is the logic of action, which we can take to mean that the essence of imagination can be understood only from within the standpoint of action.

These are provocative claims. On the one hand, Miki holds the view that a philosopher who addresses imagination in his day and age is prone to undertake his analysis from within the contemplative attitude (arguably, the situation is no different today). This tendency derives from the weight of the philosophical tradition, which has almost exclusively focused on the imagination from within the standpoint of contemplation. However—and this is what makes Miki's analysis polemical—he also holds the view that this standpoint is inappropriate to address imagination and that it inevitably

distorts the phenomenon under scrutiny. The contemplative attitude relies on formal logic and its two fundamental principles: the law of noncontradiction and the law of identity. According to Miki, these laws do not apply to imagination.[8]

From within the standpoint of contemplation, imagination manifests itself as a reproductive mode of consciousness. As I am reading Miki's writings on the imagination, from time to time my thoughts are interrupted by various sounds that reach me through the open windows. Although I no longer hear these sounds as soon as I close the windows, I can nonetheless imagine them. I then reproduce the more original experiences and intend these sounds as modifications of these original experiences. How exactly are the objects given to me in imagination? Along with Sartre,[9] one could single out four possibilities: they could be given either as absent, or existent elsewhere, or nonexistent, or neutralized. In all these cases, the imaginary objects are given as nonactual, as fundamentally cut off from the field of actuality. So things appear from within the contemplative attitude. What about the standpoint of action? At first glance, it seems that such an *Einstellungsänderung* does not bring about any significant changes. Whether one thinks of images from the standpoint of contemplation, or the standpoint of action, images are still intended as nonactual possibilities. However, action has no patience for mere possibilities; it is interested in possibilities only insofar as they can be actualized. While from the standpoint of contemplation, imaginary objects are conceived as mere possibilities, from the standpoint of action, possibilities are intended as possible actualities. While in the contemplative framework, imagination performs an irrealizing function, in the framework of action, its central function is transformative. From within the standpoint of action, imagination does not cut us off from actuality; it rather enables us to modify actuality. While from the standpoint of contemplation, imaginary consciousness is fundamentally reproductive, from the standpoint of action, it proves to be fundamentally productive, in the sense that it strives to transform the world of everyday experience.

The Field of Imagination as the Field of Action

How is one to map out the field of productive imagination and where is one to place Miki's contribution within this field? One option would be to follow Paul Ricœur's lead and to speak of four fundamental forms of productive imagination: poetic imagination, epistemological imagination, sociopolitical imagination, and religious imagination. In light of Miki's observation that "action . . . is essentially social" (Miki 2016: 27), one would be tempted to place Miki's analysis in the framework of sociopolitical imagination.

Such an approach would result in a significant broadening of sociopolitical imagination.

Although such a way of conceiving the field of productive imagination has its own merits, I would nonetheless contend that it suppresses the full-fledged significance of Miki's analysis. While Ricœur's goal is to typologize the field of productive imagination in terms of its four fundamental fields, Miki's goal is to ground productive imagination in the basic experience from which productive imagination as such arises. Here we encounter his original contribution to the phenomenology of productive imagination. According to Miki's intriguing thesis, all modes of productive imagination have the same experiential roots; namely, they are all rooted in action: *the logic of the imagination is the logic of action*.

What exactly does the concept of action mean? According to Miki, action has four fundamental characteristics: it is embodied, expressive, social, and historical. First, to claim that action is embodied is to suggest that it takes root in our embodied relation to things and the world at large: "it is through our bodies that we collide with things themselves in their materiality" (Miki 2016: 26). Second, the qualification of action as expressive can be understood in two complementary ways: in terms of self-expression and world-expression. The acts of the acting subject are forms of self-expression and simultaneously expressions of the world's own possibilities: they realize the world's potentiality by rendering it an expressive world. Third, to claim that action is social is to suggest that it is neither individual, nor universal, but collective (Muramoto 2010: 15–16). In Miki's words, the logic of action refers to group psychology. "Everything that can be seen as a product of group psychology, such as language, myth, manners, custom, institutions, etc., cannot be grasped by formal logic" (Miki 2016: 27). Finally, precisely because it is social in the collective sense of the term, action is fundamentally historical: the logic of action is the logic of history, conceived not from the perspective of comprehension, but from the perspective of historical action.

Thus for Miki, productive imagination is grounded in action and as such, it is fundamentally embodied, expressive, social, and historical. To a certain degree, it thereby becomes understandable why Miki would claim that the logic of the imagination is the logic of action; yet only to a degree, for it still remains unclear how one is to understand Miki's general contention that besides the logic of the intellect there is another kind of *logic*, which must be identified as the logic of the imagination. One could list three fundamental reservations. (1) Clearly, it is one thing to qualify certain experiences (say, those of dreams or daydreaming) as prelogical, or alogical; it is an altogether different matter to contend that at least some of the experiences that do not subscribe to the principles of formal logic are nonetheless logical, although in a different sense of the term. (2) So also, it still remains unclear why one

should identify this preconceptual logic and the logic of the imagination, and not as some other kind of logic. (3) Finally, it is unclear why one should qualify the logic of the imagination as a proto-logic (*Urlogik*).[10]

First, a methodological remark. In "Myth," Miki argues that productive imagination shapes the human experience of the world by way of generating collective representations, symbols, and forms. With this in mind, he qualifies the logic of the imagination as the logic of collective representation, the logic of symbols, and the logic of forms. In what follows, I want to turn to Miki's analysis of these three themes and show that insofar as we see them as accomplishments of productive imagination, we can derive from them a certain common structure. It is this common structure—so I will contend—that makes up the logic of the imagination. With regard to the three questions listed above, this means the following: (1) insofar as experiences that do not subscribe to the principles of formal logic are ruled by the structure of formation, transformation, and reformation, they are not just alogical or prelogical, but logical, although not in the sense of formal logic. (2) The logic of which we here speak is none other than the logic of the imagination. (3) This logic is "a kind of *Urlogik*" in the sense that all forms of the logic of the intellect are abstracted from it.

The Logic of the Imagination as the Logic of Collective Representations

Miki is committed to the view that myth is not a phenomenon of the past, but that each epoch has its own myths, and that the cultural worlds we inhabit always have, and always will have mythical dimensions. In direct contrast to the positivists and the spokespersons of the Enlightenment, Miki asserts that "freedom and equality were myths of the eighteenth century. In the present age, there are myths for the present age" (Miki 2016: 33). Following his line of thought, we could say that democracy and communism, the rise of ethno-nationalism in Europe and European Union, Xi Jinping's China and Shinzo Abe's Japan, Brexit and Trump's America, ISIS and the fight against terrorism are the myths of the twenty-first century. For Miki, myths are not fictive entities but constitutive ingredients of any social life. With this stipulation in mind, Miki opens a dialogue with anthropological and sociological literature on mythical consciousness, "in order to obtain some suggestions" (29). Miki is interested in those suggestions that will enable us to understand myths as constitutive formations of our historical sociocultural worlds.

Following Durkheimian sociologists, and especially Lévy-Bruhl, Miki contends that the domain of mythical consciousness is governed by collective

representations. These representations are both social and historical: social, in the sense that they are common to members of a certain social group; historical, in that they are common to different generations of the same social group (Miki 2016: 29). Collective representations are multidimensional: they are not merely cognitive phenomena, but also entail emotive, kinetic, and intellectual strata.

Following Lévy-Bruhl, Miki draws a sharp distinction between *the law of contradiction*, conceived as the fundamental principle of formal logic, and *the law of participation*, conceived as the fundamental principle that guides over the generation of collective representations.[11] Insofar as consciousness is governed by the law of participation, it is indifferent to the principle of contradiction: the one and the many, the same and the other, and the here and the there do not constitute sets of oppositions and do not compel one to give up one alternative if one chooses the other. In some cases, the primitive mind can plainly go against the principle of noncontradiction, as happens when it conceives of things in the surroundings as themselves and simultaneously not themselves. To use Miki's example, the members of the Bololo clan believe that they are red parrots. They do not believe that their ancestors were red parrots before they were born, or that they will become red parrots once they die. Rather, they believe that they are red parrots here and now. Such a somatic and mystical symbiosis must be understood in a twofold sense: as the identification of the individual person with the social group and as the identification of the person with things in the surrounding world. Such a twofold symbiosis is an accomplishment of productive imagination.

However, the effects of productive imagination are not reducible to the generation of such identifications. Following Lévy-Bruhl, Miki contends that myth is born precisely when the above-mentioned symbioses are not accepted at face value. Precisely when their validity comes into question, the need is born for the reinforcement of the social ties that bind the members of the social group to each other. Myth is born from the need of such reinforcement.[12] Not surprisingly, therefore, myths represent solidarity not only with things we come across in the surrounding world, but also with the past of the social group. We are confronted here with myth's *ideological* function: while the loss of commitment to the established collective representations gives rise to a crisis of established meaning, myth strives to overcome such a crisis by reestablishing the bond that ties the present to the past, by demonstrating that the present is the child of the past and thereby reinvigorating the power of collective representations.

Miki's appropriation of Lévy-Bruhl's standpoint, no matter how legitimate it might be,[13] lies beneath his identification of myth as a form of productive imagination. For Miki, productive imagination is the power that shapes our world-understanding through collective representations, whose functioning is

governed by the law of participation. Moreover, in light of the fact that this law does not subscribe to the principle of noncontradiction, Miki can claim that imagination is *a priori* to reason and that the historical sociocultural worlds are constituted not by reason, but by imagination.[14]

Miki's analysis of myth in light of Lévy-Bruhl's studies brings to light myth's ideological function: it reinvigorates the established collective representations. However, myth can also perform a "utopian" function, as Miki's engagement with Georges Sorel's revolutionary syndicalism demonstrates (Sorel 2004).[15] While in Lévy-Bruhl's studies, myth primarily has to do with the historical past, "what Sorel calls myth primarily has to do with the creation of the future" (Miki 2016: 46). Miki much appreciates Sorel's recognition of the role of imagination in the constitution of the cultural worlds. As Miki puts it, "What he [Sorel] refers to as myth is nothing other than a product of the imagination" (45). Miki also appreciates Sorel's emphasis on the dynamic, developmental, and, more broadly, historical nature of productive imagination, and on the voluntary and affective dimensions of productive imagination ("Sorel states that myth is an expression of the will" [43]). Nonetheless, Miki is critical of Sorel's persistent attempt to remove all intellectual elements from myth and, more generally, from imagination. In this regard, Miki distances himself from Sorelianism, conceived as a branch of irrationalism.

According to Sorel, while myth is an expression of the irrational will, utopia is a product of intellectual labor.[16] Miki accepts the validity of this distinction, although with important reservations. Even though both myth and utopia entail cognitive, emotive, and kinetic dimensions, in the case of myth, the emotive and kinetic elements are fundamental, while in the case of utopia, the cognitive element is primary. With this in mind, Miki contends that "we can probably view myth as belonging to productive imagination (*produktive Einbildungskraft*) and utopia as belonging to the reproductive imagination (*reproduktive Einbildungskraft*)" (43). Just as for Sorel, so also for Miki, it is myth, and not utopia, that anticipates and builds the future world.

We can now understand Miki's central and highly intriguing claim: "we must conceive imagination at the root of the world's creation" (64). For Miki, the world as we know it is always already given as a horizon of shared meanings (Krummel 2017: 255–56) and this horizon is largely shaped by collective representations, conceived as accomplishments of productive imagination. Herein we encounter *the primary function of productive imagination*, namely, its function to shape collective representations and thereby to transform a formless universe into a cultural world, conceived as a horizon of shared meanings, that is, as a synthetic totality of historical forms. The very fact that the human world is fractured into a large variety of cultural worlds provides

the evidence needed to maintain that the human world is shaped neither by sensations, nor by reason (both of which are, presumably, common to all humanity) but by productive imagination. Yet the very fact that these forms are irreducibly historical also indicates their fragility and signals that, sooner or later, all the established collective representations will lose their validity. At such moments when collective representations "no longer speak to us," we face the transformation of the historically formed world into a universe of pure indetermination—a transformation that one could further character-ize as the world's dehumanization or as a crisis of the overarching meaning that gives human life its sense and unity. It is precisely at such moments of crises that we come across the *secondary function of productive imagina-tion*. Besides shaping collective representations, productive imagination also counterbalances their nullification, and it does so in two fundamental ways: either, as in Lévy-Bruhl, by reinvigorating the validity of those collective representations that are no longer accepted at face value, or, as in Sorel, by replacing them with the creation of novel collective representations. In short, to conceive of imagination at the root of the world's creation is to recognize that not only the formation but also the reformation and transformation of collective representations are the works of productive imagination. *Forma-tion, reformation, transformation*: such are, then, the key words of the logic of the imagination.

The Logic of the Imagination as the Logic of Symbols

Although our everyday worlds are largely shaped by collective representa-tions, they are nonetheless not reducible to collective representations. More-over, while collective representations are, by nature, cut off from anything specifically individual, according to Miki, the logic of the imagination is the logic of the individuals. Miki's identification of the logic of the imagination as the logic of symbols significantly broadens the field of productive imagi-nation by incorporating within it not only what is collective, but also what is individual.

For Miki, all forms of logic perform one and the same function: they enable a human being to transcend the boundaries of immediate experience. Miki appears to think of the world given through immediate experience analogously to how Hegel thought of sense-certainty, namely, as a field of pure indetermination. Nonetheless, from Miki's analysis one can derive some general features characteristic of immediate experience. One can begin by saying that immediate experience consists of an embodied encounter with things themselves in the surrounding world. Miki takes this to mean

that our embodied "collision with things themselves" (Miki 2016: 26, 27) is largely motivated impulsively and instinctually. The identification of drives, impulses, instincts, bodily passions, and needs at the bottom of our embodied encounter with things themselves is of great significance for our understanding of the logic of the imagination. It allows Miki to identify pathos as the experiential basis that underlies the logic of the imagination. This issue calls for some clarification.

Miki employs the concept of pathos with references to the lived body (which in his earlier works, Miki called "the inner body"[17]), conceived as the preconscious locus of instincts, drives, and impulses that shape consciousness not outwardly, but inwardly. Precisely because these instincts, drives, and impulses are preconscious, pathos is more original than logos, just as the inner body is more original than consciousness. Shigenori Nagatomo has argued that "of the pathos, Miki recognizes two major tendencies: he assigns the state of being to the passive phase and impulse to the active phase of pathos. It is the active impulse which animates a creation of image" (Nagatomo 1995: 55). Since desires, drives, impulses, and needs lie at the bottom of immediate experience, human life cannot content itself with the indeterminacy characteristic of immediate experience. No matter how insatiable they might be, impulses would not be impulses if they did not strive for fulfillment. Precisely because immediate experience is not merely passive, but is largely guided by active pathos, human life is motivated to search for ways to transcend the field of immediate experience.

How is such an act of transcendence to be understood? Along with Théodule Ribot, the author of *The Essay on Creative Imagination* (Ribot 1906), Miki sees two, and only two, possibilities: one can "venture to the yonder side of that which can be raised by immediate experience" (Miki 2016: 33) either by means of *inference* or *imagination*. Following Ribot, Miki contends that originally, these two procedures were intermingled and that only subsequently they were distinguished from each other. Miki qualifies the original inseparability of these two forms of logic as the logic of the imagination. Here we see the reason why Miki would identify the logic of the imagination as the logic of emotions and further qualify it as the logic of love. It is precisely through *eros* that the daemonic impulse that lies at the root of immediate experience develops into an idea, thereby accomplishing the transition from pathos to logos: "Idea . . . is born from the daemonic pathos, and this pathos contains an *eros* as its impulse in its longing from nothingness to being, from the unrestrictedness to restricted, from darkness to light."[18]

How does imagination accomplish this transition from nothingness to being, that is, from pure indeterminacy of immediate experience to the determinate ideality of the *logos*? Arguably, the things we collide with through our bodies in the field of immediate experience obtain their meaning through

the symbolizing power of productive imagination. Through the imagination, human life symbolizes what it lives through by means of externally formed images. So also, through the imagination, human life animates the things it has "collided with" by offering them symbolic meaning. Besides being the logic of emotions and the logic of love, the logic of the imagination is also the logic of symbols.[19]

One should not confuse symbolization with allegorization or pictorialization, both of which employ images as illustrations. Illustrations are by definition secondary: they rely upon anterior givenness of a thing that is being illustrated. By contrast, symbolization is fundamentally primary: it marks the original way in which things obtain their meaning. So as to emphasize this priority, Miki speaks of the "symbolization without the symbolized" (Miki 2016: 38). By this, we are to understand that symbolization is the means whereby productive imagination performs the transition from the indeterminate chaos of original experience to the field of determination.

Thus, the world reaches determinacy through acts of symbolization, conceived as accomplishments of productive imagination. Presumably, insofar as an active *pathos* lies at the root of immediate experience, such a symbolic world serves the function of their fulfillment. Nonetheless, desires and impulses that lie at the heart of immediate experience are in principle insatiable.[20] We face here a peculiar dialectic between fulfillment and insatiability, which relies upon the same logic we have already encountered in Miki's analysis of collective representations. Here also we need to draw a distinction between the primary and secondary functions of productive imagination. The *primary* function of productive imagination consists of the transformation of the field of immediate experience into a determinate symbolic world. However, the validity of such a symbolic world comes into question as soon as this world no longer provides the life-forming impulses with their self-realization. At such moments of disillusionment, we come across the *secondary* function of productive imagination, namely, the function of either reforming the validity of established symbols or replacing them with other symbols.

Formation, reformation, transformation: once again we discover that these three concepts make up the logic of the imagination. Just as productive imagination is the power that forms collective representations, so also it is the power that provides immediate experience with symbolic meaning. Moreover, just as productive imagination is the power that either reforms the validity of collective representation or generates new collective representation, so also it proves to be the power that either reconstitutes the legitimacy of established symbols or replaces them with other symbols. The logic of collective representations and the logic of symbols are guided by the same logic, which Miki invites us to conceive of as the logic of the imagination. The logic

of the imagination is not only the logic of collective representations, but also the logic of symbols.

The Logic of the Imagination
as the Logic of Forms

We are dealing here with approximations. Just as the logic of the imagination is not reducible to the logic of collective representations, so also, it is not reducible to the logic of symbols, and especially insofar as symbols are conceived as impulsively driven expressions of the imagination. The foregoing account of the logic of symbols is psychological, and even though Miki invites us to draw such psychological implications, nonetheless, we cannot overlook Miki's explicit observation that "we ought not to understand the imagination, from the outset, in a psychological sense" (Miki 2016: 41).

Eros, conceived as the active impulse that underlies immediate experience, is not reducible to desire, which means that it cannot be accounted for in terms of merely subjective satisfaction. For Miki, the logic of love is not the logic of gratification, but the logic of transgressing the merely subjective boundaries of immediate existence. The striving that characterizes the original impulse is the striving for being, for light, for determination, that is, for *form*. Following Dilthey, Miki maintains that imagination produces "something ideal," namely, it produces *forms* or *types* (*kata*) (36).[21] By this, we are to understand that the particulars we come across in the everyday world already typify commonalities, and these commonalities are to be conceived as accomplishments of productive imagination. The concept of form, or type (*kata*), signifies the subsumption of the particular within the intersubjective context of mutual understanding. Forms, or types, are of subjective origin, yet their validity is by no means psychological: the cultural worlds we find ourselves in are shaped by the accomplishments of typifying consciousness, which constitute communal meanings and values.

For Miki, forms are conceivable only insofar as they overcome two sets of binary oppositions. First, forms are both subjective and objective.[22] Second, forms are both individual and universal.[23] Yet we have to admit that the field that stretches between the merely subjective and the merely objective as well as between the merely individual and the merely universal is remarkably broad, which means that Miki's concept of form admits of highly diverse degrees of generality. At its lowest level, the determination of any empirical object as an object of a certain type is already an accomplishment of typifying consciousness. When we name things we come across in our surroundings, we rely upon the accomplishments of productive imagination.[24] At its highest level, language, myth, science, and technology are also forms, although much

more general forms. On this basis, Miki asserts that "what Cassirer refers to as 'the philosophy of symbolic forms' needs to be rewritten in accordance with the logic of the imagination" (Miki 2016: 36).

At the bottom of Miki's analysis of the imagination, we discover a conception of human life that is ruled by the impulse to overcome the indeterminacy characteristic of immediate experience. This impulse is the driving force behind the generation of forms that subsume all the experiential particulars. All these forms, without exception, are creations of the human will and imagination, even though no particular individual is ever in the position to generate these forms in their entirety. This means that the forms of which we here speak are not only the results of human creation, but also the goals of human appropriation.[25] Only insofar as they are appropriated by a particular community can they suitably perform their function of the world's humanization. However, there are at least two fundamental conditions that need to be met for the world to be humanized. A community must not only establish the fundamental forms that will subsume experiential particulars, but the members of the community must also accept the validity of the forms in question. Yet the very fact that these forms are historical means that sooner or later their validity is no longer accepted at face value. At such moments of disenchantment, forms lose their objective validity and are recognized as arbitrary projections of subjective will—mere fictions, which have no hold on reality.

Formation, reformation, transformation: we once again discover the same logic of the imagination, yet this time in the context of form constitution. The logic of the imagination is not reducible to the original configuration of forms, and if one should qualify their configuration as the *primary* function of productive imagination, then to this one should further add that the reconfiguration of forms, conceived either as the reformation of existent forms or as their replacement with alternative forms, makes up the *secondary* function of productive imagination.

Conclusion

To what degree is Miki's philosophy of the imagination a child of its time? It provides a powerful explanation of the world of the 1930s and 1940s, characterized by all its disturbing myths, alarming collective representations, symbols, and forms. One can only smile ironically as one tries to think of such a world either as the manifestation of reason or as a spiritual formation that relies upon the resources of sensuous experience. A philosophy that grants primacy to imagination over reason and sensibility provides a viable alternative to rationalism and empiricism and a much more compelling account of the Japanese (although by no means only Japanese) world of the 1930s and

1940s than any rationalist or empiricist position could ever generate. Still, if this philosophy is nothing more than a child of its time, then one can quality it as a *Weltanschauung* that has outlived its day—a page in relatively recent intellectual history, which carries little genuinely *philosophical* significance. While this so-called "philosophy" might very well explain the mindset of the 1930s and 1940s, it appears incapable of saying anything of importance about the structure of the sociocultural world itself.

As a response to such an objection, it is important to stress that here, in Miki's reflections on the imagination, we come across the very same insights that other phenomenologically oriented Western thinkers will present a few decades later. In his recent study, John Krummel has also emphasized this point, bringing Miki's philosophy of the imagination into dialogue with Cornelius Castoriadis, Paul Ricœur, and Charles Taylor. However, according to Krummel, "in comparison to Ricœur or Castoriadis, Miki still seems to be caught in a residual transcendentalism inherited from Kant when he emphasizes the transcendentality of the imagination and uses the terminology of German transcendentalism" (Krummel 2017: 264). I would suggest that, quite on the contrary, in this "residual transcendentalism" lies Miki's unique contribution to the phenomenology of productive imagination and that it constitutes a significant strength of his philosophical standpoint.

The logic of the imagination, interpreted as the logic of formation, reformation, and transformation of collective representations, symbols, and forms, is indicative of the fact that there is a constant need for cultural renewal and rejuvenation. On the one hand, each culture produces its own identity by means of self-objectification. On the other hand, since it reaches its own self-objectification in the irreducibly historical collective representations, symbols, and forms, it is only a question of time until each culture will find itself locked in within its own self-objectifications. In Miki's own words,

> Humans form a world and by producing culture discover within it a dwelling place and gain life. . . . That which was the developing form of life will in due time become a negation of life and will become a shackle for life. Culture become the so-called humans' "self-alienation" rather than an objectification of life. Life that has thus achieved a formative synthesis of self, by producing the culture, now falls again into a separation and an opposition.[26]

The perpetual transformation of the objectification of life into its self-alienation is indicative of a perpetual crisis of humanity.[27] Yet in the world ruled by imagination, only imagination itself can provide the resources needed to counteract the perpetual crises that it itself breeds. If the crisis is not momentary, but perpetual, and if the task of rebirth is not relative, but absolute, then this crisis can only be countered, and this task can only be met, by affirming the idea of *absolute creativity*.[28] For Miki, life itself is necessarily situated not

only between pathos and logos, but also between hope and despair, elation and disenchantment, cultural crisis and its overcoming. Miki's philosophy of productive imagination is a philosophy of absolute creativity.[29]

Notes

1. Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger (insofar as his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is seen as a work that belongs to the phenomenological tradition), and Paul Ricœur appear to be the only great phenomenologists to have spoken of productive imagination explicitly.

2. As Susan Townsend puts it, this study consists of "a rather haphazard collection of notes, not unlike Pascal's *Pensees*" (Townsend 2009: 214).

3. To the list of Ricœur's writings on the imagination, one should also add his so-far unpublished Lectures on the Imagination, which he delivered at the University of Chicago in 1975.

4. Miki's analysis of myth—conceived not as a phenomenon of antiquity, but as a perpetual cultural force—demonstrates how the human world-understanding is shaped by the imagination. His analysis of institutions shows how our social and historical worlds are organized by the imagination. Finally, Miki's account of technology brings to light that the transformations of the historical world are also largely driven by the imagination.

5. See Cassirer, E. *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Dritter Teil: Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis*, viii.

6. According to Miki, the everyday world of our experience needs to be clarified phenomenologically, yet it cannot be clarified either in accordance with the Husserlian or Heideggerian principles. In a short text from 1930, entitled "Is Phenomenology the Science of Tomorrow?" Miki argues that neither Husserlian phenomenology, conceived as phenomenology of reason and the science of pure consciousness, nor Heideggerian phenomenology, conceived as the analysis of the conditions of human existence and the phenomenology of being, can be identified as a "phenomenology for tomorrow." According to Miki, both need to be supplanted with a phenomenology that studies "the conditions of even more realistic and historical human existence" (*MKZ*, 13: 105; John Krummel's translation). This short text does not clarify in detail how exactly Miki conceives of the phenomenology for the future. It does make clear, however, that Miki conceives of this phenomenology as a certain kind of synthesis of Marxism and phenomenology. He thus writes that phenomenology "requires the analysis of human conditions that would complete the self-alienation particularly in its contemporary sense or more precisely in the sense of a commercial 'product' (*shōhin* 商品). This type of phenomenology would probably not comprise the science of tomorrow. It is the science of today. But it is also the science *for* tomorrow." Presumably, Miki identifies his own writings with this kind of "third wave of phenomenology."

7. As John Krummel has it, "Miki in developing his philosophy of the imagination aims to take the standpoint of the actor acting *within* history as opposed to the

philosopher who merely theorizes about facts from outside of their historical happenings. The point is that the practical and historical dimension is essential in Miki's understanding of the imagination" (Krummel 2017: 261).

8. Here we encounter one of the central reasons why, in the title of this work, Miki speaks not just of imagination, but of the *logic* of the imagination. This turn of phrase suggests that the laws of logic do not apply to imagination, that in order to grasp what imagination is, one must rely on other principles. According to Miki, imagination generates its own principles and it must be judged according to these principles.

9. See Sartre (2004). For Miki's remarks on Sartre's writings on the imagination, see Miki (2016: 49).

10. While commenting on Aristotle's logic and Hegel's logic, Miki writes, "as a kind of *Urlogik*, the logic of imagination educes these two from within itself as configurations of self-reflection" (Miki 2011: 706–7).

11. In Lévy-Bruhl's words, "In the collective representations of primitive mentality, objects, beings, phenomena can be, though in a way incomprehensible to us, both themselves and something other than themselves. In a fashion no less incomprehensible, they give forth and they receive mystic powers, virtues, qualities, influences, which make themselves felt outside, without ceasing to remain where they are" (Lévy-Bruhl 1985: 76–77).

12. As Miki has it, "the continuity of time is suspended by a period of crisis. We can probably say that all myths are products of the consciousness of crisis" (Miki 2016: 60).

13. Starting with his early studies on the subject, Lévy-Bruhl has consistently defined "primitive collective representations" as noncognitive and nonconceptual (Mousalimas 1990: 37). By contrast, Miki interprets Lévy-Bruhl's collective representations as synthetic unities that comprise cognitive, emotive, and kinetic elements. This is Miki's conception of collective representations, not Lévy-Bruhl's. Even more importantly, Lévy-Bruhl has been criticized by many anthropologists for drawing too sharp a distinction between the primitive and the civilized minds. As Evans-Pritchard has it, Lévy-Bruhl made "civilized thought far more rational" and "savage thought far more mystical" than they both were and thus offered a "caricature" of the "primitive mentality" (Evans-Pritchard 1934: 7, 9). In light of this widespread criticism, which was also shared by Malinowski, Lowie, and Radin, Lévy-Bruhl modified his position in his later works by abandoning the controversial concept of the prelogical that stirred up the controversy. The question whether the abandonment of this concept signaled a substantive or merely a terminological revision appears to be a contentious issue (Mousalimas 1990: 41). The controversy concerning the sharp opposition between the primitive and the civilized mind plays no role whatsoever in Miki's interpretation of Lévy-Bruhl's writings. Moreover, according to Miki, no such distinction between the primitive and the civilized mind exists. "Will pre-logical modes of thinking vanish as a consequence? Lévy-Bruhl states that this is impossible. Even in advanced societies, traces of the pre-logical ways of thinking, instead of vanishing, remain in the majority of concepts" (Miki 2016: 31). Here again, we face Miki's and not Lévy-Bruhl's position.

14. According to Miki, "Imagination is more primordial than reason" (Miki 2016: 44). Miki returns to this assertion on a number of occasions: "The originariness of the

imagination vis-à-vis the intellect must be acknowledged" (Miki 2016: 45); "We can recognize the existence of the imagination at the root of the intellect" (46).

15. We will soon see why the concept of utopia can be used here only metaphorically, and thus, in quotation marks.

16. As Sorel puts it in his "Letter to Daniel Halévy," "Men who are participating in great social movements always picture their coming action in the form of images of battle in which their cause is certain to triumph. I proposed to give the name of 'myth' to these constructions . . . the general strike of the syndicalists and Marx's catastrophic revolution are such myths" (Sorel 2004: 20). "A utopia is, on the contrary, an intellectual product; it is the work of theorists who, after observing and discussing the facts, seek to establish a model to which they can compare existing societies in order to estimate the amount of good and evil they contain. . . . It is a construction which can be broken into parts and of which certain pieces have been shaped in such a way that they can (with a few alterations) be fitted into future legislation (28).

17. Miki employs the concept of the "inner body" in earlier works, such as "On Pathos" and "Ideology and the Logic of Pathos" (1933). This concept suggests that, in a good sense, materiality is more fundamental than form. Thus in "Ideology and the Logic of Pathos," Miki writes, "Contrary to the Greek way of thinking, that which is material or physically substantial is more primary than that which has form or is ideal" (quoted from Fujita 2011: 312). With regard to these studies, one could qualify Miki's philosophy as materialistic phenomenology. However, such a qualification would be inappropriate with regard to *The Logic of the Imagination*. According to Fujita, already in *Philosophical Anthropology* Miki carefully avoids using the concept of the "inner body" and replaces it with the concept of nothingness (313). Presumably, in *The Logic of the Imagination*, Miki holds the view that insofar as human life is determined by pathos, it is determined by genuine nothingness, conceived as the ground of existence. This nothingness is not to be conceived as matter, but as "formless form": "The one that ties together the many forms is formless rather than being a form, it is a so-called 'formless form'" (Miki 2016: 40). Thus, in *The Logic of the Imagination*, the body is not conceptualized as the original locus of pathos, but as a *medium* that binds being and nothingness.

18. Miki, *Bungeiteki ningengaku* (「文芸的人間学」; *Anthropology via the Arts and Literature*), Vol. 11, 1967, 473 (quoted from Nagatomo 1995: 56).

19. As Fujita has it, "Miki's unique philosophy was made possible on the basis of the fact that he discovered, in the imagination, a power capable of giving logical (i.e., *logos*-informed) expression to the impulses of *pathos*, which we inevitably harbor insofar as we exist as embodied human beings" (Fujita 2011: 317).

20. As Miki puts it in his *A Philosophical Foundation of Humanism*, human desires "possess an unlimitedness in that they can never be immediately satisfied by anything that is given. As such, the human desires are daemonic. Daemonic here means a sensibility of possessing unlimitedness. All that is human has this sort of character" (quoted from Nagatomo 1995: 55–56 [170]).

21. Since Miki's concept of form is heavily indebted to Dilthey, it is worthwhile noting how Dilthey himself conceives of forms or types: "The particular manifestations of life that confront the understanding subject can be considered as belonging

to a sphere of commonality, to a type. The commonality sets up a relation between manifestation of life and spirit such that as soon as we locate the manifestation in a common context, a spiritual meaning attaches to it" (Dilthey 2002: 230).

22. Insofar as forms arise out of the insatiable impulse, they are subjective. However, they are not merely subjective, for they have objectified themselves in the sensuous world.

23. Insofar as we can recognize many individuals as having the same form, they are universal. However, they are not universal in the strict sense of the term, because forms are by definition manifold: "Forms are not one. Forms in relation to forms are forms by being many" (Miki 2016: 40).

24. To use Dilthey's telling example, "Every square planted with trees, every room in which chairs are arranged, is understandable to us from childhood because human tendencies to set goals, produce order, and define values in common have assigned a place to every square and every object in the room" (Dilthey 2002: 209). While we are "always already immersed in the medium of commonalities" this medium itself is a subjective accomplishment, which Miki interprets as an accomplishment of productive imagination.

25. To return to Dilthey, "The child grows up within the order and ethos of the family that it shares with the other members and in this context it accepts the way the mother regulates things. Before the child learns to speak, it is already wholly immersed in the medium of commonalities. The child only learns to understand the gestures and facial expressions, movements and exclamations, words and sentences, because he or she constantly encounters them as the same and in the same relation to what they mean and express. Thus, the individual becomes oriented in the world of objective spirit" (Dilthey 2002: 229–30).

26. Miki, *Huymanizumu no testugakuteki kiso* (「ヒューマニズムの哲学的基礎」; *The Philosophical Foundation of Humanism*), Vol. 5, 1967, 176–77 (quoted from Nagatomo 1995: 14).

27. Shigenori Nagatomo has argued that Miki's philosophy of productive imagination should be understood as a philosophical response to the looming crisis of the day. "The 'mixed' connotes a degree of chaos as a counter concept to form (*eidos*), and the chaos is formless, presenting itself as a state of the world in which Miki believed he and his contemporaries lived. Therefore, as a way of correcting this situation, Miki attempts to give 'form' though his philosophical endeavors to the otherwise formless world. Basically, Miki sees in contemporary anxiety, springing from the formless world, a lack of artfully creative, productive spirit which he tried to exhort us to embody through the act of 'creative imagination' by assuming the standpoint of acting self-awareness" (Nagatomo 1995: 6–7).

28. As Miki has it, "The one that ties together the many forms is formless rather than being a form, it is a so-called 'formless form'" (Miki 2016: 40). Not only do all forms arise out of nothingness, they also all return to nothingness. Absolute creativity appears to be Miki's response to the perpetual crises that such a play of nothingness and being generates.

29. A word of gratitude is due to John W. M. Krummel for his kind help with the preparation of the text.

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Chapter 6

Unpacking
"the Imaginary Texture of the Real"
with Kant, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty[1]

Kathleen Lennon

In this chapter, I put forward a concept of the imagination that weaves together many of the key and overlapping dichotomies around which discussions of the imagination have circled: dichotomies between the productive and reproductive, between presence and absence, between creativity or spontaneity and receptivity or passivity, between invention and disclosure, and between cognition and affect. Interimplicated with these dichotomies is that between imagination and perception. Utilizing the work of Kant and Merleau-Ponty, and in critical conversation with Sartre, I distil an account of the imagination that cuts across these dichotomies, delineating a capacity that is at work in perception, as well as in the range of activities of "phantasing" or "conjuring up," to which the term is often restricted.

Imagination and Image

Central to the account of the imagination, which I wish to defend is a recognition of the imagination working within everyday experience. Imagination is, I shall suggest, a (creative) capacity to experience the world in a certain way, in the form of images. The concept of image here is much wider than what is sometimes taken to be its standard definition: "the internal [or external] representation of a sensory object in the absence of a corresponding sensory stimulus" (Brann 1991: 13).What marks each of the writers that I will discuss is the rejection of such a conception of images (deriving from the writings of Hume), as faint copies of sensory perceptions in an inner mental realm of the imagination. As Merleau-Ponty points out,

> The word image is in bad repute because we have thoughtlessly believed that the design was a tracing, a copy, a second thing and that the mental image was . . .

belonging among our private bric a brac. But in fact it is nothing of the kind. . . .
They are [that] . . . without which we would never understand the quasi presence
and imminent visibility which make up the whole problem of the imaginary.
(Merleau-Ponty 1993: 126)

In place of an account of images as copies lined up in an inner faculty, here
they are viewed as the shapes or forms in terms of which we experience the
world, which weave together the present and absent, in a way that requires
both invention and discovery, and remains open to possibilities of revision.
To speak of images in this way, and of the imagination as that which concerns
such images, is not to employ a usage quite removed from our everyday one.
When we speak of people as imaginative, we do not usually mean that they
live in a world of make believe, played out within their interior life. We often
mean that they are particularly perceptive, sensitive to the shapes that the
world (including others) around them can take. On this wider conception of
the imagination, the activities of conjuring up or fantasizing is just one arena
in which the imagination is at work. (Though, even here, it is questionable
whether the Humean picture is the correct one.) Imagination is therefore at
work, in Strawson's words, in

> seeing a cloud as a camel or a . . . formation of stalagmites as a dragon . . . in the
> first application of the word "astringent" to a remark . . . to a . . . scientist seeing
> a pattern in phenomena which has never been seen before . . . to Blake seeing
> eternity in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower. (1974: 95)

KANT:
The Imagination and the Art of Synthesis

The articulation of such an account begins with Kant. The productive imagi-
nation was an *active* faculty, for Kant, central to the *synthesis*, which was
necessary for us to have perceptual experiences at all. For Kant, our percep-
tual experience is never an awareness of momentary, brute sensory data. It is
always an awareness of, what he terms, a *manifold* of intuitions, always and
already organized/shaped. This shaping of a manifold is what Kant refers to
as synthesis. The activity of synthesis is the distinctive activity of the produc-
tive imagination.

> What is first given to us is appearance. When combined with consciousness it
> is called perception. . . . Now, since every appearance contains a manifold, and
> since different perceptions therefore occur in the mind separately and singly,
> combination of them such as they cannot have in sense, is demanded. There
> therefore must exist in us an active faculty for the synthesis of this manifold.

> To this faculty I give the name imagination . . . imagination has to bring the manifold of intuition into the form of an image. (Kant 1929: 144)

Here, Kant is using the concept of image in a broad sense and not just to denote visual images. Images are the shape or form given to a sensory manifold by the imagination.

The Kantian account, which stresses that in perceptual experience we have *synthesized* sensory data, is important in drawing our attention to the "seeing as" structure of perception, which is one stressed by a multitude of writers. Strawson illuminatingly compares the Kantian discussion with Wittgenstein's (Wittgenstein 1968). In the Kantian account, the imagination is at work, not only when a child treats a broom as a horse, but also when he or she perceives a horse as a horse also (Guyer 2004). In each case, a multiplicity of sensations is organized into a shape or form that enables us to experience it *as* something. In Michael Young's terms, our perceptual experience involves a "construing as," and such construal requires the imagination (Young 1988: 140–64). For Kant, perception requires synthesis and synthesis requires the workings of both the productive *and* the reproductive imagination. The apprehension of a manifold requires that a multiplicity of intuitions "must be run through and held together" (Kant 1929: 183) so that the momentary present can be linked to what is not immediately presented to us. The capacity, *the making of the absent present*, is what, in Fiona Hughes words, "makes possible our transcendence of the mere moment or present and "sets us in relation to something other than ourselves" (Hughes 2007: 147). The reproductive imagination keeps absent experiences in play and the productive imagination unites this manifold of the present and absent into a unity, a synthesized image. The reproduction involved here is, I think, best understood through Strawson's discussion. He discusses what is involved in perceiving a dog: "To perceive something as a dog, when silent and stationary, is to see it as a possible mover and barker" (Strawson 1974: 89). We should not, however, interpret this as requiring us to conjure up inner mental images of the dog moving or barking. Most of the time, we do not do that. Rather, the possible moving and barking is *alive in* the immediate and present perception of the dog: We will return to this below, for it is pivotal to Merleau-Ponty's account. But it is important to note in the context of contemporary discussions of perception in which the phenomenon of the "absent present" is often accommodated by the postulation of additional unconscious mental images.

In the section of the *First Critique* entitled the *Schematism*, Kant describes the workings of the imagination "an art concealed in the depths of human soul, whose real mode of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover" (Kant 1929: 183). This art is *the art of being able to detect in the manifold* a possibility or possibilities of unification. It requires both

activity and passivity (spontaneity and receptivity): receptivity to intuitions and spontaneity in grasping the possibilities for synthesis. But the resulting phenomenal experience is not one in which these different components can be disentangled. In Kant's account of the productive imagination, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the way the synthesis is produced, and the consequent form that the world takes for us, is constrained by the categories, *universal* rules to which all perceptual content must conform. Consequently, there is a question mark over how much room the imagination has for the exercise of creativity. Moreover, in that text, Kant is primarily concerned with cognitive synthesis. However, in Kant's account of beauty in the *Critique of Judgement* (Kant 2007), we have an account of the productive imagination operating without the application of determining rules and an interweaving of image and affect.

In this text, Kant returns to the question of the possibility of judgment, which had formed a focus of the Schematism. Judgment in general, for him, is the faculty for thinking the universal within the particular. In his previous discussion, he had viewed this process as a process of subsumption. The particular instance is brought under a concept, which we hold prior to our encounter with the concrete. In this process, the concepts provide the rules for the imagination, guiding the process of synthesis. In this later work, however, he pays attention to a different category of judgment, what he terms reflective judgment. In such judgments, the imagination is *searching* for a form. It is within this context that he gives his account of the appreciation of beauty. Judgments of taste are not cognitive judgments. Perception of beautiful objects, Kant recognizes, is connected to *feelings* of pleasure. Feelings for him are subjective and noncognitive. Nonetheless, such subjective feelings are the ground of aesthetic judgments of beauty, which appear to make claims of universal validity. How can this be so? Well, for him, the feeling of pleasure is the experiencing of the harmonious relation between the manifold of sense and our understanding. Such a feeling is different from that of both pleasurable sensations and the esteem we feel for the morally good. It has a quality of disinterestedness linked to the recognition of *its potential validity for others*.

The harmony here is due to the work of the imagination, exercising its freedom in detecting, in what is presented, something that is intelligible to us. Fiona Hughes describes this in the following way: "the beautiful marks a moment when the . . . [imagination] makes sense of something in the world" (Hughes 2007: 6). The beautiful thing is one in which the imagination can creatively weave a form that displays "the harmonious interplay of understanding and imagination" (Schaper 1992: 373). (Kant stresses here that the source of the beauty is form; color, taste, smell, and texture are excluded. But we do not need to follow him in this.) Although the feeling of pleasure that constitutes the detection of such harmony is subjective, it makes demands of a universal kind. For, if the imagination has done its job properly, and

given Kant's humanist assumption that the facilities of human sensibility and understanding are universally shared, then when this form is made evident to others, they should also experience the same feeling. This is not just a claim about a causal regularity: the same objects causing the same feelings because we are made the same way, as some writers seem to suggest (Cohen and Guyer 1982). Once the harmony has been made manifest, then everyone would be justified in sharing the feeling, and indeed *should* do so. Failure to have the feelings is failure to detect the harmony. As Kant remarks, "The assertion is not that everyone *will* fall in with our judgment, but rather that everyone *ought* to agree with it" (Kant 2007: 85).

Whatever we may think about this as an account of aesthetic beauty, Kant has given us a model, of the way in which the imagination can work, creatively (and without concepts), which can have a more general application. It is one in which the activity of synthesis is put together, as Merleau-Ponty later stresses, with a *receptivity*, in a giving over of the subject to the world, but also of *an accountability to that world,* delivered by the necessity of others recognizing the appropriateness of the images/forms, which we imaginatively both create and detect. It is also a model in which the workings of the imagination are tied to affect. The images produced are affective and not simply cognitive. "A given object, through the intervention of sense, sets the imagination at work in arranging the manifold" (Kant 2007: 83). The productive imagination in this later work of Kant allows a *creative* apprehension of the form of the sensible. He argues here that we employ our creative imagination in *seeking* a form in the sensible world, whose validity depends on it being recognizable (and felt) by others. The form that we apprehend in the sensory manifold must be a *possible form* for the world to take. Such a dimension of creativity, if attached to an account of perception in general, allows for the possibility of our world being imagined in different ways, formed into a variety of images: "interminable reinterpretations to which it is legitimately susceptible" (Merleau-Ponty 1993: 139).

Many read Kant's account as *impositionist* (Hughes 2007). According to this model, the imagination *simply imposes* forms on an indeterminate given, in accordance with rules derived from the understanding. But this does not seem right. His account requires that the world encountered is one that is *apt for* the forms that we both seek out and impose upon it. In his discussion of synthesis, Kant stresses that the manifold that is encountered must be one that is *synthesizable*. And in the *Critique of Judgement*, the *a priori* principle that renders judgment possible is that nature is *susceptible* to our faculties, "a principle without which understanding could not feel itself *at home* in nature" (Kant 2007: 35). Nature must be susceptible to such images for them to be projectibly detectable by ourselves and others. This is also a feature of his account, which is picked up and developed by Merleau-Ponty.

What, however, haunts Kant's account of the imagination and makes it problematic for many, among whom I count myself, is that it seems to offer a picture of a noumenal subject confronting a noumenal world. The imagination can then appear as a faculty of just such a noumenal subject. (A quite contrary danger, which Kant himself seemed to be aware of in rewriting for the second edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason,* is that the description of the three moments of synthesis found in the first edition is read as a characterization of an empirical process of sensory processing of empirical subjects.) In the work of Merleau-Ponty, we find an account that rejects a noumenal subject, while retaining the fundamental Kantian insight that the imagination is what yields the texture of the real.

Sartre and Merleau-Ponty: Absence and Presence

Before turning to Merleau-Ponty, however, we need to address Sartre's writings on the *Imaginary*, with which Merleau-Ponty was in conversation. One of the great strengths of Sartre's account is the way in which he sees the imagination at work across a range of situations, in the way in which we can see doodles as animals, clouds as castles, take a photograph or a portrait to be a portrait of someone or something, or produce and engage with art works in general: "mental images, caricatures, photos are so many species of the same genus" (Sartre 2004: 19). This is a genus that includes seeing "the fat and painted cheeks, black hair and female body" of the impersonator Franconay, as Maurice Chevalier (25). (Here there are parallels with Strawson. However, in Sartre's work, in contrast to Strawson, we find a bifurcation of imagination and perception and correspondingly a bifurcation of the imaginary and the real. So although the imagination is at work when we see Franconay as Chevalier, it is not at work, according to him, when we see her as Franconay.)

In his work on the imagination (Sartre 2004; 2012), Sartre follows Husserl (Husserl 1962; 1970), both in rejecting the empiricist account of the imagination, in which it consists in inner pale copies of perceptions, and in insisting that imagining was a kind of intentional act distinct from perceiving. Consequently, he provides an account of the imagination that also stands in contrast to Kant, for whom both the productive and the reproductive imagination were engaged in perception, in the conjuring up of mental images, and in the production of and engagement with works of art. For Sartre, in both perceiving Pierre and imagining him, I am engaged in intentional acts directed in some way at Pierre. But they are intentional acts of quite different kinds: "consciousness is related [to Pierre] in two different ways" (Sartre 2004: 7). Nonetheless, "the imagining consciousness that I have of

Pierre is not a consciousness of an image of Pierre" (Sartre 2004: 7). In perception, something is *present* to us, something that is in excess of any aspects we may grasp of it, and to which we can return for further information. In contrast if I imagine Pierre, then Pierre is *absent*, and any characteristics of this imagined Pierre are ones that I have bestowed. "A perceptual consciousness appears to itself as *passive* . . . an imaging consciousness . . . [has] a *spontaneity* that produces and conserves the object as imaged" (14, emphasis added). For Sartre, the act of consciousness involved in imagining is *a negation of the real* and the constitution of an *irreal* image, whose distinctive mark was its *absence*. "In this sense one can say that the image has wrapped within it a certain nothingness . . . it gives its object as not being" (2004: 14).

When I make of a doodle the face of a creature, what is perceived is a set of material marks. But I *surpass* such perception by imagining in those marks the face. Here, I have gone beyond what is present to create an image that is *not present*. In so doing, I use the material of the ink marks as the grounding of my image, but the image itself is something constituted by my acts and, for Sartre, works by negating its ground and replacing it with an image whose constitutive character is its irreality. When Sartre discusses the performance artist Franconay, we see "a small stout brunette woman" but negate this materiality to posit an image of the absent Maurice Chevalier. For that to happen, "that black hair we did not see as black; that body we did not perceive as a female body, we did not see those prominent curves" (Sartre 2004: 27). The absent Chevalier comes, Sartre suggests, *to possess* the body in front of us. (It is hard to fault the phenomenology here.) Nonetheless, for Sartre, I am aware that I am spontaneously and at each moment creating this image; "the image represents a certain type of consciousness, absolutely independent of the perceptual type and, correlatively a sui generis type of existence for its objects" (93). (This seems less accurate and to omit the phenomenological overlaps between seeing Franconay as Franconnay and seeing her as Chevalier.) In each of the cases of imaginary acts that Sartre discusses, there is something perceived that serves as what Sartre calls the *analogon* of the image that is created: the perceptual ground that we negate and surpass in the creation of the image. This model he applies to photographs, portraits, and other works of art. Perception is, on this account, the passive reception of a positivity. It offers us the real. In contrast, the act of imagining requires a negation of such positivity and the creation of an image. Imagination is therefore the realm of activity/spontaneity. Sartre rests the possibility of our freedom on such a distinction: "It is because we are transcendentally free that we can imagine" (186), and we need to be able to imagine to possess such freedom. At any point, we can *negate* the real and surpass it into an imagined future that we ourselves posit.

But Merleau-Ponty rejects the dichotomy, found in Sartre's account, for *failing to accurately characterize and make sense* of the phenomenology of both perception and agency. By means of a critical engagement with Kant, Merleau-Ponty offers an account of perception that incorporates elements of *both* receptivity and spontaneity. Nonetheless, despite their fundamental differences, what is striking in reading the two authors is the similarity to be found in their phenomenological descriptions of perceptual experience. This is particularly the case in the use of the metaphor of pregnancy. This is used first by Sartre and becomes pivotal to Merleau-Ponty. Perceptual experience is pregnant, with a past, and elsewhere, and with possibilities for our future, in a way that is captured by both writers, but which sits in tension with Sartre's onto-logical dichotomy of the imaginary and the real. In his later works (Merleau-Ponty 1968), Merleau-Ponty introduces the terms *visible* and *invisible*, which echo and replace Sartre's sets of distinctions between the present and the absent, being and nothing, and the perceived and the imagined. Throughout this later work, there is an ongoing challenge to the account of our perceptual encounters, which Sartre offered. Sartre's account, he says, "assumes . . . a bipartite analysis: perception as observation, a close-woven fabric, without any gaps . . . the imaginary as locus of the . . . negation" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 266). Sartre, he complains, offers us a perceived world without depth. This he rejects. Instead, "there is no thing fully observable, no inspection of the thing that would be without gaps and that would be total . . . conversely, the imaginary is not an absolute unobservable. This distinction . . . is not that between the full and the void" (77). In place of Sartre's picture, he offers an account of perception in which the visible, what we might initially character-ize as the perceptually present, is woven though with the invisible, the absent, present, "a visible is not a chunk of absolutely hard, indivisible being, offered all naked to . . . vision . . . but ever gaping open" (132). He wishes to replace Sartre's account of the imaginary with "an operative imaginary . . . which is indispensable for the definition of Being itself" (85). This imaginary is not the freely postulated irreality that Sartre suggests but the latent depth in the perceived world. Pregnancy is again the recurrent metaphor. The visible is pregnant with the invisible. The invisible is not the nonvisible. It is made manifest through the visible, giving it "immense latent content of the past, the future and the elsewhere, which it announces and which it conceals" (114), In Sartre's account, we *posit* the imaginary and fix its content, but Merleau-Ponty suggests, in contrast, that "the invisible is a hollow in the visible, a fold in *passivity, not pure production*" (235) [my emphasis]. What he is offering us, therefore, is an account of "the visible as in-visible" (in the visible) (242) in place of a binary opposition between the perceptual and the imaginary, being and nothingness.

> The proper essence [le propre] of the visible is to have a layer [doublure] of invisibility . . . which it makes present as a certain absence. (Merleau-Ponty 1993: 147)

> The visible is not the contradictory of the visible, the visible itself has an invisible inner framework . . . and the in-visible is the secret counterpart of the visible, it appears only within it . . . it is in the line of the visible . . . it is inscribed within it. (in filigree). (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 215)

The shape of the world is an interweaving of the visible and the invisible. The framework of the visible and the invisible, which Merleau-Ponty offers, proves to be a rich resource for articulating multiple features of our perceptual experience. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, he pointed out that to recognize an object as red requires an awareness of other actual and possible reds, but it is *not to conjure up* these other reds (Merleau-Ponty 2012: 217). For Merleau-Ponty, the imaginary (the invisible) is explicitly separated from the domain of representation. There is no question of memories of past experiences or anticipations of future ones being lined up in the inner realm of consciousness alongside present sensory data. Rather, for him, the other possible reds are *alive* in the red that we see.

> This red is what it is only by connecting up . . . with other reds about it, with which it forms a constellation . . . a certain node in the woof of the simultaneous and the successive. . . . A punctuation in the field of red things, which includes the tiles of roof tops, the flags of gatekeepers . . . also a punctuation in the field of red garments, which includes the dresses of women, robes of professors. (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 132)

These connections are not a result of an intellectual process of generalizing or the workings of an empirical psychological process of association. They are part of the texture of perceptual experience: "the visible landscape under my eyes is not exterior to . . . other moments of time and past, but has them really behind itself in simultaneity" (267). Such simultaneity of other moments of time within the audible present is also the feature that allows us hear a melody in a piece of music. And the interweaving of the visible and invisible is what we experience when we see the carpet as extending under the cupboard and experience the completion of the pattern. The gestalt of the world is like that of a gesture. It is a movement across time in which a visible or positive presence carries with it an expressive depth.

Also in the *Phenomenology*, he points out that, when we perceive, each of our senses it suggests what is available to others:

> We see the rigidity and fragility of the glass, and when, it breaks with a crystal clear sound, this sound is borne by the visible glass. One sees the elasticity of

steel, the ductility of molten steel, the hardness of the blade in a plane, the soft-
ness of its shavings. . . . The form of a fold in a fabric of linen or cotton shows us
the softness or the dryness of the fibre. . . . In the movement of the branch from
which a bird has just left, we read its flexibility and its elasticity . . . we see the
weight of a block of cast iron that sinks in the sand. (Merleau-Ponty 2012: 238)

When I perceive an object, via one sense, a whole range of other possible
sensory encounters are implicated, including those involving other senses.
And he extends this range of possibilities to include a grasp of possible
perceptual encounters that would be had by other perceivers. Our perceptual
experience of the world has implicit within it the possibility of what we see
being perceived by others, whose experiences of it may be different from
ours. The possibility of such *differing* experiences latent within our own
perceptions is part of what makes those perceptions to be of things, of a
world. We experience our world as both available to all of our senses and
as open to a potentially infinite range of possible modes of perception from
different positions within it, perceptions that can never exhaust it. "Every
landscape of my life . . . is . . . pregnant with many other visions besides my
own"(Merleau-Ponty 1968: 123). The possibilities here are not constituted
by multiple acts of imagining consciousness but are implicit in the shape
the immediate perceptual world has for us. For Sartre, possibilities for our
future required acts of *negating* the world as perceived. For Merleau-Ponty,
we experience the world as *offering possibilities* to our bodies. We can
make sense of our activities within it by pointing to worldly characteristics
in which they are implicit. Merleau-Ponty argues that freedom only makes
sense within a field of possibilities. Our freedom emerges as a normatively
intelligible response, rather than an exercise in transcendence. As a conse-
quence, my relation to my past is neither one of its determining the present,
nor one in which it provides a ground to be negated. Though not a fate, the
past has a weight that bears on my present decisions and gives "the atmo-
sphere of my present" (467).

   Close reading of the works of both Merleau-Ponty and Sartre allows us to
recognize what we have termed the absent present in our perceptual experi-
ence of the world, woven into the gestalts of everyday experience. For Sartre,
the texture of everyday experience was misleading. It disguises from us the
distinction between the perceived and the imagined, and thereby the extent to
which the possibilities we seem to find in the world are of our own making. In
contrast, for Merleau-Ponty, the invisible/imaginary texture of the perceived
world is something that emerges from our corporeal immersion within it, a
manifestation of the multiple possibilities of the real. For Merleau-Ponty,
then, if we pay attention to the *character of perceptual experience itself*,
we find the imaginary within it. In this, he follows the lead that Kant has

provided. Nonetheless, he rejects a Kantian metaphysics of transcendental idealism. We need to pay attention to the phenomenology, the world as perceived, without metaphysical speculation as to its source. He dissociates himself from the view of the subject that itself *imposes* the laws of understanding onto the manifold, in favor of a subject that finds itself able to respond to harmonies encountered in nature. He does away with the transcendent constituting subject, bestowing, via the exercise of spontaneity, form onto a mass of intuitions that have been passively received. Such a picture, he argues, takes us away from the character of the perception itself. To grasp that character, we must return to prereflective experience:

> What have we then at the onset? Not a given manifold with a synthetic apperception which ranges over it and completely penetrates it, but a certain perceptual field against the background of the world . . . not a mosaic of qualities, but a total configuration.
>
> "Form" is not privileged in our perception because . . . it makes a world possible (in the Kantian sense), but rather because form is the very appearance of the world, not its condition of its possibility. (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 62)

> To perceive is not to experience a multitude of impressions . . . it is to see an immanent sense bursting forth from a constellation of givens. (23)

Synthesizing activity is not the imposition of conceptual form onto intuited matter. It is rather the *taking up* or *grasping of shape* in the world we encounter and which emerges in relation to our body. The productive imagination here is bodily, and it does, not so much impose form, as take up form, as a consequence of its sensitivity to the world in which it is placed.

In Merleau-Ponty's later work on institution, *Institution and Passivity* (Merleau-Ponty 2010), he provides an account of the processes whereby the imaginary gestalts of our perceived world are initiated, continued, and revised. The imaginary as *instituted* is encountered by us as something that has been deposited: "[the] inter-subjective or symbolic field, [the field of] cultural objects, . . . is our milieu, *our hinge*" (6). This is an imaginary organization of existence that is sociocultural as well as bodily. He writes we need to "understand the imaginary sphere . . . as the true *Stiftung* [institution] of Being" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 258). Lefort comments that "he uses *Stiftung* to designate the fecundity deriving from a moment in time . . . the workings of culture which opens a tradition" (Merleau-Ponty 2010: xv). The distinction between constitution and institution is key here. The imaginary as constituted is dependent on and makes no sense independent of the constituting subject(s). In contrast, the instituted imaginary is encountered in the sociohistorical field. But the instituted imaginary itself depends on a founding moment in which significance is opened

or instituted. He returns time and again to the *opening* of signification, the creative origin of the imaginary of the world, an originating creative (*instituting*) moment, in which meaning takes hold and signification becomes actualized. An initiating gesture (an advent) brings into view an aspect of the world, making it accessible to ourselves and others. A gesture is something to be *continued* in a way that is open, rather than determined, to the invitation to a future. Lefort comments, "If institution is openness to, openness is always produced—on the basis of" (Merleau-Ponty 2010: xi). We find "a certain variation in the field of existence already instituted, which is always behind us" (49–50). The imaginary world, both material and social, is that which we encounter "sedimented in me, a meaning as the invitation to a sequel, the necessity of a future" (50). What Merleau-Ponty emphasizes is the openness of such sequels. Even though each is grounded, he insists on the dimension of difference in the way in which different subjects/times may form a sequel, further institutions that are "echoes and exchanges" (15) of each other and that which they follow. And on the basis of which themselves new instituting events (*advents*) will take place. The new imaginaries emerge, then, from the encounters of bodies and world, and previously instituted imaginaries.

The Affective-Cognitive Synthesis

The final strand which I want to briefly highlight in articulating the responses of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty to Kant's writings on the imagination concerns the intimate relation between imagination and affect. The notion of affect has two aspects. One is the capacity of our bodies *to be affected*, to bear the marks of our interactions with the world and other bodies. Another is our capacities *to respond*, expressively or purposively. Both receptivity and spontaneity are in play. Both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty articulated the way in which the imaginary offers possibilities for response, *the imaginary thereby carrying affective salience.* (Although not discussed here, we find parallels in the writings of Castoriadis on the radical imagination, stressing the interweaving of the affective and the cognitive in its workings, and this was also found much earlier in Spinoza [Castoriadis, 1998; Spinoza 1951].)

In the section "Affectivity," in Sartre's text *The Imaginary*, he characterizes the "affective-cognitive synthesis," which is "the deep structure of image consciousness" (Sartre 2004: 73). In these discussions, he rejects an account of feeling/affect as a "purely subjective and ineffable shiver" linked externally (causally) and contingently with representations. In its place, he offers a "living synthesis." To hate Paul is not just for Paul to be the object of an intellectual judgment, it is to be conscious of Paul as hateful, and this is to

make a certain sense of Paul, to experience him as appearing to me with a certain "affective structure" (Sartre 2004: 69). If I love "the long fine white hands" of someone, "this love . . . could be considered as one of the ways that they have appeared to my consciousness." But this is not a cognitive sense but an affective one: "the affective form entirely permeating the object" (69). He quotes a passage of D. H. Lawrence: "It was always the one man who spoke. He was very young, with quick large, bright dark eyes that glanced sideways at her. . . . His long black hair, full of life, hung unrestrained on his shoulders." Sartre comments, "Lawrence excels at suggesting, while he seems only to be describing the form and colour of objects, those subdued affective structures that constitute their deepest reality" (70). These affective structures are, for Sartre, the work of imaging consciousness. Desire is provided with an imaginary object that tells us what the desire is a desire for: "desire and disgust exist at first in a diffuse state . . . in being organized . . . into an imaging form, the desire is made precise and concentrated" (139). I awake restless. It is not clear whether the physiological discomfort is hunger or sexual desire. The matter is settled by the direction that my imagining consciousness takes. To experience the desirability of the hands is to surpass (sometimes unaware) their *physiological form* and constitute them into an image of desirability, giving the hands to me in their *affective form*. It is only by means of these affective forms (images) that we can become aware of our desires, whose intentional objects are the posited images of imaging consciousness. "The image is a kind of ideal for the feeling" (72). My love for Annie consists, in part, by my making her "irreal face" (141) appear when she is absent, and, crucially, by the form it takes for me when it appears. However, even when Annie is present, her attribute of being lovable is an imagined one. These affective qualities for Sartre enter phenomenologically into the experience of the perceived object and cannot be detached by the unreflecting consciousness. Faced with such qualities, I react: "this book for example . . . is entirely suffused by . . . affectivity . . . faced with this book I do not remain inactive . . . I pick it up or put it down, I do not like its binding, I make judgments of fact and value" (141). And these responses register the affective qualities it holds for me. For Sartre, then, image and affect are internally related: "If the image of a dead one appears to me suddenly . . . the ache in my heart is part of the image" (Butler 1999: 113).

Merleau-Ponty, along with Sartre, views the imaginary as providing us with the affective depth of the experienced world: "Quality, light, colour, depth, which are there before us, are there only because they awaken an echo in our bodies and because the body welcomes them" (Merleau-Ponty 1993: 125). "Things . . . arouse in me a carnal formula of their presence" (126). This carnal formula is the manifestation of the affective shape of the world. The

imaginary shape the world takes for us is therefore constitutively tied up with ways of responding to and acting in relation to it, and it is this that we mean by claiming that it has affective texture. Merleau-Ponty draws attention to the fact that once we experience the world as having a certain shape we already have a world that carries affective content. "We must no longer ask why we have affections in addition to 'representative sensations' since the representative sensation also . . . is affection, being a presence to the world through the body and to the body through the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 239). It is through the images in terms of which we perceive the world that the world makes "affective sense" to us. We experience it as a world of possibilities for us, both for intentional projects and expressive responses.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined what Merleau-Ponty coins "the imaginary texture of the real" (Merleau-Ponty 1993: 126), the imagination at work in the everyday world that we perceive, the world as it is for us. The imaginary on this account is not the realm of fantasy and negation. When it is manifest in perception, it is the animating form of perceived experience, weaving together the present and the elsewhere into a *Gestalt*, which we find in the world as experienced by us. This gestalt I have suggested, following Kant and Merleau-Ponty, is neither imposed nor simply discovered, but emerges from a *creative interplay* between corporeal subjects and the world (including the social world) within which they are placed, and to which they are sensible. The gestalt interweaves the manifold of the *present and the elsewhere*, the visible and what is *in* the visible giving immediate perception an experienced depth and also, an *affective* character, a salience and significance, which the imaginary texture carries. As phenomenological writers have made clear, the world is experienced by us as *enticing*, that is, it is experienced by means of cognitive and affective images. That imaginary world, as described here, is our most direct and immediate mode of perception.

Note

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Chapter 7

The Imaginary Texture of Beings and Its Ethical Implications

Rethinking Realism with Husserl and Merleau-Ponty

Annabelle Dufourcq

According to Malebranche, "the imagination is a madwoman who is pleased to play the fool" (Malebranche 1973: 148). Philosophy has always hosted the imaginary field as an embarrassing guest. However, precisely because imagination cannot really find its place within the established frameworks, and the classical dualities between the sensible and the intelligible, body and mind, real and unreal, and subjectivity and objectivity, it possesses an exceptional power of subversion. Think for instance of the status of myths in Plato's dialogues or of the schematism in Kant's philosophy. I quote from the first *Critique*: "Schematism . . . is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover" (*CRP* A141; Kemp Smith translation, 183). Here, the whole of Kant's philosophy trembles. It was already a huge step forward to give such a significance to productive imagination rather than to reproductive imagination. But, with the idea of the art concealed in the depths of the human soul, the pattern according to which the world of phenomena stems from a synthesis based, in the end, on the activity of human faculties (understanding and imagination) is radically brought into question. Meaning could, after all, be born from the depths of sensible matter and we would perceive this process with amazement, as if it were a sort of miracle by which nature would somehow talk to us. Productive imagination must be understood at the ontological level rather than at the psychological and anthropological level. This is exactly what Kant continues to describe in the third *Critique* when he questions aesthetical phenomena and builds the notion of an admirable and enjoyable synthesis without concept. In fact, amazement about imagination can arise from even simpler experiences. Bachelard's works on the reveries inspired in us by the elements (fire, water, earth, etc.) show, by examining poems, myths, children's games,

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and our daydreams while playing with clay or watching a fire, that *some* images or imaginative trends recur stubbornly through different epochs and possess a genuine power of fascination, an obdurate strength *of their own*. But, of course, these themes inspire our *free* reveries; their unity appears on the horizon, without any constraining concept. No one can determine in advance, through rules, which images are possible, which metaphors will be brilliant, and which ones will be ridiculous. Yet, according to a mysterious and nonpositive force ruling the imaginary field, some images are effective and successful, while others are not. Here, we discover the surprising idea that the world imagines and that our imagination responds—yet in a creative way—to a transcendent solicitation. Moreover, why don't we take more seriously the strange experience of the intensified presence of beings in some paintings for instance, the uncanny feeling—pointed out by Husserl—that a character in a portrait is actually watching us, and the impression that, in art, things and persons gain a glorious body and become eminently real? A common starting point in Bachelard's and Merleau-Ponty's reflections is the paradoxical capacity of the imaginary both to distort an object and to render its presence in an extremely striking way. Such a superpresence of beings in images appears even more problematic when compared with the occasional weakness of reality in perception. Sartre's *Nausea* gives a striking description of reality melting and shattering before our very eyes. Similarly, Proust unveiled a disease that deeply affects realism: Marcel, the narrator of *In Search for Lost Time*, cannot manage to *believe in things*. He remains puzzled and frustrated before a present and perceived reality, which he finds always too dull. And even more surprisingly, it is only through the correspondences instituted by metaphors, through imagination, that Marcel finally gains faith in the world: "True life, the only life really lived, that life is literature" (Proust 1954: 895).

My contention is that we have to understand how images and fantasies are made possible by the very being of things—not only by the *arbitrary* activity of a subjective faculty called my imagination. This does not entail that the concept of productive imagination should become irrelevant: what is at stake is precisely to fully understand how productive imagination can both be creative and able to deliver, unveil and intensify the being of the imagined objects. Therefore, we intend to stretch the limits of productive imagination by investigating its ontological roots.

The main sources of inspiration for this chapter are Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's philosophies. They provide original analyses and conceptual tools that make an ontological approach to the imaginary possible. On this basis, a revolution in the way we conceive of the real and the imaginary can be carried out.

This revolution is to be played out on two fronts: (1) acknowledging that the imaginary possesses a genuine flesh and is a particular mode of the being of things and persons themselves rather than a mere figment of a subjective

faculty and (2) challenging the classical notion of reality in order to unveil the dimension of unreality, instability, faith, and indecisiveness that is an integral part of it. But the most interesting point is to connect those two paths so as to overcome the traditional duality between the real and the imaginary and to define being as it must be prior to such a distinction.

These reflections imply significant practical questions that I will examine in the last section of this chapter: is the subversion of realism necessarily a catastrophe? Does it entail nihilism? What are the ethical consequences of an ontology of the imaginary?

IMAGES:
Original Modes of Being of Things Themselves

The first step is to take seriously the experience of ubiquity in imaginary phenomena. In this respect, Husserl's analyses are remarkably daring. He consistently defines imagination as an intuition (Husserl 1993: §14): an *Erfüllung* (fulfillment) of the intention takes place in fantasies (*Phantasien*) and pictures (*Bilder* or more accurately image consciousness [*Bildbewusstsein*]). This means that, through images and fantasies, the object gives itself to us in person. In fantasies and pictures, the imagined object is experienced: its mode of donation is not the same as in perception; we have to conceive of different modes of presence. Therefore, the concept of productive imagination is not central in Husserl's approach: Husserl rejects the idea that imagination is first and foremost a human faculty: he rather intends to investigate the mode of presence of the imagined object, its phenomenality. However, Husserl also acknowledges the dimension of creation that belongs to imagination, and, as I will demonstrate below, although Husserl was first tempted by a definition of imagination in terms of reproduction, his theory of imagination and the imaginary finally gave a prominent place to the productive dimension of fantasy and image consciousness.

By claiming that image consciousness is an intuition, Husserl asserts that fantasies and pictures belong to the same kind as perceptions rather than being akin with signs. Words are actual sounds or lines drawn on paper, actually present but regarded as devoid of kinship by nature with the intended object. In contrast, in images, the object is apprehended *as if* it really appeared, as Husserl puts it in the sixth Logical Investigation (Husserl 1993: §22, 79). This means that a part of its presence, of its being, and of its style gives itself to us, *through* the colors and the lines on the painting or *through* my emotions and the postures and behaviors of my body. Husserl asserts that an *analogical* fulfillment of the intention occurs here. The object is "presentified" (*vergegenwärtigt*) and present "by proxy" (Husserl 1980: 24–25)[1].

Moreover, Husserl overcomes the model of the representative or the analogon according to which a present object would be an intermediary that my imagination uses in order to aim at an absent object. This model fails to explain how an absent object can be somehow present *through* its representative. The capacity of the object to travel and to embody itself *within* all sorts of unexpected media (avatars, images, fantasies, metaphors, pictures, reveries) must be properly explained by the very nature *of this object*. Likewise, the ubiquity of the material reality of a portrait or a photograph is what makes possible its apprehension as a picture. Instead of thinking fantasies according to the model of pictures—in which it seems relatively easy to demarcate a present representative—Husserl shows, for instance in the sixteenth text of Husserliana 23, that fantasy is a more accurate model to think every image, pictures included.[2] In 1909, Husserl acknowledges that his first approach was incorrect: "I have not seen (and generally it has not been seen) that in the phantasy of a color, for example, it is not the case that something present is given, that color as a really immanent occurrence is given, which then serves as the representant for the actual color" (Husserl 1980: 265; 2005: 323).[3] And, likewise, in 1918 Husserl writes about pictures: "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" (Husserl 1980: 514; 2005: 616).[4]

And indeed a close attention paid to the very phenomenon of fantasies makes the reproduction theory untenable. We are carried away in the fantasy world, we are decentered into an experience that absorbs us almost entirely, and we do not perceive any representative. Husserl here considers as specifically archetypal the reveries in which we fully live an experience in the fantasy world: "our fist clenches, we hold audible dialogues with the imagined persons" (Husserl 1980: 42; 2005: 45). And he adds, "Every imagination requires a *Spaltung*, a self-splitting" (Husserl 1956: 114; 1980: 468)[5]: when I imagine, I necessarily occupy a point of view within the imaginary world, so that I see the chimera in front of me or beside me. I am simultaneously an ego-image (in which I live all sorts of "perceptions" and emotions) and my present ego (who lives quasi-experiences in the fantasy world).[6] The important point here is that these egos are both myself: there is not an absent or unreal object aimed at by a merely present subject and thanks to the mediation of a merely present object. But rather a current twofold experience unveiling a new dimension of reality. Correlatively, Husserl also overcomes the claim that fantasies are a form of reproduction of a perceptive experience. "And if we describe the course of action, the character of the personalities, their motives, and so on, then we live entirely in phantasy and do not merely repeat them, do not merely reproduce them. Rather, we explicate their sense in the as-if" (Husserl 1980: 520; 2005: 621).[7]

The contemplation of physical images can then be understood in an original manner, following the model provided by fantasies: while looking at a painting or watching a play, I forget the presence of the canvas or of the actors and the set. More exactly, I face it as the presence of the imaginary world and, at the same time, I leave my current body behind myself, sitting in the museum or in the theater; the trivial massive perceptive presence is pushed in the background, and I am "carried away" by the art of Veronese "transplanted into the magnificent, opulent life and activity of the grand Venetians of the sixteenth century" (Husserl 1980: 37; Husserl 2005: 40), or I apprehend Hamlet directly within the actor and I feel, fear, and judge actively as if the story were real. Consequently Husserl claims that images are present situations that become twofold and provoke a "double perceptive apprehension (*doppelte perzeptive Auffassung*)" (Husserl 1980: 517). I do not invent or fake this ubiquity but I *experience* it: the world itself becomes ambiguous and flickering. By claiming that this experience consists in a perception (*Perzeption*), Husserl contends that the object is present *leibhaftig*, and the only difference with what is commonly called perceptions (*Wahrnehmungen*) is that we do not state any belief in the existence or nonexistence of the beings that appear through such a metamorphosis (325). This is a neutralized experience (515). Husserl calls it perceptive fantasy (*perzeptive Phantasie*), expressing the claim that reality itself somehow *starts to dream* and begets a second world that is superimposed on the perceptive world and competes with it. This tension must belong to the thing itself.

I have proposed (Dufourcq 2010: 78–105) to define such a tension by using the concept of "hovering (*Schwebung*)." Husserl speaks of the hovering in fantasy (*das Vorschweben in der Phantasie*[8]) to describe three remarkable characteristics of fantasies: (1) the absence of anchoring of the appearing object in objective space and time (I cannot trace a way that would start from my actual place in the world and would lead continuously to the centaur for instance),[9] (2) the fleeting, evasive, and fragile character of the object that appears in fantasies, and (3) *Schweben* means to hang in air. The image may be fleeting, nevertheless it is an apparition, and it possesses a relative stability, its own consistency: it competes with reality without being able to be situated within it. As a result, it is a "beyond," a beyond-the-actual-world that is neither completely nothing nor radically foreign to our world: it introduces a dimension of ubiquity, of decentering, and of phase difference within it.

In imagination, in contrast with perception, the fascination for brute unequivocal presence and stubborn reality collapses. The object, in the imaginary, reveals itself as what is and could be present elsewhere, through many possible other avatars, it appears as manifold, ubiquitous.

This brings us to the second and correlative step: redefining reality.

The Imaginary Texture of the Real

If we take the experience of the imaginary seriously, then it follows that the notion of reality is in itself problematic. Our analyses below show that the same object can display two modes of presence: perceptive or imaginative. This leads to a more complex concept of presence than the one implied by the definition of perception as the *Urerfahrung* (Husserl 1950: 11, 70). And indeed, Husserl's genetic phenomenology can help us to elaborate the idea of a presence/absence of things themselves, also in their perceptive mode of presence.

For common sense, the real is what acts in fact, what we have to reckon with, and on which we can rely. Therefore, the real is twofold. On the one hand, it is what resists me. I have to adjust to it and it sometimes constrains me. In this respect, reality is what my imagination and my will come up against. On the other hand, the real is what is present to me. Even in order to resist me, it has to be present to me. In perception, I feel the carnal kinship with objects and encounter their resistance. Yet, one cannot simply define the real as that which is perceived. My individual perception may be an illusion, whereas a real object is perceptible by others and is supposed to remain what it is beyond all perceptions. Nonetheless, to define reality as the primary qualities that can be found by turning away from perception is problematic as well: what relationship is to be identified between the resistant presence of the perceived world and this alleged *really* real that exceeds all possible experience?

In order to present itself to us, the real must be defined by a certain kinship with our thought. The real is consequently a certain set of significations. But it cannot consist in transparent significations: it would lose all transcendence. As Husserl demonstrated, God himself would necessarily see the world through incomplete perspectives (92, 101), through sensibility. Reality is beyond subjective perceptions, but it is not an in-itself that would be achieved outside of the sensible field, in a positive world of ideas.

Husserl's concept of adumbration (*Abschattung*) demonstrates that perceptive presence necessarily goes together with a dimension of absence. I see this specific perspective of things and persons in this room. I remember, sense, or foresee other *Abschattungen*, but I do not have access to anything beyond a partial series of *Abschattungen*. The thing does not coincide with any particular *Abschattung*, but it is also nowhere outside of the open series of its perspectives. Those *Abschattungen* echo each other (this profile of the cube resembles somehow that other profile and that is why the cube can appear through them). As emphasized by Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty 2012: 16, 222), the syntheses thanks to which forms emerge and objects appear are not the result of an act performed by my mental faculties; otherwise, such

syntheses would be arbitrary and would never give birth to any transcendent and real world. Merleau-Ponty points to the capacity of sensations to evoke other sensations in synesthesia (Merleau-Ponty 2012: 237): the texture of honey irresistibly evokes, by itself, the sweet and sticky obsequiousness of the flatterer and vice versa (that is what enables us to say that a flatterer is honeyed). Similarly, when I listen to a melody, the notes weave a dynamic line, an impetus that spurs me to foresee and almost hear the notes that are about to be played. But each perspective is unique and contingent. As a result, Husserl calls the flow of *Abschattungen* an Heraclitean flow. Consequently, the future embodiments of a being are never more than partly determined, just as well as the development of a melody may surprise me: the sketched theme and the sketched future are ghost-like and indecisive.

It is crucial to point out that here it is the things *themselves*, the world *itself*, that are indecisive. This is not merely a psychological phenomenon due to the imperfection of my human faculties or the creativity of productive imagination understood as a purely human faculty. To be sure, Husserl has put forward, on several occasions, that the thing is not its *Abschattungen* (Husserl 1950: 92, 94–95). Nonetheless, a sharp distinction between the thing and its *Abschattungen* enters into tension with the ontological fundamental claim that things in themselves are phenomenal. As contended by Granel in *Le sens du temps et de la perception chez Edmund Husserl*, it would amount to reducing the real thing to a regulative idea, cut off from perception, and eventually to annihilating it (Granel 1968: 178). To be sure, the thing does not coincide with its *Abschattungen*, but it is even so important not to regard the latter as pure appearances and to turn the thing into an ideal thing in itself. Husserl thus also claims that the thing adumbrates itself: "Das Ding sich 'abschattet'" (Husserl 1950: 97). The dimension of distance and inadequateness is precisely essentially constitutive of a genuine *leibhaftig* presence of the transcendent thing. The thing, as ontologically phenomenal, thus also consists in the *self-adumbrating* open process.

This is actually pointed out by Husserl in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental. Phenomenology*: Husserl highlights the unfinished being of things in the lifeworld. Interestingly enough, Husserl then uses the concept of *Schwebung* that was also a key in the description of the presence through fantasies and pictures. "The things of the intuitively given surrounding world fluctuate, in general and in all their properties, in the sphere of the merely typical [*im Schwanken des bloß Typischen*]: their identity with themselves, their self-sameness and their temporally enduring sameness, are merely approximate, as their likeness with other things" (Husserl 1954: 22; 1970: 25).[10] These things "hover [in Schwebe bleiben] in the approximate" (Husserl 1954: 357),[11] and they are "more of less straight, more or less circular" (Husserl 1954: 22; 1970: 25).[12] More exactly, a real

circle is neither circular, nor noncircular. The law of the excluded middle is not valid yet. "This world, and the things of this world are only hovering between being and non-being . . . this is precisely their mode of being, and not a form of illusion" (Husserl 1954: 394).[13]

If things seem nonetheless stable and substantial most of the time in every-day perception, this is only because of the contingent fact of the repetition and the return of habitual perspectives. We commonly identify beings with such a collection of pedestrian appearances, but this is only a surface effect, a significant one but a partial one.

Consequently, the flow of *Abschattungen* can give birth to two possible modes of presence/absence (the real/the imaginary), which differ in degree but not in nature, and the same object can continue its very existence along a dimension that encompasses both the perceptual and the imaginary fields.

Let us consider an example that Merleau-Ponty was particularly fond of: the *Montagne Sainte-Victoire*, a limestone mountain in the south of France, which has been painted by Cézanne over sixty times. Cezanne's paintings are integral parts of the reality of the Mount Sainte-Victoire Merleau-Ponty claims in *Eye and Mind*.[14] And indeed the real mountain adumbrates itself through a number of fragmentary perspectives. What we summarize with the noun "Montagne Saint-Victoire" *is* the hovering theme of an open indefinite multiplicity of contingent variations. Consequently, if the theme is present within a painting, it is legitimate to contend that the being itself is present in the painting as well. Hence, Merleau-Ponty can speak of "the imaginary texture of the real" (Merleau-Ponty 1993: 126). Thus, the role played by Cézanne's productive imagination is not denied, but it turns out that imagination, as a subjective faculty, responds to an impersonal form of imagination that is already at work in beings themselves. Cézanne can genuinely create a new avatar of the Sainte-Victoire for the latter is in itself an open being.

Nonetheless, the Sainte-Victoire is present in a specific way in the paint-ings: whereas perceived objects seem to be ossified within common pedes-trian sketches, the life of meaning that animates them becomes manifest in their imaginary embodiments. The variation process that makes sense possible then stands out, as well as the surprising and creative dimension that essentially belongs to it (pure repetition would never give birth to any meaning). Hence, images produce at the same time the impression of quasi-reality (for a prosaic approach) and of super-reality. Thus, "it is at once true and noncontradictory that no grape was ever what it is in the most figurative painting and that Caravaggio's grape is the grape itself." (147). The solid crystallized flesh of perceived objects falls apart, but the impulse of their style of being is unleashed. In this respect, the imaginary field brings us closer to the very principle of the presence of beings. Merleau-Ponty writes

that "the painting . . . by breaking the "skin of things" shows how the things become things, how the world becomes world" (1993: 141).

This is precisely the reason why a reflection on imagination essentially leads to an ontological revolution.

Ontology of the Imaginary: New Patterns for Thinking the World

In this section, I will outline the ontological fundamental structures redefined through the consideration of the experience of imagining. In a schematized way, we can distinguish here between three levels of being.

The first level is the one we are living in. What Husserl calls the lifeworld, the world that we actually experience and that we commonly call reality. But I have argued that the imaginary is a dimension of beings themselves. In our daily lived experience, the boundaries between the imaginary and the real are actually porous. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, "The transcendence of distant landscapes invades my present and introduces a hint of unreality even into the experiences with which I believe I coincide" (Merleau-Ponty 1945: 382; 2012: 347).[15] It is indeed important to emphasize that, although Merleau-Ponty has consistently put forward the perceptive world in his philosophy, this should not be understood as a way of giving a secondary significance to the imaginary: the perceptive fields actually include an imaginary dimension; even better, it possesses an imaginary texture. To be sure the ego, real things (positively defined and circumscribed), and the *real* world appear *on the horizon* of the Heraclitean flow. They never *actually* become in-themselves beings: they remain specters that only exist through their manifold masks. Here, we stand below the clear-cut opposition between the real and the imaginary. This level may thus be called *the imaginareal* or, to escape every residue of duality, a *fallow land*: it is indeed a dynamic, open field, despised by tradition, somehow troubling and concerning, but also fruitful. The imaginareal is quite dynamical and plastic: it is always possible to focus more on the perceptive presence of beings or on the open series of actual and possible *Abschattungen* that make the world and things more unstable.

The second level is the one of ideal projections. It is "the real," or more accurately "the ideal real." This *truly* real is an unachievable ideal, since a world made of mere in-themselves and juxtaposed beings would not constitute a whole. Nevertheless, the objective world, where the real is clearly distinct from the imaginary, and the ego and things appear as substances, is also a necessary dimension of the world. The meaning has to crystallize into accretions on which to focus. The imaginareal somehow withdraws in the background and the ideal real is the normal object of focus. Nevertheless, this

ontological structure is dynamical. In a Western classical thought, the ideal real has become an especially prominent dimension of being, even in our everyday perception. By contrast, Ingold's work on the ontology of dwelling (Ingold 2000: 42) in hunter-gatherers' cultures shows that the imaginareal may be more salient without all that impoverishing or wiping out the relationship with the world.

The third level is the ontological level: *being* finds its place, in this schema, at the deepest level. Indeed, it is an ambiguous being expected not to sublimate beings, but to give roots to all dimensions of existence including illusions, errors, and evil. Being is what makes beings and the world, their presence and their resistance possible. We have argued that beings must consist in a sensible flow of perspectives. Those perspectives must, at the same time, be particular and echo or reflect each other. Being will lie, consequently, in the echo itself, or the reflection itself, which are not positive beings. They are an open creativity that decenters every being and cannot be confined in any perspective, any positive being. Merleau-Ponty suggests this idea in *The Visible and the Invisible*, when he asserts that the abyssal interlocking of images that appears between two mirrors facing each other is somehow more real than the surface of each mirror (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 183; 1968: 139). Our assumption is that being would be, consequently *the shimmering*, that which gives birth to beings. This might sound abstract. Nevertheless, it is this ubiquity or this hovering (Husserl's notion of *Schweben*) that is the core of our everyday experience: to see is to be here and there. Merleau-Ponty says that when I gaze at the sky "I abandon myself to it. . . . It 'thinks itself within me,' I am the sky gathering itself, communing with itself and beginning to exist for itself" (1945: 248; 2012: 222).[16] The sky, the "I", and other persons all appear secondarily.

An Ethical Ordeal

Finally, I would like to point out several significant practical implications of this new ontology. The practical question is not contingently added to the reflection on imagination. An ontology of the imaginary must deal with a fundamental ethical concern: if, as it were, all is image, how may we escape nihilism? To be sure, the overwhelming presence of images is, in some way, one of the plagues of contemporary societies and goes along with universal irony and carelessness. In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard (1981) claims that contemporary techniques of image production as well as—to put it roughly—postmodern philosophies have led to an unprecedented form of nihilism. According to Baudrillard, we are currently living in "hyperreality," which was born from the belief that reality is nothing outside of our

representations. There is nothing but images. And indeed our society tends to produce images of everything. Everything is overexposed, saturated with manifestation (hence the prefix hyper), and brought back to the same plan of immanence where our representations and reality merge.[17]

But it is possible to counter a formatted and ideologically exploited institutional imaginary with a reappropriation of the field of simulacra then regarded as the playground for *our* activity. Indeed, as demonstrated by Bachelard, since imagining is not a vain amusement, but a genuine struggle with what we usually call reality, then to imagine is to act, and actions always have to deal with a field of simulacra that cannot be appropriately approached without a deep work on our imagination.

With his strange ontology of the imaginary, Merleau-Ponty confronts us with an ethical ordeal: "the understanding says, like Lamiel, *What? Is that all there is to it*? Is this the highest point of reason, to realize that the soil beneath our feet is shifting, to pompously call 'interrogation' what is only a persistent state of stupor, to call 'research' what is only trudging in a circle, to call 'Being' that which never fully *is*?" (Merleau-Ponty 1961: 92; 1993: 149) One can find Nietzschean intonations here and this is actually an explicit reference for Merleau-Ponty.[18] Being does not have to be sought *outside of* the interplay of phenomena and, consequently, we have to love this sensible world since it is the only possible one; it will recur over and over again. Merleau-Ponty then notices that only the *spurious* fantasy (le faux imaginaire) may feel frustrated here. The "spurious fantasy" is the fantasy that sees itself as vain and craves a positivity that could fill its emptiness. Instead of that, Merleau-Ponty suggests that one may discover that images are rich, inspiring, and convey transcendent themes. They are profound since they bear in themselves the reference to many others; they sketch melodic lines, with which *one* may dialogue in a more or less relevant way. Merleau-Ponty does not urge us to become authentic (which means, etymologically, to be the perfect master of oneself and of one's work[19]) but, rather, to become profound.

That is precisely the lesson of Proust's work: paying attention to the muffled meaning in things, a meaning that has become dull and almost dead in the mundane surface of the so-called reality, makes the discovery of true life possible. What is reached is a more intense life and, somehow, essences: for instance the essence of Combray, of the madeleine, of the little phrase in Vinteuil's music, of the hawthorn bush. But these essences also remain quite dynamical and one could say unclear: Proust claims to present them to us through a work of art, not through a scientific or metaphysical treatise. These essences (he uses the word) do not take the form of theoretical clear-cut ideas, rather the form of a principle of creation of *metaphors* that make appear sensible things through other sensible things (Gilberte through Albertine, young

girls through the hawthorn flowers, all of them through the little phrase and vice versa, in an endless process: art is the key). Indeed to understand and to respond to the imaginareal is to create, but in resonance with hovering themes. Here, it is our responsibility to build interpretations, representations, and structures for existence that will heighten a creativity and a production of meaning that are already at work in the world.

This ethics of profundity also plays a key role in Merleau-Ponty's political thought. Instead of a momentary crisis, we have to face, Merleau-Ponty claims, a permanent state of vertigo (Dufourcq 2016). And instead of dealing with the reason of history, we must engage with the "imagination of history" (Merleau-Ponty 1955: 29, 53, 183; 1973: 17, 35, 130): the meaning of events and institutions is in itself uncertain. Thus, in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty contends that the proletariat is never a positive being: it is rather a specter looming and emerging through a myriad of singular microevents: "The day-laborer . . . perceived concretely the synchonicity between his life and the lives of the workers. . . . The small farmer . . . feels solidarity with the workers when he learns that the owners of the farm preside over the board of directors of several industrial corporations" (Merleau-Ponty 1945: 507–8; 2012: 470).[20] Individual situations echo each other and a certain meaning forms between the lines, in the shadow or as a watermark (*en filigrane*) (Merleau-Ponty 1955: 28)[21]. This meaning is a certain historical force that can support or hinder individual projects. But every individual contributes to its formation and evolution. On this basis, how can one know what the right action is? First, Merleau-Ponty claims, "It is important to feel and to decipher the situation and to sense the lines of meaning, the *kairoi*." But, Merleau-Ponty adds, a decision is always a wager. One can certainly choose opportunism: her actions will immediately enact the roles outlined by the situation. Indeed, our contemporaries' expectations, the infrastructures of our society at a given moment, and the current political tendencies at work make certain actions more likely to be successful. However, every situation is ambiguous; even opportunism may fail and it may be more fruitful to bet against all odds, in the name of an ideal. Merleau-Ponty gives the example of resistance to the German occupation of France in 1940 (1947: 69). Referring to allegedly universal ideal values and hoping that history will eventually be a fair judge is certainly not a guarantee of success, in the short or even in the long run. One can always discover retrospectively that she was blinded by ideological biases for instance. As a result, the most important "rule" is to achieve symbolical actions, in other words actions that, in any case, have a profound meaning and will speak to others through time. "History is the judge—not history as the power of a moment or of a century, but history as the inscription and accumulation, beyond the limits of countries and epochs, of what, given the situation,

we have done and said that is most true and valuable. Others will judge what I have done, because I painted in the realm of the visible and spoke for those who have ears—but neither art nor politics consists in pleasing or flattering them. What they expect of the artist or of the politician is that he draw them toward values in which they will only later recognize their values. The painter or the politician forms others much more often than he follows them" (Merleau-Ponty 1960: 92; 2007: 273). The universal, according to Merleau-Ponty, can only be a "lateral universal" (Merleau-Ponty 1960: 150) that exists through an unremitting dialogue between different perspectives, cultural, political, and ethical models. Our consciousness is always partial and mystified, which entails that it also senses that which limits it (Merleau-Ponty 1955: 63; 1973: 42) and can always decenter itself so as to see the familiar as foreign and the foreign as familiar. Consequently, a symbolic action is of course an action that is meaningful and teaches, throughout time, a certain conception of what is fair and valuable, but more fundamentally it is an action that revives what Merleau-Ponty calls the wild thought (la pensée sauvage) (1960: 151) or the "symbolical function [la fonction symbolique]" (1960: 153), namely the power of transposing oneself from one perspective to the other. A symbolic action is profound when it is abysmal. Merleau-Ponty's praise of the "lame philosopher" and of the Socratic model perfectly illustrates this ethical theory of profundity: those who engage in actions that will make sense but also force others to doubt, and be less assertive, act in the rightest way possible.

Conclusion

In a phenomenological approach, phenomenality—appearing processes—becomes an integral part of the very being of things themselves. This amounts to introducing a virus in the classical positivist ontology, since appearing is manifold and involves the possibility of illusion. The case of the imaginative mode of appearing is especially subvertive: when the phenomenon of quasi-presence is taken seriously, when one wants to account for the strange ability of productive imagination to enhance and heighten the presence of beings, it becomes impossible to maintain the concept of a positive being: every being must possess an imaginary open texture. Clear-cut, positively circumscribed beings recede into a far-off never-actual horizon. Merleau-Ponty has taken an ontology of the imaginary up to the verge of pure vertigo, but he also conceived of this experience as an ethical ordeal, possibly fruitful.

I will conclude with a quotation from Merleau-Ponty's *Institution and passivity*, in which he completes a phrase from Proust: "In exchange for

what our imagination leads us to expect, life gives us something else [these are more or less Proust's words, and Merleau-Ponty adds] . . . something else *that was secretly willed, not fortuitous*" (Merleau-Ponty 2003: 75; 2010: 72).[22] Indeed, the imaginary directs us toward the world. Its ambiguity makes enriching experiences and freedom possible, and therefore one might realize in the end that one wants such an adventurous, sometimes deceptive and destabilizing life, a life that succeeds in being always profound out of superficiality.[23]

Notes

1. "Und danach finden wir in der Phantasievorstellung eine gewisse Mittelbarkeit des Vorstellens, die der Wahrnehmungsvorstellung fehlt. . . . Die Phantasie stellt einen Gegenstand dadurch vor, daß sie zunächst *einen anderen*, ihm ähnlichen Gegenstand zur Erscheinung bringt und ihn als *Stellvertreter* oder besser, das einzige Wort ist hier doch Bild, ihn als Bild für den eigentlich gemeinten nimmt. . . . Ein genaues Analogon werden wir noch kennenlernen: es ist so, wie beim Lesen eines Wortes."

2. See also Claesen (1996).

3. "Ich habe nicht gesehen (und man hat überhaupt nicht gesehen), daß z.B. bei der Phantasie einer Farbe nicht etwas Gegenwärtiges, nicht ein Erlebnis Farbe gegeben ist, das dann für die wirkliche Farbe repräsentiert."

4. "Ich habe früher gemeint, daß es zum Wesen der bildenden Kunst gehöre, im Bild darzustellen, und habe dieses Darstellen als Abbilden verstanden. Aber näher besehen ist das nicht richtig."

5. "das Ich im Bild (*ich lebe ganz im Bild*, etwa des Töchterleins des Jairus, und stehe mit dabei) ist, wenn ich das Bild nicht als Abbildung nehme, sondern als Einbildung, perzeptives Ich, aber setzungslos."

6. Such a persistence of an actual Ego is necessary, otherwise I would experience a mere perception, not an imagination.

7. "Und beschreiben wir den Gang der Handlung, den Charakter der Persönlichkeiten, ihre Motive etc., so leben wir zunächst *ganz* in der Phantasie *und wiederholen sie nicht bloß, reproduzieren sie nicht bloß*."

8. *Es schwebt mir vor* means "I have it in mind"; schweben means to hover, to hang in air.

9. "Ein A (das Rathaus, Freund Schwartz) phantasieren heißt, sich diesen Gegenstand vorschweben lassen, d.i. ihn als selbst daseienden erscheinen lassen (ihn erscheinen lassen, vorschweben lassen und als selbst daseienden < erscheinen lassen > ist einerlei). Freilich nicht als jetzt seienden, als da in meiner jetzigen Umgebung seienden!" (Husserl 1980: 174–75)

10. "Die Dinge der anschaulichen Umwelt stehen ja überhaupt und in allen ihren Eigenschaften *im Schwanken des bloß Typischen*. Ihre Identität mit sich selbst, ihr Sich-Selbst-Gleichsein und in Gleichheit zeitweilig Dauern ist ein bloss ungefähres, ebenso wie ihr Gleichsein mit anderem."

11. "doch ist offenbach das, was uns dabei, als Erkenntnis desselben zu eigen wird, in allen seinen identifizierbaren Bestimmungen unweigerlich ein im Ungefähren, in vagen Unterschieden der größeren oder geringeren Vollkommenheiten, in Schwebe bleibendes."

12. "[das] mehr oder minder Geraden, Ebenen, Kreisförmigen usw."

13. "Sagt er [der Philosoph], sie [die Welt] sei, ihre Dinge seien nur in Schwebe zwischen Sein und Nichtsein, so ist das eben ihre Seinsweise und nicht etwa Illusion."

14. "It is too little to say that [a being] is [on the surface of the canvas] as an image or essence; it is there as itself, as that which was always most alive about it." Thus, "[Cézanne's] *Montagne Sainte-Victoire* produces and reproduces itself from one end of the world to the other in a way different from but no less energetic than in the hard rock above Aix."

15. "La transcendance des lointains gagne mon présent et introduit un soupçon d'irréalité jusque dans les expériences avec lesquelles je crois coïncider." I have modified the translation ("hint" instead of "suspicion").

16. "Je m'abandonne à lui, je m'enfonce dans ce mystère, il 'se pense en moi,' je suis le ciel même qui se rassemble, se recueille et se met à exister pour soi."

17. Baudrillard gives the example of the media: it is not any longer possible to simply claim that they influence us, since they more and more often present what we think as genuine information about the world itself: opinion polls, street interviews, and reality TV.

18. See, for instance, Merleau-Ponty (1996: 276–78; 2000: 205).

19. *Ho authentès* is the one who acts by oneself, who takes the initiative. This term also designates an absolute master. *Authentein* means "to bear power over," "to have authority over."

20. "Le journalier a perçu concrètement le synchronisme de sa vie et de la vie des ouvriers. . . . Le petit fermier . . . se sent solidaire des ouvriers quand il apprend que le propriétaire de la ferme préside le conseil d'administration de plusieurs entreprises."

21. "en filigrane" is simply omitted in the English translation (Merleau-Ponty 1973: 17).

22. "En échange de ce qu'on avait imaginé, la vie nous donne autre chose qui était secrètement voulu, non fortuit. Réalisation n'est pas ce qui était prévu, mais tout de même ce qui était voulu: on avance à reculons, on ne choisit pas directement, mais obliquement."

23. This text was written as part of the grant-funded project GACR "Life and Environment. Phenomenological Relations between Subjectivity and Natural World," Czech Science Foundation (GAP15-10832S).

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Chapter 8

Image-Picture versus Image-Fiction

Is Sartre Ignorant of Productive Imagination?

Kwok-ying Lau

Victim of his own celebrity as an existentialist à-la-mode thinker, Jean-Paul Sartre's contribution as a phenomenological philosopher to the phenomenological movement inaugurated by Husserl has seldom been correctly understood and recognized.[1] This is particularly true of the young Sartre's original works on imagination, published between 1936 (*L'imaginaton*) and 1940 (*L'imaginaire. Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination*), at a time when Husserl's lectures on phantasy and image consciousness were still unknown to the public.[2] The situation of the reception of Sartre's phenomenology of imagination and the imaginary has to wait for the death of its author in order to see some changes. This change is primarily brought about by an article published in English in 1981 by Paul Ricœur, Sartre's own compatriot, entitled "Sartre and Ryle on the Imagination" (Ricœur 1981). In this article, Ricœur introduces a critical discussion on Sartre's theory of image and phenomenology of imagination. Ricœur's concise article has successfully brought to the attention of a wider audience in the Western academia the phenomenology of the imaginary of the young Sartre. Subsequent to Ricœur's study, some commentators basically repeat Ricœur's criticism of Sartre's theory of image and phenomenology of imagination and judge that Sartre succeeds only in formulating a theory of reproductive imagination, while the author of *Being and Nothingness* is unable to establish a doctrine of productive imagination.[3] In the recent years, there are more commentators who have tried to defend Sartre by appropriating materials from the mature Sartre and give counterattacks to Ricœur's criticism.[4] The present author will adopt a slightly different approach. We'll try to show from the very rich Conclusion chapter of Sartre's 1940 book *The Imaginary* and argue that, as a young philosopher writing on imagination, Sartre was, in the late 1930s, at the same time an emerging novelist and playwright in the French literary scene. It is

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not useless to remind readers that Sartre has published his first important
novel *La Nausée*, which became soon a classic in existentialist literature, in
the year 1938, which is exactly halfway between the years in which his two
books on imagination were published. The young Sartre gathered in himself
the rare gift of being at the same time a first-class writer of philosophical
treatises and of fictional works. Sartre is simply the incarnation of an origi-
nal philosopher and a creative novelist and playwright. For a man of such
great talents, we have to go back to the times of the French Enlightenment
of the eighteenth century to look for historical precedents, as shown by such
eminent figures as Rousseau, Diderot, and Voltaire. With the knowledge of
this double creative life lead by the same writer Sartre, we are driven straight
to the following questions: how could the young Sartre's idea of image be
limited to image-picture, as pretended to be so by Ricœur? How could Sartre
the writer of fiction be unaware of the existence of image-fiction? Is it pos-
sible for Sartre the author of literary creation to limit himself to reproductive
imagination and neglect completely productive imagination as presented by
Ricœur and his followers? It is with these questions in mind that we will try
to defend Sartre against Ricœur's criticism.

Ricœur's Criticism of Sartre: Privilege of Image-Picture at the Expense of Image-Fiction

At the outset of his critical study on the philosophies of imagination of Sartre
and Ryle, Ricœur states explicitly that his starting point is the important Kan-
tian distinction between productive imagination and reproductive imagination
(Ricœur 1981: 167). To Ricœur, both Sartre and Ryle limit their discussion of
imagination with reference to image-picture only. Such a unilateral approach
can merely guide us to understand the reproductive mode of imagination,
but unable to give an account of productive imagination. Image-picture is an
entity formed from the reproduction of the order of reality, while image-fic-
tion posits without detour an entity that belongs to the order of unreality and
is thus an entity in the order of fictional existence. In the reading of Ricœur,
the emphasis on image as image-picture or mental or physical replica of an
existing original by Sartre and Ryle reinforces the privilege given to image-
picture in the tradition of Western philosophy. This privilege results in the
unilateral development of a theory of reproductive imagination at the expense
of a theory of productive imagination.

   Ricœur presents his argument with reference to Sartre's famous example
on the positing in imagination of his friend Peter ("Pierre" in Sartre's French
original) in his absence. To Ricœur, the example of Pierre in absence given
by Sartre is a "paradigmatic example" (168) meaning that this example serves

as a paradigm and a standard that overrides all other examples. In the later part of this chapter, we'll see whether Ricœur's judgment corresponds to the state of affairs in question. Positing something or somebody in absence is of course a mode of consciousness, which relates to that intentional object. This is a mode of consciousness different from the mode of perception, which presents the object under the perceiving eyes. While the consciousness that presents Pierre in his absence is not a perception, it is still a mode of consciousness that relates intentionally to a certain Pierre who exists in reality, and thus this mode of consciousness has a real entity as its ultimate referent. This mode of consciousness reproduces an object in its absence; it is thus merely a mode of reproductive imagination.

Ricœur agrees with Sartre that the consciousness of imagination is the expression of the spontaneity of consciousness (Ricœur 1981: 169). Yet he criticizes Sartre's characterization of image as nothingness as one which "blurs all the important contrasts between fiction and picture" (171). Ricœur's criticism once again falls on the example of Pierre-in-absence evoked once by Sartre as example of an image produced by the imaginary consciousness and goes on to emphasize that this image of Pierre-in-absence refers ultimately to an existing object, something that belongs to the order of reality. Ricœur reminds us that when Husserl explains the ontological character of an imaginary object by the example of the image of flute-playing centaur in the §23 of *Ideas I*, the German father of phenomenology is not referring to any existing object. Ricœur insists that the image of centaur is an image-fiction, entirely different from an image-picture. As the ontological status of the referent of these two categories of image is different, they "cannot be treated within the same framework" (170). An image-fiction does not take any existing thing as its referent. A fictional object such as a character in a novel is "nonexistence as unreality," which is "opposed both to absence and to presence as reality. Therefore, a theory of absence cannot be extended to a theory of unreality" (171). Ricœur draws this seemingly logical conclusion.

In a word, Ricœur criticizes Sartre for neglecting the difference between image-picture and image-fiction. The former is image as a nonexisting object, though, but is still founded on some already existing objects as its mode of origin. The latter kind of image is imagination ex-nihilo: such as narratives in storytelling, novel, and drama, or fictional creation in political allegories or political doctrines such as the projection of ideology and utopia—Ricœur calls these latter "social and cultural imaginary" (1). Narratives in storytelling, novel, drama, and political fiction are all image-fictions created by consciousness. They are different from image-pictures represented by photography, painting, drawing, figures, and so forth. Image-fiction creates a nonexisting object; it is the incarnation of creative or productive imagination.

Image-picture is representing only an existing object by a mode of consciousness other than perception. It is thus merely an exercise of reproductive imagination.

Though overall critical, Ricœur gives some positive comments on Sartre's work on imagination, in particular on Part II of *The Imaginary*, entitled "The Nature of the Analogon in the Mental Image," which explains the relation between physical image and mental image through the analogon between the two kinds of image. Ricœur praises this chapter as "remarkable" and the description "genial" (Ricœur 1981: 172). Yet Ricœur shows his reservation with regard to the Sartrean attempt: the young Sartre's treatment is limited to the study of the images within the same family of image-picture, which are homogeneous in nature. The heterogeneous relation between image-picture and image-fiction is not touched by Sartre. To Ricœur, Sartre has rightly pointed out, through the analogon between mental image and physical image, the distinction between the two: a mental image represents imaginatively an intended object that is absent; it is thus ontologically independent of any physical object. Yet to Ricœur, Sartre's analysis, though "brilliant" and "very convincing," focuses on "likeness" and gives privilege to an "original" (172). The examples given by Sartre are mostly portraits, caricatures, schematic drawings, geometric figures, and so forth. These are all image-pictures.

Ricœur concludes that Sartre's theory of image is established upon the analogon from physical picture to mental picture. It is an explanation by two kinds of homogeneous images within the same family of image, namely the picture family. However, this is done at the expense of image-fiction (172). His own ambition is to build a "phenomenology of fiction" to account for the "new kind of relation between fiction and reality—a relation stemming from the non-existence of fiction's object" (173). This is a project that Ricœur considers that the young Sartre's two works on image consciousness and imagination, though brilliant, have failed to take into consideration.

SARTRE:
Imagination as Creative Consciousness of Irreality and Its Transcendental Status

Is Ricœur's criticism of Sartre justified? Does Sartre completely ignore image-fiction? Is Sartre ignorant of the possibility of the creation and production of irreal objects and of the order of irreality or unreality in general?

Sartre has already pointed out in his first work on imagination of 1936 that the fictive nature of image in imagination as image-fiction is different

from image-memory (*image-souvenir*). The latter is a consciousness of the representation or of the reproduction of something or some object that existed already.[5] In the 1940 book *The Imaginary*, Sartre states from the outset that image is not an object, but a consciousness that relates to an object (Sartre 1940: 17; 2004: 7). Thus, image is not a thing-like existence. In addition, Sartre demarcates from Husserl's theory of imagination by emphasizing that the consciousness of imagination is not merely the neutralizing modification of perceptual consciousness. A modified consciousness of perception by neutralization of its ontic or ontological thesis is only a consciousness of representation or reproduction. Yet to Sartre, an imaginary consciousness has its creative aspects; it is the manifestation of the creative capacity of consciousness. The ability to imagine is precisely the creative aspect of consciousness. To imagine is the capacity of consciousness to think or to relate to an object by means of image (*imager*). But what is the essential condition for a consciousness to be able to think by means of image (*imager*)? Again Sartre replies without detour, "It must have the possibility of positing a thesis of irreality" (Sartre 1940: 232; 2004: 182). In other words, Sartre's basic understanding of the image is that it belongs to the order of irreality. What he means by the positing of the thesis of irreality is to conceive the object imagined or the image as "nothingness."

When Sartre uses the example of imagining Pierre-in-absence to explain the ontological status of the image of Pierre as nothingness, it is clear that this image of Pierre refers to a certain Pierre as an existing person. Yet Sartre draws our attention to the fact that the essential characteristics of imagination and image consciousness consist in their capacity to produce irreality. The image formed is not necessarily a copy of existing reality. This shows that Sartre never limits imagination or image consciousness to the representation or the reproduction of reality. On the contrary, imagination can always produce the irreal. Sartre says,

> Imagination is not an empirical power added to consciousness, but the whole of consciousness as it realizes its freedom; every concrete and real situation of consciousness in the world is pregnant with the imaginary in so far as it is always presented as a surpassing of the real. It does not follow that all perception of the real must be reversed in imagination, but as consciousness is always "in situation" because it is always free, there is always and at every moment the concrete possibility to produce the irreal. . . . The irreal is produced outside the world by a consciousness that *remains in the world* and it is because we are transcendentally free that we can imagine. (Sartre 1940: 236–37; 2004: 186)

Sartre gives a more detailed description of the way in which an imaginary consciousness produces an order of irreality. In fact, an act of imagination is first of all an ontological act that surpasses the world of reality and at the

same time constitutes it as world. Sartre explains the constitutive status of the imaginary consciousness succinctly:

> In order to be able to imagine, it is enough that consciousness can surpass the real and constitute it as a world, since the nihilation of the real is always implied by its constitution as a world. (Sartre 1940: 234; 2004: 184)

The capacity to surpass the world of reality by imagination is the freedom of consciousness. Yet the exercise of this freedom is not arbitrary. In order to exercise this act of surpassing, consciousness must itself be situated in the world such that the surpassing of this very world of reality can take place, and the means through which this surpassing of the reality of the world toward the irreal is enacted is the positing of the nonexistence of an object presentified by an image. Sartre uses the example of the formation of the image of centaur to illustrate this, and not that of his friend Pierre-in-absence, contrarily to what Ricœur said of him. Let's listen to Sartre together:

> The arbitrary positing of the real as a world will not of itself make the centaur appear as an irreal object. For the centaur to arise as irreal, the world must be grasped precisely as world-where-the-centaur-is-not, and this can be produced only if different motivations lead consciousness to grasp the world as being exactly such that the centaur has no place in it. Likewise, for my friend Pierre to be given to me as absent, I must have been led to grasp the world as a whole such that Pierre cannot *currently* be present in it *for me*. (Sartre 1940: 234–35; 2004: 185)

Here, Sartre emphasizes that the appearance of the image of centaur as an irreal object must be enacted on the basis of the consciousness that there is no place for the centaur in this world of reality. After that, Sartre goes on to evoke the case of Pierre-in-absence, but simply using the expression "likewise" to refer back to the example of centaur, without pursuing further analysis. This shows that the centaur as image-fiction is the prime example of Sartre in his analysis of the act of imagination and image consciousness, and not Pierre as image-picture, as claimed by Ricœur.

Yet when Sartre brings together the examples of the centaur and Pierre-in-absence in his explanation of the act of image consciousness, does this not show precisely that he "blurs all the important contrasts between fiction and picture," as Ricœur has remarked? But does Sartre ever say or hint that an image must refer to an original or a picture? That is to say, does Sartre ever mean that an image consciousness must be enacted through a representation of a thing-like or picture-like object? In the Conclusion chapter of *The Imaginary*, Sartre's answer is clearly negative. In fact, he goes on to explain that even when a consciousness imagines an object such as a person, it is done

"most of the time without representation" (Sartre 1940: 237; 2004: 187). The imaginary consciousness surpasses its situation and projects toward a place where, in comparison to its original situation, "is *a lack, an emptiness*" (Sartre 1940: 237; 2004: 187). In fact, this is the way Sartre explains the underlying operation of an act of imagination as an act of nihilation (néantisation) of the world as the entire order of reality. When the imaginary consciousness posits an order of irreality without representation, when it surpasses the world as reality toward somewhere which is a lack and a void, this means that this positing is not enacted by copying a prior model or an original as its mode of reference. The irreality spoken of by Sartre here is an ontological category; it is not an ontical category. Thus, the production of irreality cannot rely on any actually existing entity in the world as its original model of reproduction. Yet the image-fiction spoken of by Ricœur still belongs to the ontical order; it is as existent as fiction. It is true that Sartre has not devoted an independent chapter on image-fiction in *The Imaginary*. But when he emphasizes that the operation of an act of imagination by means of image consciousness must proceed by an act of nihilation of the world of reality, he understands that this is an act operated on the ontological and not ontical level: to posit an order completely outside of reality. This act of nihilation enables the positing of irreality by the imaginary consciousness without the need to refer to any preexisting sample. The creative production of consciousness, including the production of image-fiction, can thus take place at somewhere outside of and beyond the order of reality, in a void, in a nowhere. If our analysis is correct, it shows that the young Sartre not only has not excluded image-fiction, thematized by Ricœur, as a family of image produced without any reference to an original in the order of reality; in addition, through the understanding of the act of imaginary consciousness as an act of nihilation of the world of reality, Sartre has given an ontological foundation to the creation and production of image-fiction through the description of the operation of the act of image consciousness.

What is of significance here is that Sartre understands the act of imagination and image consciousness as essentially an act of "irrealizing" ("*irréalisant*") (Sartre 1940: 11; 2004: 3), an act that surpasses the world of reality and renders possible the creation of an order of irreality without the need to refer to the objects within this real world. The nihilating act of the imaginary consciousness surpasses the world and constitutes the world as world of reality at the same time. Thus, Sartre gives a phenomenological and ontological explication of the absolute status of consciousness, whose freedom allows it to express and operate as imaginary consciousness, as the constitutive origin of the world of reality, yet without the need to imagine the "annihilation of the world" in the manner of Husserl in the §49 of *Ideas I*. It is well-known that in order to emphasize the absolute ontological status of consciousness as the constitutive

origin of the meaning of the world, the Husserl of *Ideas I* explains that in spite of the possible experience that "there might no longer be any world," consciousness as the absolute realm of being still exists as a "residuum" that survives the "annihilation of the world" (Husserl 1913: 91; 1982: 109). By doing so, Husserl has secured for consciousness a transcendental status, that is, consciousness as the constitutive origin of the meaning of the existence of the world. Yet the price to pay for is the presentation of transcendental phenomenology as transcendental idealism, a position objected by nearly all followers of the phenomenological movement. By contrast, Sartre's explication of consciousness as imaginary consciousness, which constitutes the world as world by surpassing the world of reality in its act of nihilation toward the order of irreal, succeeds also in giving a transcendental status to consciousness, yet without the need to sacrifice the existence of the world of reality. Sartre's phenomenology of the imaginary saves transcendental phenomenology from its idealist self-interpretation in the manner of Husserl.

SARTRE:
Irreality of Art Works and the
Irreal Attitude of Art Appreciation

It is true that in the second part of the Conclusion chapter of *The Imaginary* devoted to the discussion of art work, a number of the examples mentioned by Sartre belong to what Ricœur calls image-picture. Yet Sartre draws our attention to the fact that some contemporary schools of art, for example, cubism, no more refer to reality as their models of creation; they are not reproducing these models of real life by paintings or pictures. Thus, if we start from Ricœur's dichotomy between image-picture and image-fiction, works of cubism belong to image-picture, but they are not necessarily the products of reproductive imagination. Cubist works, be they paintings or sculptures, are not replica of any really existing objects, but products of creative imagination. But Sartre reminds us that not only cubist works are not imitation of real objects; in fact during the activity of aesthetic appreciation of art work, the object of artistic contemplation as such does not belong to the order of real existence. Sartre has some very vivid descriptions of this state of affair:

> One is accustomed, since cubism, to claiming that the painting need not *represent* or *imitate* the real, but should constitute an object in itself. . . . If it means that the painting . . . is nevertheless a *real object*, it commits a grave error. . . . When I "contemplate" it, I am not, for all that, in the realizing attitude. The painting still functions as an *analogon*. It is simply that what is manifested through it is an irreal ensemble of *new things*, of objects that I have never seen nor will

ever see but that are nonetheless irreal objects, objects that do not exist *in the painting*, nor anywhere in the world, but are manifested through the canvas and that have seized it by a kind of possession. And this is the ensemble of these irreal objects that I describe as *beautiful*. (Sartre 1940: 241–42; 2004: 190–91)

To Sartre the phenomenologist, in the attitude of aesthetic contemplation, a painting, no matter what school of art it belongs to, is viewed as an irreal object. This irreal object is not the result of imitation of existing things or objects, but the ensemble of a new mode of existence of some new things as the result of creation. If it is an image-picture, it is not a replica of an original, but the product of productive imagination. That means an image-picture can be product of productive imagination, contrary to the parallel between image-picture-reproductive imagination and image-fiction-productive imagination cherished by Ricœur.

Sartre notes further that what he describes with reference to painting applies to other art forms such as novel, poetry, and drama:

It goes without saying that the novelist, the poet, the dramatist constitute irreal objects through verbal analogons; it goes without saying that the actor who plays Hamlet makes himself, his whole body, serve as an analogon for that imaginary person. (Sartre 1940: 242; 2004: 191)

Sartre still uses the expression analogon to explain dramatic art. Yet in drama, the existence of an imaginary and fictive character as the model or original is prior to the imitation by the actor on stage in order that the actor can imitate the imaginary and fictive character in question. In this act of imitation and analogon in drama, it is the imaginary and fictive image that comes first and serves as the model of imitation of the real, physical actor. Thus, it is at the opposite of what Ricœur ascribes to Sartre in the explication of the analogon between physical image and the mental image, with the latter always imitating the former. Himself an author of playwright, Sartre understands well that in the life of a dramatic actor the imaginary and the fictive, that is, the irreal, come first. That is why Sartre says with emphasis that an actor *lives entirely in an irreal world* (Sartre, 1940: 242; 2004: 191). For example, when an actor, motivated by the plot, cries on stage, though she or he is really crying, her or his cry is the analogon of a cry as irreality. Sartre describes the irreality of dramatic art in the following terms:

It is not that the character is *realized* in the actor, but that the actor is *irrealized* in the character. (Sartre 1940: 243; 2004: 191)[6]

The last example given by Sartre to serve his analysis of the irreal character of art work and art appreciation is illustrated through the common experience

of listening to the performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. With this example, Sartre point outs that appreciation of musical performance is not an event that happens in real time. Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 is not an object of the real order of things. If we still call it a thing, it is "a synthetic whole that does not exist note by note but through large thematic ensembles"(Sartre 1940: 243; 2004: 192). When I listen to the performance of this symphony, I am considering it as an art work. As such, the symphony does not spring out from the walls of the concert hall, nor is it the melodies and themes flying out in real time and space from the tip of the bows of the string instruments. Sartre explains,

> It is entirely outside the real. It has its own time, which is to say it possesses an internal time, which flows from the first note of the allegro to the last note of the finale, but this time does not follow another time. . . . The Seventh Symphony is in no way *in time*. It therefore entirely escapes the real. It is given *in person*, but as absent, as being out of reach. (1940: 244; 2004: 192)

When we listen to the performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, we are not listening to the real sound as physical reality; we are neither listening to the execution of this work as a real event. The performance of this work serves only as its analogon. Sartre reminds us that if we want to grasp the Symphony No. 7 through its analogon, which is its performance, we have to operate the "imaging reduction" ("la reduction imageante") (Sartre 1940: 244; 2004: 193). This reduction serves to bring us from the realm of reality, the real sound, and notes of the performance, to the musical work as an irreal object of musical image, which is the realm of irreality, or, in the Husserlian language, the realm of musical ideality.

> It is given as a perpetual elsewhere, a perpetual absence. . . . It is not simply outside [physical] time and space . . . it is outside the *real*, outside existence. I do not really hear it, I listen to it in the imaginary. (1940: 245; 2004: 193)

Every performance of the Symphony No. 7 is only the analogon of the Symphony No. 7 as an art work, which is an object of ideality. When we listen to it as an art work, we must exercise our consciousness of imagination; more precisely, we use our image consciousness to grasp this musical work. Yet the Symphony No. 7 as a musical work does not have any reality. It is not made from some materials based on a real event as its original model, and then being represented or reproduced in imagination. Its creation is entirely the result of productive imagination. In fact, Beethoven composed his Symphony No. 7 entirely in his imaginary consciousness before any actual performance of this musical work can take place. It is also a famous legend that by the time

Beethoven's sublime Symphony No. 9 was premiered, he was completely deaf: he was no longer able to listen to the real performance of his master work. Thus, not only the composition of this Western musical classic happened entirely in an imaginary realm, the execution and appreciation of this musical work takes place also in an imaginary realm without any reference to physical reality.

If our analyses above are not wrong, we have shown that Sartre considers on the one hand art works such as painting, drama, and musical work as irreal objects. In the language of Husserlian phenomenology, these are all objects of ideality. On the other hand, Sartre considers the contemplation of painting, the appreciation of drama, and the listening to music performance as nonreal events that have to mobilize our imagination and image consciousness. Sartre understands all kinds of art work and their relative activities of appreciation from the perspective of productive imagination. How can we agree to Ricœur's judgment that Sartre's theory of image privileges image-picture at the expense of image-fiction, that Sartre's phenomenology of imagination is limited to reproductive imagination while neglecting productive imagination?

Responses to Ricœur's Criticism of Sartre

1. Sartre emphasizes at the outset of his book *The Imaginary* that the greatest function of imagination is irrealizing. This means that he sees imagination as the essential characteristic of consciousness, which can create an order of irreality without reference to the world of reality. Thus, Sartre builds his phenomenology of imagination and image consciousness entirely with reference to productive imagination.

2. In Ricœur's presentation of Sartre's theory of image, Pierre-in-absence is Sartre's paradigmatic example of image. This pushes Ricœur to conclude that Sartre privileges image-picture at the expense of image-fiction. Yet we have shown that in the Conclusion chapter of *The Imaginary*, Sartre uses the example of centaur—an image-fiction in the dichotomy of Ricœur—to explain the irreal character of image and its status as nothingness in the world of reality. In the second part of the Conclusion chapter of *The Imaginary*, Sartre discusses three types of art work. Among them only painting falls under the category of image-picture in the language of Ricœur. The other two types of art work—drama and music—are art objects presentified through image-fiction. Thus, Sartre has not neglected image-fiction, though he has not developed an explicit theory about it.

3. Ricœur criticizes Sartre of neglecting the irreal nature of image-fiction. Yet Sartre not only emphasizes that an art work belongs to the order of irreality, he reminds us that the attitude of the consciousness underlying

activities of art appreciation, be they contemplation of painting, appreciation of drama, or listening to music performance, is an attitude of irreality. Sartre states clearly that activities of art appreciation are not events of real time and do not fall under physical space; they do not belong to the order of reality. Thus, he does not neglect the irreal character of image-fiction.

4. Ricœur thinks that Sartre's theory of imagination reinforces the privilege given to "likeness" and reality as "original" as shown in the history of Western philosophy. What Sartre has shown in the Conclusion chapter of *The Imaginary* is rather the contrary. Through the examples of appreciation of drama and music performance, Sartre has pointed out that if there is some sort of "model" or "original" in drama and music performance, they are rather an imaginary and fictive object produced by the consciousness of imagination. These imaginary and fictive objects serve as the model of which the actual performance of a drama or a musical work is only its analogon. Ricœur's criticism that Sartre's theory of imagination gives priority to the real as original does not stand.

5. To Ricœur, ideology and utopia are image-fictions of the social and cultural domains, which do not refer to any existing reality. But are things so simple? Is the *New Atlantis* of Francis Bacon as the projection of a utopic land absent from any reference whatsoever to the state of humanity as known to Europeans of the early seventeenth century? The idyllic image of "primitive communism" projected by Marx and Engels in their work *German Ideology* is one of the most famous political utopias in modernity. It serves as the supreme social and moral end that justifies the violent means of class struggle lead by the proletariat. But why Marx and Engels present communism as a state of social organization originated from the primitive stage of human society? Doesn't it show that such form of social organization has already existed in human history in the past? Doesn't the projection of the future communist utopia based on a certain model of social organization of primitive humanity show that the intelligibility of the utopic future has to refer to the reality of its primitive past? Can any social imaginary be entirely independent of any reference to the cultural and historical reality of humankind? Or, rather a certain degree of reference to social and historical reality is inevitable? In such a case, is the intertwinement between image-picture and image-fiction also inevitable in the projection of ideology and utopia?

6. The above discussions bring us to the old question of the role of mimesis in art. Since Plato, art is considered as the mimesis of phusis. Natural reality is the model and serves as the original for the mimetic act of the artist. Sartre points to the other direction: imagination can create some sort of model or original in the realm of art; they are not real objects. Likewise, the underlying attitude of the subject of art appreciation is an attitude of

irreality in front of art works. The aesthetic attitude does not need any reference to reality to appreciate an art work. On the contrary, when we are operating aesthetic judgment on art performance, for example, when we judge whether the actor playing the role of Hamlet is performing well, whether a conductor of an orchestra playing the Symphony No. 7 of Beethoven succeeds in bringing out a beautiful performance of this music, we refer to the art work in question, itself an object of ideality, as the model and original. Here, we operate the mimesis of the reverse order: the irreal object of ideality is the model or original. The Chinese proverb「天籟之音」(tiānlài zhīyīn) is a metaphor that serves to describe the supreme musical quality of a human voice or the tone of a musical instrument that is as clear and beautiful as the sound from the heaven. Yet this metaphor is not established from the actual sounds of Nature. In Natural reality, not all sounds are clear, lyrical, and beautiful. Thus,「天籟之音」 is an idealized image. It is the product of aesthetization of the sounds of Nature by imagination. It is not the pure mimesis of Nature; rather, it is through our imaginary consciousness that the idealized sounds of Nature are established as a model of musical beauty. Likewise, all actual performance of art sets for itself a model of ideality as its object of mimesis. This mimesis of the reverse order is at the opposite of the Platonic conception of mimesis. Has Ricœur considered this kind of mimesis of the reverse order in artistic performance and art appreciation? In our presentation above, we have shown that the young Sartre is entirely aware of this state of affairs through his discussions of the originally unreal character of the model of dramatic and musical performance: any actual drama actor or music performer sets his or her standard of artistic performance with reference to a model that is imaginary in nature. Mimesis of the imaginary instead of mimesis of Nature in the Platonic sense: this is what we learn from the Conclusion chapter of the young Sartre's *The Imaginary*, an achievement that we are not sure that the mature Ricœur has attained.

Notes

1. The English philosopher Mary Warnock is probably one of the few exceptions. See Warnock (1970).

2. Although Husserl lectured on "phantasy and image consciousness" as early as in the winter semester of 1904–1905 as Part III of his lecture course "Principal Parts of the Phenomenology and Theory of Knowledge," materials of this lecture and other related writings were published only in 1980 as Husserl (1980): English translation as Husserl (2005).

3. For example, Thomas Busch (Busch 1996), after having presented one by one the two phenomenological accounts of imagination, came to the conclusion that

"no real dialogue took place between Sartre and Ricœur on the imagination." Yet he added the following remark: "while their overall philosophical projects profoundly differ, there is much similarity in their treatment of imagination" (516). In any case, Busch, well-known for his former works in defense of Sartre, did not defend Sartre against Ricœur's criticism.

   4. For example, Lior Levy (2014). Among French scholars, Philippe Cabestan has devoted a detailed comparative study on imagination in the young Fink and the young Sartre in Cabestan (2004), chapter 2, "Conscience et imagination: de l'unité de la conscience imageante," 65–122. Pierre Rodrigo refers constantly to Sartre while he scrutinizes Husserl's *phénoménologie de l'image* in his excellent book (2009: 153–98).

   5. Sartre draws our attention to the distinction between image as fiction and image as memory in the critical discussions of Bergson's understanding of image as mere "image-souvenir," that is, image-memory. See Sartre (1936: 46–49).

   6. Husserl thinks too that while we are watching a theatrical performance, "we live in a world of perceptual phantasy (in einer Welt der perzeptiver Phantasie)." We certainly see a series of images on stage, which form the cohesive unity of one image, "but they are not pictures as reproductions (Abbilder)" (Husserl 1980: 514–15; 2005: 616). This shows that Husserl is of the view that in the attitude of dramatic appreciation, we immerge ourselves in the world of imagination and do not see the images on the performing stage from a realistic attitude. This understanding is in complete agreement with Sartre.

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Chapter 9

On Castoriadis and the Social Imaginary Institution of the Real

Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Affinities and Critiques via His Dialogue with Merleau-Ponty

Suzi Adams

In his "Preface" to *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (1987 [1975]), Cornelius Castoriadis notes that the "properly philosophical aspect of the question of the imaginary and of the imagination" was reserved for another work-in-progress—*L'élément imaginaire*—which was to be published soon (1987: 6).[1] Regrettably, this work remained unfinished and, apart from a few fragments, unpublished.[2] Nonetheless, Castoriadis continued to develop his response to the question of the imaginary (and the imagination) throughout his intellectual trajectory. The imaginary element can be understood as the creative core of the human condition, which creates *ex nihilo* figures and forms that make the world—and this particular social world—possible. Castoriadis's approach brings the philosophical question of the creative imagination to bear on the sociological theme of social creativity within an overall theory of meaning. In so doing, he forges a distinctive framework for understanding the human condition in its twofold aspect of the radical imagination as psyche and the radical imaginary as social-historical. The radical imaginary is a *dimension of society*; it is transsubjective, unmotivated, and anonymous.[3] As such, unlike the imagination, it is irreducible to a faculty of the mind or, more broadly, to a capacity of the embodied self. This chapter focuses on the imaginary element in its social-historical mode as a dimension of society, in general, and as instituting society as the radical imaginary, in particular.[4]

The present chapter contributes to the reconstruction of the imaginary element in Castoriadis's thought. It highlights not only the phenomenological-hermeneutic affinities with Castoriadis's project, but also his critical engagement with phenomenology through the lens of his dialogue with Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to assess

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all aspects of Castoriadis's critique of Merleau-Ponty. The aim is rather to draw on his discussion to situate—and recover—the phenomenological debates and sources of significance for Castoriadis's articulation of the imaginary in order to argue both with and against Castoriadis's theoretical framework. The chapter is organized into three sections. Leaning on Merleau-Ponty, the first part sketches an approach to phenomenology within which to situate Castoriadis's project. It also articulates the main lines of Castoriadis's critique of Merleau-Ponty. The second section reconstructs Castoriadis's elucidation of the imaginary element as the imaginary institution of the real. The final section considers Castoriadis's changing response to the phenomenological problematic of the world and the implications that this holds for his elucidation of the imaginary element and human creation.

Castoriadis, Merleau-Ponty, and Phenomenology

Castoriadis's engagement with phenomenology was not systematic. It was, rather, a background feature of his overall project, especially in his pre-ontological thought, which took the phenomenological universe as a philosophical given.[5] Even when Castoriadis was critical of phenomenology, he still took for granted that philosophy should take its insights seriously, and, as such, that philosophy was to be a phenomenological philosophy, broadly understood. This notwithstanding, his explicit engagement with central phenomenological figures was generally antagonistic and dismissive. Two inter-linked criticisms were characteristic of his approach. First, he often dismissed phenomenological arguments—such as those by Husserl and Heidegger—as less than useful as, on Castoriadis's account, they remained within determinist ontologies, which meant that the imaginary element, the ontological implications of human creativity, and the social-historical field were occluded (I return to this below).[6] Castoriadis understood that these major phenomenological figures had, indeed, attempted to go beyond ensemblistic-identitarian thought that is characteristic of determinist ontologies; however, he judged these attempts unsuccessful. His own project set out to not only dismantle the inbuilt biases of inherited thought, but also to put forward a positive articulation and ontological place for the creative imagination/imaginary (I return to a summary of key tenets of his project, below).

In what ways, then, can Castoriadis's project be considered phenomenological? In his "Preface" to the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty famously begins by asking: "What is phenomenology?" (1962: vii).[7] In the "Preface" itself, Merleau-Ponty recognized broader and narrower versions of phenomenology: it was an expansive historical movement before its doctrinal

turn with Husserl. Even today, phenomenology remains a highly contested and heterogeneous field. Ricœur, for example, goes so far as to characterize it as a series of "Husserlian heresies" (1967: 4). More generally, the key figures of twentieth-century phenomenological thought always went beyond strict phenomenological sources (in the narrow sense) and drew on the broader historical movement in the development of their respective phenomenologies. In this way, even Castoriadis's shift to ontology in the 1970s can be understood as part of a broader ontological turn within phenomenology itself—from Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty, and beyond.

So, returning to Merleau-Ponty's "Preface" to the *Phenomenology of Perception*, let us hone in on some ways in which Castoriadis draws on Merleau-Ponty's understanding of phenomenology. It is first important to note that Merleau-Ponty's renewal of the phenomenological endeavor as outlined in the "Preface" is not only directed at the embodied self—for which his work is well-known—but also, albeit less systematically, at the macro-constellations of society, history, and civilizations.[8] In this vein, Merleau-Ponty writes that

> it is a matter, in the case of each civilization, of finding the Idea in the Hegelian sense, that is, not a law of the physico-mathematical type, discoverable by objective thought, but that formula which sums up some unique manner of behaviour towards others, towards nature, time and death: a certain way of patterning the world which the historian should be capable of seizing upon and making his own. These are the *dimensions* of history. (Merleau-Ponty 1962: xviii, emphasis in original)

Let us note briefly that this reference to the objective spirit as a way of patterning the world in and as history is also key to understanding the imaginary element in Castoriadis's sense as social imaginary significations embedded in social doing and institutions.[9] Furthermore—returning to the Preface itself—it is in *this* context—that is, the historical dimension of collective human existence, not the embodied existence of the subject-self—that Merleau-Ponty articulates his well-known insight that "because we are in the world, we are *condemned* to meaning" (1962: xxii; emphasis in original). Therewith, he voices a phenomenological understanding of meaning as characterized by the interplay of sociality, historicity, and world relation. As Merleau-Ponty uses the term *sociohistorical* in other writings (e.g., Merleau-Ponty 1992), we can characterize this as the interplay of sociohistoricity and world relation.[10] In adumbrating the sociohistorical region, Merleau-Ponty presages Castoriadis's development of the "social-historical" as a question in its own right that requires an elucidation of its mode of being.[11] Thus, we can argue that Merleau-Ponty articulates a twofold relationship of meaning: the social-historical and the world relation, respectively. Meaning is thereby decentered: it goes beyond sociocentric, but also the subject-centric approaches to meaning. The

subject-self exists only within the context of social collectives (more specifi-
cally, in the context of society understood as self-instituting).[12]

In the "Preface," Merleau-Ponty makes clear that the world problematic is
a cornerstone of phenomenological reflection. In grappling with the enigma
of the world, Merleau-Ponty tells us that phenomenology does not bring it
"to explicit expression [as] . . . a pre-existing being"; rather, the world is
understood as the "laying down of being" (1962: xx). Likewise, philosophy
is "not the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, like art, the act of bringing
truth into being" (xx). Merleau-Ponty calls this a *creation*.[13] Philosophy—
"true philosophy"—is not alone, however, in its capacity to grasp the world.
Merleau-Ponty goes on to say that history, too, "can give meaning to the
world quite as 'deeply' as a philosophical treatise," for history is the domain
where the meaning of the world "comes into being" (xx). Phenomenology is
thus understood as the disclosure of the world and of history—of the world
as historical and of historical worlds—and of the human condition within the
world as condemned to meaning: "the meaning of the world or of history as
that meaning comes into being."

In the final sentence of the "Preface," Merleau-Ponty draws parallels
between the project of phenomenology and the "general effort of modern
thought" (xxi). Within that, the ongoing aim to reveal the mystery of the world
and reason/rationality is condemned to remain unfinished: phenomenology is
always in-the-making. It is of interest to note that despite the central link to
reason/rationality, he refers in the final paragraph to artistic-cultural works—
from Proust to Cézanne—and thereby implicitly brings in the question of the
creative imagination. As the "other" of reason in modernity, the imagination,
especially as creative, is held under suspicion for being inherently chaotic
or anarchic. In the "Preface" under discussion, for example, Merleau-Ponty
mentions the imagination/imagine/imaginary six times. Its ambiguous and
ambivalent status is reflected there, too, varying from a contrast to "the real"
to the embracing of Kant's insight in the third *Critique*, that "if the subject has
a nature, then the hidden art of the imagination must condition the categorial
activity" (1962: xvii). But, Merleau-Ponty did not further explore the ques-
tion of the imagination at that point. Where Merleau-Ponty sees phenomenol-
ogy as a philosophy that aims to uncover the enigma of the world and reason
in rethinking the real, Castoriadis radicalizes Merleau-Ponty's grappling with
the "real" and the "imaginary" evident in *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968
[1964]) (and other late essays) but develops this problematic in a different
direction. Castoriadis will argue that we can only grasp the world and the
real via the imaginary. In so doing, Castoriadis articulates a highly original
approach to the imaginary element of society that elucidates the imaginary
institution of the real.

As we shall see, despite Castoriadis's early sympathies with Merleau-Ponty's work, Castoriadis ultimately deemed that Merleau-Ponty, too, remained trapped by the "weight of the ontological tradition."[14] Nonetheless, Castoriadis's most important phenomenological interlocutor remained Merleau-Ponty. Although Merleau-Ponty was not as central to the development of Castoriadis's intellectual project as it was for Claude Lefort (Castoriadis's cofounder of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*), his emphasis on society and history, as well as his seminars on the institution, for example, gave important (if often unacknowledged) impetus to Castoriadis's theoretical framework.[15]

Castoriadis's Critique of Merleau-Ponty

Castoriadis devoted two essays to Merleau-Ponty's thought. The first "The Sayable and the Unsayable: Homage to Merleau-Ponty" was first published in the special issue of *L'Arc* in 1971 (Castoriadis 1984). Castoriadis wrote it on the cusp of his ontological turn, and it respectfully and constructively engages with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the world, meaning, and the "speaking subject." The second essay, entitled "Merleau-Ponty and the Weight of the Ontological Tradition," was published in 1993 and was more critical. In the later essay, Castoriadis took Merleau-Ponty to task for his "hesitations" at the border of the "imaginary" and the "real," which left him, in Castoriadis's view, ultimately unable to move beyond an ontology of determinacy to grasp the mode of being of the radical imaginary and, concomitantly, social-historical creation.[16]

Castoriadis's link between the imaginary element—especially as social imaginary significations as instituting society—and meaning through and as which the world of each society is created, goes to the heart of his critical response to Merleau-Ponty: the "real" is a social-historical *institution* of a particular magma of social imaginary significations. Castoriadis charged Merleau-Ponty with vacillating on the cliff-edge of the "real" and the "imaginary" in *The Visible and the Invisible* (and other essays of the same period), unable to embrace the radicality of the imaginary as the social institution of the real, and thus remaining within the ontological grip of determinacy. He argued that Merleau-Ponty's hesitations demonstrate the extent to which "the enormous weight the implicit prejudices of the inherited ontology bring to bear upon someone's thought at the very moment when it is struggling to free itself therefrom" (Castoriadis 1993: 5). For Castoriadis, inherited ontology is characterized by a reliance on understanding being as "being-determined." However, the imagination is "in its essence rebellious against determinacy" (Castoriadis 1997b: 214); as such, traditional philosophy cannot grasp its

mode of being as radically creative, nor, concomitantly, its centrality for the institution of the real.

The fault was not Merleau-Ponty's alone. The intractability of the categories of inherited thought also played an important part. Castoriadis argues that, to successfully escape from this straightjacket, Merleau-Ponty

> would have had to abandon, to begin with, "reality" and the traditional ontological illusion, exacerbated by Heidegger and taken up again from him by Merleau-Ponty, the one makes of being the self-giving of what is given and is fatally obliged, therefore, to adjust itself to the being-given. The few attempts at the imaginary in *The Visible and the Invisible* remain and could remain only attempts because they are deeply heterogeneous to what is essential to the thought that is deployed therein and ultimately incompatible with it. (Castoriadis 1993: 6)

Ultimately, Castoriadis attributes the hesitations in Merleau-Ponty's thought in *The Visible and the Invisible*—the "truly wild humus of the working notes" notwithstanding—to the enduring hold of "perception" in Merleau-Ponty's thought (which in his late work was transmuted into "experience" and "ontological reception"), which remains, on Castoriadis's interpretation of Merleau-Ponty, within the realm of the "rational" not the "imaginary."

The Imaginary Element

Overview

Castoriadis includes two essays on "the imaginary element" in his most systematic and best-known text *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (1987 [1975]).[17] First published in 1975, the *IIS* is a heterogeneous work: it is divided into two parts, each of which was written at a different time. The first part includes three essays that themselves were published earlier in 1964–1965 in *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. These interlinked essays detail Castoriadis's critique of Marx, of which the third essay offers his first articulation of the radical imaginary as instituting history. The second part of the *IIS* was written between 1970 and 1974 and makes a sudden jump to elucidate an ontology of the social-historical and the imaginary element. It consists of four chapters, each addressing a different aspect of anthropic being: the mode of being of the social-historical, the proto-institutions of *legein* and *teukhein*, the radical imagination of the psyche, and social imaginary significations, respectively.[18] The two chapters most relevant to the present discussion are the final chapter of the 1964/65 section of the *IIS*—"The Imaginary and the Institution: A First Approach"—and the final chapter of the second section—"Social Imaginary Significations." This chapter will focus on the earlier elucidation

of the imaginary element, as Castoriadis's affinities with phenomenological-hermeneutic problematics were more apparent at that point, but a critical dialogue will be taken up with Castoriadis's ontological articulation in the final section of the present chapter.

Before reconstructing Castoriadis's first articulation of the social imaginary, a general point requires brief explanation.[19] The links between the radical imagination and the radical imaginary in Castoriadis's work are sometimes in tension. But in selective ways, their respective problematics are mutually informing for the development of Castoriadis's framework. At the time of the mid-1960s, the imaginary was an emerging problematic for Castoriadis; some terminological uncertainty is apparent. Distinctive to Castoriadis's approach is his central link between the imagination and meaning. Kant, along with Aristotle, hold a special place in Castoriadis's thought: he credits each of them with discovering the "primary" imagination (in contrast to the "secondary" imagination as imitative and reproductive), although each discovery was also marked by a subsequent retreat (Castoriadis 1997b). Castoriadis delineates a tripartite distinction—in reference to Kant—between the perceived, the rational, and the imaginary/imagination (Castoriadis 1987). The perceived corresponds to *Anschauung*, and the rational to *Verstand*. For Castoriadis, the aim is to restore (and radicalize) the constituting role of the imagination (from which the instituting role of the imaginary emerges), from which Kant had all but retreated in the second edition of the first *Critique*. This, too, was Heidegger's objective in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In this vein, Castoriadis tells us that "no doubt it is to Heidegger that we owe both the restoration of the question of the imagination as a philosophical question and the possibility of an approach to Kant that breaks with the somnolence and aridity of the neo-Kantians" (1997b: 215). Elsewhere, he acknowledges that Heidegger had "attempted to return imagination to a central position in the way human beings relate to the world" (Castoriadis 2007: 72). Castoriadis's sustained elucidation of the social imaginary institution of the real, and of the imaginary as the root of knowledge, must be understood as taking up the gauntlet that Heidegger laid down. In so doing, however, Castoriadis proposes to take up the challenge in a very different way. He shifts register and radicalizes the argument from an account of the creative imagination to the radical imaginary (Castoriadis 1987: 139–40). He notes that although there is an intermittent discussion of the imagination as productive in the history of philosophy, "one would seek in vain" for a discussion of the "instituting social imaginary" (Castoriadis 2007: 72). This is needed as a "full recognition" of the radical imagination is only possible "if it goes hand in hand with the discovery of the other dimension of the radical imaginary, the social-historical imaginary, instituting a society as source of ontological creation deploying itself as history" (Castoriadis 1997b: 245). Here, Castoriadis takes up Merleau-Ponty's insights into "institution" as a critique of

"constitution" and more broadly the egological and transcendental subject; although he retains Merleau-Ponty's insistence on the historical dimension of the institution, he makes explicit its transsubjective aspect that is irreducible to intersubjectivity (Merleau-Ponty 2010).[20]

Castoriadis's ontology of creation serves as a trenchant critique of what he calls Western philosophy's bias toward an understanding of "being" as "being determined." He wants to provide an alternative to "the history of the mainstream of philosophy as the elaboration of Reason, homologous to the positing of being as being-determined, or determinacy (*Peras/Bestimmtheit*)" (Castoriadis 1993: 1). Such approaches characteristically emphasize reason/the rational (Castoriadis 1987) and occlude the very possibility of creation, on the one hand, and the social-historical as the self-creating mode of being par excellence, on the other. Castoriadis takes up openings in the phenomenological tradition (including from Heidegger and Sartre) regarding the creative imagination and reorients phenomenology toward the radical imaginary/radical imagination as the root of both reason and history, as the basis of the real as socially instituted/created.[21]

Castoriadis delineates a critique of determinacy as an ontology of creation, which points to his distinction between "difference" and "alterity," on the one hand, and "production" and "creation," on the other. The "production of difference" belongs to identity thinking and occludes creation. It implies the fabrication from something already existing—a combining of preexisting elements. He takes the structuralist argument (especially Lévi-Strauss's account) as paradigmatic for this approach, which also informed his discussion with Ricœur in the mid-1980s (Ricœur and Castoriadis 2017). For Castoriadis, the "creation" of "new forms" brings about "alterity/otherness," that is, the emergence of radical novelty. It recognizes the human capacity to create ontological form (*eidos*), which undermines traditional ontologies of determinacy, and which, moreover, was traditionally occluded in Western thought. Castoriadis argued that inherited thought (inaugurated and epitomized by Platonic metaphysics) posited the "hyper-category" of determinacy—"to be" as meant as "to be determined." As such, it could not grasp the radical, self-creating regions of anthropic being, in particular, the social-historical and the psychical that are immanently and radically self-creating/self-determining, that is, are not determined by an external source.

The Symbolic

As part of his critical response to Marx, Castoriadis elucidates history (as the social-historical) as the domain of meaning. His overall purpose is to argue for the imaginary institution of the real; his first step in the argument is to critique functionalism through consideration of the symbolic (Castoriadis

1987). A key aim for Castoriadis in this essay was to demolish functionalist approaches to society, by which is meant a functional approach to social institutions; consideration of the institutional dimension is central to any understanding of society. Social institutions are *real*—that is, they are actual—for example, from marriage to buying property to legal penalties—but for Castoriadis, they are irreducible to a functional element (Castoriadis 1987: 131). In this way, the real is irreducible to functionalism: to discuss a function of society already presupposes the activity of the imaginary element. Castoriadis argues in this vein that "the functionalist view can realize its programme only if it supplied itself with a criterion for the 'reality' of the needs of society. Where will it find this criterion?" (116). As we will see, Castoriadis will argue that the "real" has its basis in the imaginary element of society: the real is a social-historical creation; the real is instituted.

In arguing against the equivalence of the functional/real and the rational, Castoriadis argues for a symbolic infrastructure to both the real/rational. In so doing, Castoriadis presents a tripartite framework—the functional, the symbolic, and the imaginary. This was clearly inspired by the Lacanian approach; however, Castoriadis confers a very different sense to the imaginary (and the symbolic) than Lacan. The context for Castoriadis's articulation of this tripartite framework, moreover, is society as a particular configuration of institutions (as *instituted society*), on the one hand, and the social-historical as the advent of social transformation and change (as *instituting society*), on the other. Before Lacan become interested in the symbolic (dating from 1953), he was more interested in articulating the imaginary (1936–1953); these reflections can be considered a psychoanalytic response to Sartre's approach to the phenomenology of the imagination and the imaginary. Sartre also figured in Castoriadis's developing approach to the imaginary; where Sartre presented it in a negative mode, Castoriadis saw it as the "emergence of something positive" (Castoriadis 2015: 64), while the critique of Marx demanded new visions of history within a phenomenological framework.

Castoriadis turns to the second aspect of the institution—the symbolic—as the first step to critique the pretentions of functionalism (and its concomitant determinist ontology). This is the only time in his published writings that Castoriadis systematically discusses questions of the symbolic; as such, it is significant.[22] He pursues a broadly phenomenological problematic, that is, to examine the mode of being in which the institution is "given to us" (Castoriadis 1987: 117); everything, indeed, that is given to us in the social-historical world "is inextricably tied to the symbolic" (117).[23] Castoriadis understands the symbolic as "symbolic networks"—such as religion or the legal system—within which particular symbols operate. For example, a property title symbolizes the socially sanctioned "right" of the owner to undertake unlimited operations in relation to the property in question (117). Although institutions are irreducible to the symbolic, they "can only exist in the symbolic; they are

impossible outside of a second-order symbolism for each institution consti-
tutes a particular symbolic network" (117).[24]

Castoriadis also wants to challenge functionalist (rationalist) views of the
symbolic. To do so, he takes up the meta-institution of religion (following
Durkheim) (118). He contends that, although all religions incorporate ritual,
the relation between the ritual and the content of the ritual is *symbolic*,
not functional. Ritual consists in a proliferation of specific detail; each
aspect is equally as important; there is no distinction between "essential"
and "secondary" aspects of its content: "Everything the Sacred takes hold
of is equally sacred" (119). But interpretative lacunae remain: gaps in the
network of the symbolic and functional that leave a residual meaning; the
symbolic relation is not self-evident, where the symbol is neither inevitable
nor haphazard (but an institution of the social-historical); and, finally, the
boundaries of the symbolic (i.e., the point at which the symbolic overlaps
with the functional) are not predetermined and vary according to context.
It can lie "almost anywhere" (119), for example, from the "bareness" of
protestant churches and the "jungle-like lushness" of Hindu temples, until
"suddenly, just where symbolism seems to have invaded every square inch
of matter, as in some Siamese pagodas, one sees that it has all at once lost
its content and has become essentially mere decoration" (119).[25] In this
way, we can see the strength of Castoriadis's challenge to functionalist
understandings of the real via recourse to the symbolic, but this is not the
whole story.

The Imaginary

Thus far, we have seen that Castoriadis's focus has been mainly on the sym-
bolic element of religious rituals and the symbolic element of institutions.
For him, institutions are inextricably symbolic. No version of functionalism
can account for the "surplus of meaning" encountered in rituals and social
institutions. "Meaning" in this context, is understood explicitly as symbolic
meaning. Castoriadis speaks of "symbolic networks" of society and argues
that they are fundamental to every social institution, social ritual, and so forth.

Having argued at length for the centrality of the symbolic in relation to
the real-rational, at the end of the essay, however, Castoriadis stops quite
abruptly to make his point that symbolic networks do not exhaust social
meaning (Castoriadis 1997b: 127). They in turn draw on, and are made pos-
sible, by the imaginary element—social imaginary significations (especially
as the radical imaginary). Castoriadis's distinction between the symbolic and
the imaginary differentiates him from a number of thinkers in the field—from
Paul Ricœur to Charles Taylor, from Merleau-Ponty to Lefort. And yet, the

implications of his insight remain ripe for further debate, discussion, and analysis:

> The deep and obscure relations between the symbolic and the imaginary appear as soon as one reflects on the following fact: the imaginary has to use the symbolic not only to "express" itself (this is self-evident) but to "exist," to pass from the virtual to anything more than this. The most elaborate delirium, just as the most secret and vaguest phantasy, are composed of "images," but these "images" are there to represent something else and so have a symbolic function. But, conversely, symbolism, too presupposes an imaginary capacity. For it presupposes the capacity to see in a thing what it is not, to see it other than it is. (Castoriadis 1987: 127)

The crux of his argument in that essay was then to demonstrate that the imaginary element as the radical imaginary was the precondition—or "common root" of the actual imaginary and the symbolic. Thus, for example, the paycheck symbolizes the capitalist system of wage labor, but this in turn articulates the social imaginary signification of *rational mastery*—or, more correctly, *the infinite pursuit of (pseudo)rational mastery*. This imaginary signification is one of two central significations of modernity; the other is *autonomy*. For Castoriadis, the signification of rational mastery underpins modern projects of bureaucracy, (techno-)science, and capitalism. But for present purposes, it is important to note that the symbolic and the imaginary elements are entwined and manifest this interplay through the self-institution of society—and its institutions. Each society has a particular symbolism that is grounded in the specificity of that society's imaginary significations.

The aim of Castoriadis's reappropriation of the imaginary is to challenge the long-received notion that "the imaginary" is distinct from "the real," whether it claims to take the place of reality (as in telling a falsehood), or whether it makes no such claim (as with a novel). At its most basic level, the imaginary lies in "positing or presenting oneself with things and relations that do not exist, in the form of representation" (127). Castoriadis posits the radical imaginary as the common root of the actual imaginary (the concretely existing world/s configured by a particular constellation of social imaginary significations) and of the symbolic: "This is, finally, the elementary and irreducible capacity of evoking images" (128). Unlike the actual imaginary, however, the symbolic is not reducible to the imaginary; it retains a "real-rational" aspect: "that which represents the real or is indispensable for thinking of it or acting on it," but this, too, is inextricably intertwined with the actual imaginary (Castoriadis 1987: 128), for the "real-rational" is instituted by the imaginary.

Hitherto, we have taken the "real" to refer to actual social institutions—and social life of which they are an inextricable dimension—which, as Castoriadis demonstrated via a discussion of the symbolic, was irreducible to functional accounts of "the real." He argues that imaginary component is needed to respond to the query: "to what end is social life functional?" (134). The imaginary element outstrips any functional component of institutions. At the heart of every social order lies an "imaginary" origin, be that "God," "Nature," and so forth (128), that is, the invisible behind the visible: an "invisible unnameable" (131). Yet, what is the imaginary element? It is "more real than the real," through and as which we gain access to "reality." The imaginary element is

> an original investment by society of the world and itself with meaning—meanings which are not "dictated" by real factors since it is instead this meaning that attributes to these real factors a particular importance and a particular place in the universe constituted by a given society—a meaning that can be recognized in both the content and the style of its life (and which is not so far removed from what Hegel called "the spirit of a people")? (Castoriadis 1987: 128)

Here we are close to the Merleau-Ponty passage quoted above from the "Preface" to the *Phenomenology of Perception*. The imaginary element provides an articulation of meaning in its twofold relations of sociality and world, which can be understood in Hegelian terms of *Volksgeist*. Castoriadis singles out the two imaginaries central to Western civilization: the Hebraic-Christian imaginary of a monotheistic God (as Divine Legislator) and the ancient Greek imaginary of autonomy as found in the twin birth of democracy and philosophy (I return below to the question of the world).

The imaginary—social imaginary significations—of a particular society or civilization is further organized around central and secondary significations.[26] These are inextricably symbolic and imaginary, but the imaginary component brings forth

> the "figures" that render society visible to itself (the clans, the ceremonies . . . [etc]) possess an indivisible meaning, as if this meaning stemmed from an originary operation that posited it from the very outset—and this meaning, which henceforth is active as such, is situated at a level different from any functional determination. (Castoriadis 1987: 130)

The imaginary, as used by Castoriadis, is not the "irreal," the "fictive," or the "specular." Incarnated in social imaginary significations, and embodied in social institutions, the imaginary not only gives access to "the real" but also creates "the real" as this "particular reality." Central imaginaries configure the world of a particular society/civilization: they are, as Castoriadis was later to say, without a world referent but instead are imaginaries that are

totally generative of meaning: here, autonomy, God, and rational mastery are key examples, as mentioned above. Without reference to the particular imaginary as the "invisible unnameable" standing behind institutions, its symbolic and functional aspects (and their interconnections) remain incomprehensible. The imaginary not only creates new forms—such as democracy—more broadly, it also institutes social reality as the creation of a world of meaning. Creation in this sense refers to the capacity to grant what is not given in perception or rational thought (Castoriadis 1987: 133), and it is characteristic of the imaginary. In this vein, discourse "intends something other than symbolism: it is a meaning, which can be *perceived, thought or imagined*" (139; emphasis added). Meaning is the "independent core" that comes to expression and is carried by significations corresponding to the perceived, the rational, and the imaginary (sometimes Castoriadis also includes the symbolic as a fourth aspect; e.g., Castoriadis 1987: 140; 1988: 30). Despite the close links between these three varieties, they each have a particular modality. Castoriadis is most interested in imaginary significations, especially central imaginary significations that, as mentioned above, are purely creative and absolutely generative of a sociocultural world. Castoriadis gives the example of "God" in this respect. No matter what the rational efficacy might be of God as an organizing principle of some societies, or what supports his being might find in the perceived world of experience, God is "neither a signification of something real, nor a signification of something rational, nor is he a symbol of something else again" (140). God is, rather, a central social imaginary signification—that configuration of "signifiers and signifieds into a system" that supports, extends, and modifies this nexus (Castoriadis 1987: 140). God is an "imaginary creation" that cannot be accounted for by reality, rationality, or the laws of symbolism (141). But this too takes on an Husserlian tenor:

> How can we grasp God, as an imaginary signification, except on the basis of the shadows (*Abschattungen*) projected onto the effective social action of a people—but at the same time, how could we overlook that, just like the thing perceived, he is the condition for the possibility of an inexhaustible series of such shadows, but, unlike the perceived, he is never given "in person?" (Castoriadis 1984: 132; 1987: 141–42)

Such central social imaginary significations are not primarily symbolic in the sense that they are not there in order to represent something else: it is a condition of possibility that makes particular symbols, organization patterns, and representations of a given society, the "final articulations the society in question has imposed on the world, on itself, and on its needs," as the "invisible cement holding together this endless collection of real, rational and symbolic odds and ends that constitute every society, and as the principle that selects and shapes the bits and pieces that will be accepted there" (Castoriadis 1987: 143). Functionality looks to an external source for its meaning; symbolism

refers to something that is neither symbolic nor real/rational: in each case, this element is the imaginary element of a society.

Articulating the World

Earlier, we noted that Merleau-Ponty's central connection between the phenomenological question of the world, sociality (and historicity), and meaning: we are condemned to meaning because we are always already *in-the-world*. The focus thus far in the discussion has been on one aspect of meaning: the sociality of institutions. The imaginary element is incarnated in social imaginary significations that themselves are further embodied in institutions. But what of the world problematic? Unlike Merleau-Ponty, Patočka, or Ricœur, the problematic of the world horizon was not a question in its own right for Castoriadis. In his pre-ontological thought, the world was part of the fabric of his philosophical framework, but as he developed his philosophy of the radical imagination/radical imaginary as an ontology of autocreation—and as creation *ex nihilo*—in the 1970s and beyond, the implications for the incorporation of the world problematic as an overarching and shared horizon became a site of tension in his thought. Nonetheless, Castoriadis remained clear throughout that the imaginary institution of the real connects the imaginary element to social-historical meaning as a human creation of a world.

Although the question of the world had become marginalized in his thought, it formed an explicit part of Castoriadis's critical engagement with Merleau-Ponty. Castoriadis's critique emerged in the context of his discussion of perception (Castoriadis 1993: 24ff). He points to the cultural—that is social-historical via social imaginary significations—preconditions of perception, which means that

> some nontrivial components of perception, of perceiving, are instituted (for that which relates to the modes of being of the "natural" object as well as for some formative schemata of perceiving—such as perspective, to take an example often cited by Merleau-Ponty), that already leads to a radical condemnation of the entire egological frame of reference within which, and within which alone, perception has until now and has always been considered. (Castoriadis 1984; 1993: 24, 24–29)

This leads to questions about the ways in which the institution of the social as public world configures (or contributes to the configuration of) the perception of the subject and "what is most important, to do so without our being able to refer to an allegedly 'natural' perception, or perception 'outside culture' that

would furnish us the *tertium comparationis* relative to which such and such a historical specification of perception would appear as a 'variant' demanding and capable of explanation" (Castoriadis 1993: 24). This, Castoriadis goes on to argue, is the same situation as with language—"it boils down to the same thing to say that it is impossible to separate the organization of the public world posited by the society under consideration from its manifest presentation-representation that is language" (25). The issue becomes not the distinction between the public and private worlds but the "indefinite" number of public worlds that proliferate among the plurality of cultures. Within this context, then, Castoriadis contends that

> it is hard to see how *the* world *tout court*, on which would "reset" this polymorphism of historical cultures, could have any status other than that of being In Itself, any meaning of being that would not be ideality. For, I can then only say, once more, that each culture "reaches it but does not exhaust it," which makes of it, here again, an inexhaustible provisioning certainly, but one already given of which each culture is partially revelatory, and which therefore truly is apart from them in all—in a "Where?" and a "When?" that can only be the no-place and the non-instant, illocality and intemporality, the *aei* of the In Itself and of ideality. (25; emphasis in original)

Castoriadis formulated the above critique after he shifted to ontology in the 1970s. In elucidating the mode of being of the social-historical, Castoriadis criticized Western philosophy, in general, and Plato, in particular, for the occlusion of the social-historical, the imaginary element, human creation, and, concomitantly, an understanding of time that was irreducible to space or the eternal. In response, Castoriadis developed a radical ontology of becoming. Central to this, as briefly summarized above, was the notion of creation *ex nihilo*: a new form was created by the social-historical *out of nothing*, that is, as irreducible to its antecedents. The creation of a society's world of meaning that was configured by central imaginary significations was also a creation *ex nihilo*, as central imaginary significations—such as God or autonomy—were without a world referent. They were absolutely generative. Castoriadis, as we have seen, developed the distinction between central and secondary imaginary significations in his "first attempt" at elucidating the imaginary and the institution in the *IIS*. But this was developed further in ontological terms in his second iteration of social imaginary significations in the *IIS*.

One result of this was that each social-historical world became ontologized. This is seen in two ways. First, the figure of the world itself is ontologized through the introduction of the *magma* metaphor. The magma was absent from the 1964–1965 articulation of the imaginary, but played an important part in the later ontology. Each social-historical world is created by a magma of social imaginary significations. What is a magma? Drawing

on the geological notion of volcanic lava, magma is a nonensemblistic mode of organization of the social-historical (and also of the unconscious, with society itself a "magma of magmas"): "The world of significations is a magma" (243). Like the world, magma is enigmatic, and, like social imaginary significations, can only be grasped indirectly and obliquely (Castoriadis 1987: 143). Like the world, magma cannot be brought under a concept (Richir 1989). Thus, Castoriadis is unable to give a positive, definitive definition of the magma, but the language to elucidate it reverts to phenomenological precepts: "What we seek to understand is the mode of being of what gives itself before identitary or ensemblistic logic is imposed; what gives itself in this way in this mode of being, we are calling a *magma*" (Castoriadis 1987: 343).[27] Even when he is most distant from phenomenology, his overall orientation hearkens back to its key tenets.

Second, as we have seen, Castoriadis holds that the self-institution of society is simultaneously the institution of a magma social imaginary significations "which we can and must call a *world* of significations" (Castoriadis 1987: 359; emphasis in original). Almost in passing, Castoriadis then adds that "for it is the one and the same thing to say that society institutes the world in each case as its world or its world as the world" (186, 359). But, indeed, it is not the same thing. The former presupposes the world as an overarching and shared background horizon, that is, the world as a phenomenological problematic, while the latter moves toward a more constructivist ontology of closed cultural worlds.[28] In this context, Castoriadis comes perilously close to extending his image of the psychic monad to the social-historical sphere. The world has no meaning in itself and favors no one cultural meaning over another: thus, it must be meaningless, without meaning.

Why was this a necessary step for Castoriadis to make? To be consistent with the radical ontology of creation *ex nihilo*, Castoriadis needed to repudiate all forms of determinacy. This included the hermeneutic element of world articulation both as interpretative creation and creative interpretation. While the notion of the world as an overarching and shared horizon—"*the* world *tout court*"—provides a minimum of commonality across the human condition, on Castoriadis's account, Merleau-Ponty's understanding that this polymorphism of cultures "reaches" the world but does not "exhaust it" implies that the "set" of possible meanings is already given in and with the world. But this cannot be the case, Castoriadis argues, as this casts the whole within determinacy again: what is, is given, determined, in advance. Elsewhere, in reply to his critics, he writes in the same vein:

> We remark straight away the immense variety of these proper [social-historical] worlds—of the S.I.S. [SA: social imaginary significations] of different societies and of the institutions that bear/convey them. We then ask ourselves: How is

the world *tout court*, since there effectively is this indefinite variety of worlds proper to each society?

The response is: The world lends itself to (is compatible with) all these S.I.S. and privileges none. That means: The world *tout court* is senseless, devoid of significations (save that of lending itself to . . .; but that is not what we call a signification). The result is that, *at this level*, all "hermeneutical" discussion, every attempt to see in the creation of S.I.S. "interpretations" of the world, has no ground to stand on. (Castoriadis 1997a: 363–64; emphasis in original)

Because the world of social imaginary significations is understood in ontological terms as a social-historical creation *ex nihilo*, any incorporation of an understanding of the world as a shared horizon in need of interpretation (which can incorporate a creative aspect) must necessarily involve a hermeneutic dimension, but because Castoriadis can think only in terms of the polarization of "potentiality" and "actuality" as always already within determinism as the negation of qualitative time as creation (as opposed to the spatialization of time as nontime), he is unwilling to grasp the hermeneutic implications of meaning as underdetermined (not indeterminate) along with the *Sinnfähigkeit* of the world: the world invites signification, and, unwilling to accept an interpretative dimension to creation (and vice versa).[29] But the "meaning of meaning" is neither a positive "something" nor a negative "nothing." It is underdetermined. The world invites its articulation through the encounter between anthropic-collective-historical worlds and the world *tout court*.[30] The rejection of the hermeneutic-phenomenological implications of the human condition of being-in-the-world was a consequence of his ontology of the social imaginary creation of the world *ex nihilo*.

Although the world was not ever a question in its own right for Castoriadis's work, his pre-ontological writings demonstrated a greater sensitivity toward hermeneutic-phenomenological insights in this regard—not only, as we have seen, in the intrinsically hermeneutic aspect of the symbolic webs of social institutions, but also in the world as a shared horizon. We have seen traces of this in the discussion above—for example, the imaginary is "an original investment by society of the world and itself with meaning" (as quoted above, Castoriadis 1987: 128, 149ff). However, the richest elucidation of the world is found in his earlier essay on Merleau-Ponty (Castoriadis 1984).[31]

Written on the cusp of Castoriadis's turn to ontology, this beautiful homage to Merleau-Ponty is infused with a deep, respectful reading that remains close to Merleau-Ponty's own texts. Although it ostensibly focuses on language and the speaking subject, it also reveals Castoriadis's embrace of the world. The question animating his interpretation of Merleau-Ponty is the following: What is expression? And what makes expression possible? Expression is possible because the "extra-linguistic correlate belongs to the world . . . one of the

necessary conditions of their existence is provided by the manner of beings of things in the world" (Castoriadis 1984: 124–25). And again, "the false logic of either/or here again has no purchase, for it can conceive of language (and likewise of thought) only in terms of the dilemma between a description that mirrors a world in itself and a wholly arbitrary organisation—both of which are equally impossible, equally meaningless formulations" (127). And further, "language could not, in the same moment, speak the world at each time, and each time speak it in its unique fashion, if the world had not role to play in this astonishing possibility. What role, then, is this?" (127). In reconstructing Merleau-Ponty's response to this question, Castoriadis asks two further questions: "How, then, can the meaning of the thing summon forth an indefinite multiplicity of modes of expression and lend itself to them?" (127), which is followed by "how is it that every language, each in its always unique fashion, is able to speak the same world?" (128). Castoriadis has been hitherto talking about the perceptual world, the natural world, which the inherent rational dimension of the world and of being: it speaks to the universality of language and the world across cultures. But both the world and language are actively involved in this. But the commonality of the world across languages—the world as an overarching and shared horizon—is also a plurality: "the world brought into existence as a world by language is always an historical world" (129). Perception is "instituted"; it is social-historical and is configured by significations that enframe the cultural world (Castoriadis 1984: 130; 1993: 24ff).[32] Perception in this sense is never "natural" but derives from the "cultural order" of the symbolic-imaginary field (Castoriadis 1984: 130). Castoriadis also made this point in his later critique of Merleau-Ponty (as noted above), but in this earlier essay, he engaged more fruitfully with the ensuing implications. Language expresses the invisible of the cultural order to bring it into visibility, both in general, and the visibility of a specific society, in particular. Language belongs to the being of the social-historical: "No culture can exist without its nuclei of meaning, its central significations, certain principles of organisation of its world (which is both 'natural' and 'historic' and thus historic" (Castoriadis 1984: 131).[33] But there is a further entwining of the universal and the particular (and the particularity of the universal). The nuclei of social imaginary meaning specific to each cultural world, once instituted, the nuclei of social imaginary meaning that is specific to each cultural world, belong to the world as a shared world, and become the "public property" for all cultures (Castoriadis 1984: 131 ff). In his homage to Merleau-Ponty, Castoriadis thus embraced the significance of the phenomenological question of the world and its *Sinnfähigkeit* for the "meaning of meaning" and the human condition. The world plays an active part in its articulation—its discovery/invention, its creative interpretation/interpretative creation—by each cultural world.[34]

In Lieu **of a Conclusion**

Castoriadis's enduring engagement with Merleau-Ponty was singular in his trajectory and brings into relief the phenomenological background to the development of his own philosophical project. His critique of Merleau-Ponty centered on his incapacity to grasp the real as instituted by the imaginary element; the present chapter reconstructed his early elucidation of the imaginary element that first put forward his own account of the social imaginary institution of the real. Castoriadis linked the imaginary to meaning: this was one of his most original contributions. But while he emphasized the sociality of meaning, and, more than any other thinker, gave an in-depth articulation of the social-historical region of being, his engagement with the phenomenological problematic of the world was not ever at the forefront of his thought. As we have seen, his earlier thought gave due account to the human condition in-the-world—and, concomitantly, its hermeneutic dimension—and this was incorporated into his theory of meaning. But his turn to ontology and radicalization of creation to *ex nihilo* meant that he could no longer account for the world relation of "the meaning of meaning." As a consequence, the world was flattened, reduced to its capacity to grasp the inherent rationality of being; Castoriadis neglected to consider the part the world played in the imaginary institution of the rational and the real. But he did not ever fully exorcise the problematic of the world from his thought; it remains in traces. A return to Castoriadis's earlier work on the imaginary element (and other writings of that period) gives greater scope to extend his engagement with hermeneutic-phenomenology, not only in relation to the world and the interpretative aspect of meaning/the imaginary (via the symbolic and also through a greater elucidation of the meaning qua meaning as underdetermined), but also in furthering an elucidation of the third aspect of meaning that Castoriadis emphasized more explicitly in his earlier account of the imaginary element: the being of doing. Because in doing "dwell *significations*" (1987: 146).

Notes

1. In the late 1960s, he also referred to this work as *Le fondement imaginaire du social-historique* (Castoriadis 2015: 68, n. 2).

2. For example, Castoriadis (1993, 1997b, 2007, 2015).

3. For a discussion of the transsubjective in Castoriadis's work, see Adams (2016).

4. For discussions of Castoriadis's approach to the psyche and the radical imagination, see, for example, Adams (2011, especially chapter 3) and Arnason (2014).

5. Some attempts have been made to consider the phenomenological and hermeneutic aspects of Castoriadis's engagement—for example, Arnason (1993; 2003), Mouzakitis (2008), Adams (2011), and Carlisle (2017). The recent publication of the Ricœur-Castoriadis dialogue has further highlighted Castoriadis's critical engagement with these themes (Ricœur and Castoriadis 2017).

6. Despite Castoriadis's vehement criticisms of Heidegger, his ontology of the social-historical built upon the groundwork of Heidegger's reactivation of the question of the meaning of being, while Castoriadis later thought on the ontological creativity of nature, via his rethinking of *physis* and *nomos*, can also be read as a rethinking of ontological difference. For further discussion, see Adams (2011).

7. Merleau-Ponty's own approach to phenomenology (as with Patočka, Ricœur, and Blumenberg) is characterized by a critical engagement with—and radicalization of—both Husserl and Heidegger's thought, the fruits of which can be seen already in this "Preface." As it goes far beyond the themes adumbrated in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, the "Preface" is better considered an independent work.

8. Although Merleau-Ponty's approach to history has been taken up in the secondary debates, the macro-constellations of civilizations and the transsubjectivity of the objective spirit has been neglected. Johann Arnason is unique in his development of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology in a civilizational direction (Arnason 2003, 2013). For a discussion of the transsubjective dimension of social life, see, for example, Adams (2015). Castoriadis's project also included a philosophy of the self as psyche-soma. The psyche was characterized by the radical imagination.

9. Both Merleau-Ponty and Castoriadis draw on Hegelian tropes, such as the objective spirit and, relatedly, the *Volksgeist*. However, it is to be noted that their respective usage of such themes is not to be taken as a support of Hegelian Spirit in the strict sense of a becoming toward a self-aware end.

10. Meaning should, however, rightly be understood in its tripartite relation to the world, the social-historical, and to social doing/anonymous movement. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to pursue these connections in any further detail. See Castoriadis (1984, 1993) and Rechter (2009).

11. In taking up the ontological question of the social-historical, Castoriadis thereby made explicit an understanding of history as the unfolding of the social (and vice versa).

12. Phenomenology—and philosophy, more broadly—tends to reduce sociality to intersubjectivity and marginalize the transsubjective dimension. Where the transsubjective dimension is incorporated, it tends to either be understood in negative terms (e.g., Heidegger's *das Man*) or as a way to understand the self that is curiously unencumbered by sociality (e.g., Heidegger's *Dasein*). Castoriadis's elucidation of the social-historical provides a necessary counterbalance to the impoverished theorization of the social, while still allowing for the acting, embodied subject, and contexts of intersubjectivity.

13. The question of creation is for Castoriadis intimately connected to the imaginary element but also to the social-historical. As such, he cannot see beyond Merleau-Ponty's apparent reliance on "perception" and its association with the "real" (as the opposite of "the imaginary") to grapple with Merleau-Ponty's response to the

question of creativity in other settings. Yet as Waldenfels (1999) argues, Merleau-Ponty develops a notion of the creativity of language. But Merleau-Ponty's articulation of creativity goes beyond language: it is clearly evident in his approach to history and historical time (Merleau-Ponty 1992). A fruitful way to explore connections between their approaches to creativity could be via the problematic of history.

14. This refers to the title of Castoriadis's second essay on Merleau-Ponty (Castoriadis 1993).

15. There is still much work to be done in understanding the influence of Merleau-Ponty for Castoriadis and Lefort. Additionally, the complex, mutual intellectual influences between Lefort, Gauchet, and Castoriadis also require further research.

16. For recent advances in research on the imaginary and the real in Merleau-Ponty's thought, see, for example, Dufourcq (2015).

17. Hereafter, referred to as the *IIS*.

18. For a detailed reconstruction of the second part of the *IIS*, see Adams (2011). There is a third phase to Castoriadis's elucidation of the imaginary element, which took off but was not ever completed after the *IIS*. In this final phase, Castoriadis rethought such problematics as the sacred, power, the affective dimension, the crisis of imagination/imaginary, and philosophical anthropology, all of which impacted on his articulation of the imaginary element.

19. I thank Johann Arnason for discussion of this point.

20. The question of "institution" has been important in the Francophone tradition in ways that continue to bring sociology and philosophy (particularly phenomenological philosophy) into dialogue. Key contributors to this tradition include Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Marc Richir, Cornelius Castoriadis, Claude Lefort, Marcel Gauchet, Paul Ricœur, and most recently, Vincent Descombes.

21. Where Sartre articulated the imagination in a negative mode, Castoriadis wanted to give it a positive significance.

22. A second discussion of the elemental intertwining of the imaginary and the symbolic by Castoriadis also has recently emerged. It was written in 1968, that is, between the "First Approach" essay, discussed above, and his ontological turn announced in the second part of *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (written between 1970 and 1974). Characteristic of Castoriadis's thought at the time was the dual emphasis not only on (imaginary) signification but also on "doing," and in this essay, he extends his analysis to the symbolization of language. It was posthumously located and published, and is a (draft) extract from his unfinished work, *The Imaginary Element*. Further discussion of this chapter, however, goes beyond the scope of the present paper. See also Castoriadis (2015).

23. Castoriadis's acceptance of the symbolic infrastructure of the real/rational highlights the hermeneutic dimension of this earlier, more phenomenologically attuned phase of his thought. It is not until he makes his ontological turn and retreats from the question of the world as a phenomenological problematic, that his repudiation of hermeneutics becomes explicit. I return to this in the final section of this chapter.

24. See Richir (2007) for a very interesting discussion of Merleau-Ponty and the symbolic institution of language.

25. Castoriadis then takes up the institution of law and the economy in historical-modern societies (as opposed to traditional societies) to demolish the idea that symbolism is in the service of its (rational and functional) content, but discussion of it goes beyond the scope of this chapter (Castoriadis 1987: 119 ff.).

26. Castoriadis was to later develop the distinction between primary (or "core" or "nuclear") and "secondary" imaginary significations in the second part of *The Imaginary Institution of Society*.

27. For further discussion of Castoriadis's usage of the magma metaphor, see Adams (2011, especially chapter 4) and Rosengren (2014).

28. For further discussion of Castoriadis, Merleau-Ponty, and the world problematic, see Arnason (2003).

29. See Ricœur and Castoriadis (2017) and accompanying essays in that volume.

30. For further discussion of the implications of the underdetermination of meaning for Castoriadis's thought, see Adams (2017).

31. Castoriadis's reflections on the world in the context of Merleau-Ponty, language, and art are comparable to Ricœur's review of Nelson Goodman's *Ways of Worldmaking* (which also includes a discussion of Goodman's *Languages of Art*) (Ricœur 1991). The review incorporates some beautiful passages on the phenomenology of the world as a critique of Goodman's constructivism.

32. To the best of my knowledge, Castoriadis was the first to discuss the sociocultural-historical institution of perception—and its philosophical implications—in Merleau-Ponty's work. This incipient cultural turn in Merleau-Ponty's work has been taken up by Sue Rechter (2007).

33. The meaning of the translation should be "historical" rather than "historic."

34. We could say that the world exhibits a proto-movement in the Aristotelian sense that Renaud Barbaras (2011) lends it. Both Castoriadis and Patočka reactivated Aristotle's understanding of *physis* as qualitative movement—in contrast to modern notions of movement as locomotion—although they did so from different perspectives.

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Chapter 10

Exploring Imagination
with Paul Ricœur

Richard Kearney

This chapter examines the particular significance of Paul Ricœur's contribution to a philosophy of imagination.[1] Before Ricœur's hermeneutics, most phenomenological accounts of imagination concentrated on its role as vision, as a special way of *seeing* the world. Husserl described the act of imagining as a "neutralized" mode of seeing, Sartre as an "unrealized" mode of quasi-seeing, and Merleau-Ponty as a dialectical counterpart of the visible—which privileging of the visual is undoubtedly related to the primary role "description" holds in the phenomenological method. With the hermeneutic turn in phenomenology, however, the visible no longer takes precedence over all else: as philosophy moves from description to interpretation, the imagination is considered less in terms of "vision" than in terms of "language." Or, more exactly, imagination is assessed as an indispensable agent in the creation of meaning in and through language—what Ricœur calls "semantic innovation."

The present study analyzes key steps in Ricœur's hermeneutic exploration of imagination—an exploration that is less systematic than episodic in nature. Ricœur's tentative and always provisional probing of a poetic hermeneutic of imagination represents, I maintain, the ultimate, if discreet, agenda of his entire philosophical project. And it is my view that Ricœur's hermeneutic discussion of the imaginative function—from *La Symbolique du mal* (1960) and *La Métaphore vive* (1975), to *Temps et récit* (3 vols., 1983–1985), *Ideology and Utopia* (1986), and *Du texte à l'action* (1986)—represents the most powerful reorientation of a phenomenology of imagining toward a hermeneutics of imagining.

The Linguistic Imagination

Insofar as hermeneutics is concerned with multiple levels of meaning, it is evident that images can no longer be adequately understood in terms of their

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immediate *appearance* to consciousness. Replacing the visual model of the image with the verbal, Ricœur affirms the *poetic* role of imagining: its ability to say one thing in terms of another, or to say several things at once, thereby creating something new. The crucial role imagination plays in this process of semantic innovation was to become one of the abiding concerns of Ricœur's later philosophy.

Before proceeding to Ricœur's original contribution to the philosophy of imagination, let us consider his critical summary of the available theories of images. In *Du texte à l'action*, he discusses the often confused nature of modern philosophies of the image, arguing that the radical equivocity at the heart of the imaginative activity has led to a series of rival accounts, located on two opposite axes. On the one hand, theories of the *reproductive* imagination explain the process of imagining in terms of the *object*; think, for example, of Hume's empiricist account of the image as a faded trace of perception (a weakened impression preserved and represented in memory). On the other hand are theories of the *productive* imagination, which explain our imaginative activity in terms of the *subject*, a human consciousness that is fascinated by its own images. Examples of this theory include the German Idealist and Romantic accounts in Kant and Schelling and Sartre's existentialist descriptions in *L'Imaginaire*. But this basic distinction between the reproductive and productive roles of imagination does not resolve the aporetic nature of our inherited understanding of imagining. Ricœur extends the problematic horizons of this debate as follows:

> The productive imagination, and even the reproductive to the extent that it comprises the minimal initiative concerning the evocation of something absent, operates . . . according to whether the subject of imagination is capable or not of assuming a critical consciousness of the difference between the real and the imaginary. The theories of the image here divide up along an axis which is no longer noematic but noetic, and whose variations are regulated by degrees of belief. At one end of the axis, that of a noncritical consciousness, the image is confused with the real, mistaken for the real. This is the power of the error denounced by Pascal; and it is also, *mutatis mutandis*, the *imaginatio* of Spinoza, contaminated by belief for as long as a contrary belief has not dislodged it from its primary position. At the other end of the axis, where the critical distance is fully conscious of itself, imagination is the very instrument of the critique of reality. The transcendental reduction of Husserl, as a neutralization of existence, is the most complete instance of this. The variations of meaning along this second axis are no less ample than the above. What after all could be in common between the state of *confusion* which characterizes that consciousness which unknown to itself takes for real what for another consciousness is not real, and the *act of distinction* which, highly self-conscious, enables consciousness

to posit something at a distance from the real and thus produce the alterity at the very heart of existence? Such is the knot of aporias which is revealed by an overview of the ruins which today constitute the theory of imagination. Do these aporias themselves betray a fault in the philosophy of imagination or the structural feature of imagination itself which it would be the task of philosophy to take account of? (Ricœur 1986a: 215–16)

Ricœur appears to answer yes to both parts of the question. The fault of most philosophies of imagination, in other words, has been their failure to develop a properly hermeneutic account of imagining in terms of its most basic structural feature of semantic innovation.

Hermeneutics—the "art of deciphering indirect meanings"—acknowledges the innovative power of imagination. Contra Sartre, who argued in *L'Imaginaire* that imagination was condemned to an "essential poverty" because it was a *negation* of the perceptual world, Ricœur maintains that imagining is a simultaneous juxtaposing of two different worlds, real and unreal, which produces new meaning. This power to transform given meanings into new ones enables one to construe the future as the possible theatre of one's liberty, as a horizon of hope. Thus, the age-old antagonism between will and necessity (or, in Sartre's terms, between *l'imaginaire* and *le réel*) now turns out to be entirely surmountable.

Ricœur's preference for a semantic model of imagination over a visual one makes possible a new appreciation of this properly creative role of imagination. If images are *spoken* before they are *seen*, they can no longer be construed as quasi-material residues of perception (as in empiricism), nor as neutralizations or negations of perception (as eidetic phenomenology tended to believe). For Ricœur, the productive power of imagination is primarily verbal, and the verbal metaphor in poetry epitomizes the way in which imagination conjoins two semantic fields, making what is predicatively impertinent at a literal level into something predicatively pertinent at a new (poetic) level. Or, to use Ricœur's graphic phrase, "Imagination comes into play in that moment when a new meaning emerges from out of the ruins of the literal interpretation" (Ricœur 1986a: 213–19).

Taking up Aristotle's definition of a good metaphor in the *Poetics* (1459a: 4–8) as the apprehension of *similarity*, Ricœur points out that it is not a matter of similarity between already similar ideas but between semantic fields previously considered *dissimilar*. It is the "semantic shock" engendered by the coming together of two different meanings, which produces a *new* meaning. And imagination, Ricœur claims, is precisely this power of metaphorically reconciling opposing meanings, forging an unprecedented semantic pertinence from an old impertinence. So if one wants to say with Wittgenstein,

for example, that imagining is a "seeing-as" (seeing one thing in terms of another), then this is only the case insofar as the linguistic power of conjoining different semantic fields is already at work—at least implicitly.

This is a decisive point. For new meanings to come into being, they must be spoken or uttered in the form of new verbal images. And this requires that the phenomenological account of imagining as *appearance* be supplemented by its hermeneutic account as *meaning*. Imagination can thus be recognized as the act of responding to a demand for new meaning, the demand of emerging realities to *be* by *being said* in new ways. It is a Janus facing in two directions at once, back to the being that is revealed and forward to the language that is revealing. And at the level of language itself it also does double duty, for it produces a text that opens up new horizons of meaning for the reader. The poetic imagination liberates the reader into a free space of possibility, suspending any reference to the immediate world of perception (the author's and the reader's) and thereby disclosing new ways of being in the world (Ricœur 1984b). The function of semantic innovation— which is most proper to imagination—is therefore, most fundamentally, an ontological event. The innovative power of linguistic imagination is no "decorative excess or effusion of subjectivity, but the capacity of language to open up new worlds" (Ricœur 1984b: 44). The function of imagination in poetry or myth is defined accordingly as the "disclosure of unprecedented worlds, an opening onto possible worlds which transcend the limits of our actual world" (45).

A hermeneutic approach to imagination thus differs from a structuralist or existentialist one precisely by this concentration on "the capacity of world-disclosure yielded by texts." In short, hermeneutics is not confined to the *objective* structural analysis of texts, nor to the *subjective* existential analysis of the authors of texts; its primary concern is with the *worlds* that these authors and texts open up (Ricœur 1984b). Moreover, for Ricœur, the human subject can only come to know itself through the hermeneutic detour of interpreting signs—that is, by deciphering the meanings contained in myths, symbols, and dreams produced by the human imagination. The shortest route from the self to itself is through the images of others.

And by projecting new worlds, the hermeneutic imagination also provides us with projects of *action*. In fact, the traditional opposition between *theoria* and *praxis* dissolves as the metaphors, symbols, or narratives that imagination produces provide us with "imaginative variations" of the world, thereby freeing us to conceive of the world in other ways and to undertake actions that might lead to its transformation. Semantic innovation can thus point toward social transformation. The possible worlds of imagination can be made real by action—a crucial point to which I shall return in my discussion of the "utopian imagination" below.

The Symbolic Imagination

Having outlined Ricœur's hermeneutic account of imagination, I now proceed to a systematic exploration of four key categories: (1) the symbolic imagination, (2) the oneiric imagination, (3) the poetic imagination, and (4) the utopian imagination.

The Symbolism of Evil marks Ricœur's transition away from descriptive phenomenological reflection on intentional modes of consciousness toward the hermeneutic conviction that meaning is always mediated through signs and symbols of our intersubjective existence. He shows that a rigorous interpretation of the founding myths of Western culture (e.g., Adam, Prometheus, Oedipus) enables us to disclose the symbolic relation of the human subject to meaning. Suspending the conventional definition of myth as a "false *explanation* by means of fables," Ricœur attempts to recover myth's genuinely *exploratory* function. Once we accept that myth cannot provide us with a scientific account of the way things really are, we can begin properly to appreciate its creative role as a *symbolizing* power. As a double intentionality, wherein one meaning is transgressed or transcended by another, a symbol is a work of imagination that enables being to emerge as language (signification) and, by extension, as thought (interpretation). Ricœur examines three principal categories of symbol in *The Symbolism of Evil:* cosmic, oneiric, and poetic.

Cosmic symbols refer to a human's primary act of reading the sacred *on* the world. Here, the human imagination interprets aspects of the world—the heavens, the sun, the moon, the waters—as signs of some ultimate meaning. Here, the symbol is both a thing and a sign: it embodies and signifies the sacred at one and the same time (Ricœur 1969: 10–11). In other words, when dealing with cosmic symbols the imagination reads the things of the world as signs, and signs as things of the world. As such, the symbolic imagination is already, at least implicitly, *linguistic*, which Ricœur makes clear in *Freud and Philosophy*:

> These symbols are not inscribed *beside* language, as modes of immediate expression, directly perceptible visages; it is in the universe of discourse that these realities take on a symbolic dimension. Even when it is the elements of the world that carry the symbol—earth, sky, water, life—it is the word (of consecration, invocation or mythic narrative) which says their cosmic expressivity thanks to the double meaning of the *words* "earth, sky, water, life." (Ricœur 1965: 23–24)

Ricœur can thus affirm that the "expressivity of the world comes to language through the symbol as double meaning" (24). For a cosmic symbol—like any other kind—occurs whenever "language produces composite signs

where the meaning, not content to designate something directly, points to another meaning which can only be reached (indirectly) by means of this designation" (Ricœur 1965: 24). Illustrating this linguistic property of symbols, Ricœur comments on the phrase from the Psalms "The skies tell of the glory of God" as follows: "The skies don't speak themselves; rather, they are spoken by the prophet, by the hymn, by the liturgy. One always needs the word to assume the world into a manifestation of the sacred (hierophany)" (25).

In the second category of symbols—the *oneiric* or dream image—we witness a shift from the cosmic to the psychic function of imagination. Here, Ricœur speaks of complementing a phenomenology of religious symbols (*à la* Eliade) with a psychoanalysis of unconscious symbols. To this end, he invokes the works of Freud and Jung, who investigated links between the symbols of the individual unconscious and symbols as "common representations of the culture or folklore of humanity as a whole" (Ricœur 1969: 12). Ricœur spells out the rapport between cosmic and oneiric symbols as follows: "To manifest the 'sacred' on the 'cosmos' and to manifest it in the 'psyche' are the same thing . . . Cosmos and psyche are two poles of the same 'expressivity': I express myself in expressing the world" (12–13). It is precisely this expressive function of the psychic or oneiric image that establishes its intimate relation to language. As Ricœur remarks, dream images must be "originally close to words since they can be told, communicated" (13).

The third modality of symbols—the *poetic*—completes the double expressivity of cosmos and psyche. Here, the creative powers of imagination are most evident; in fact, it is only in this third category that Ricœur (at least in *The Symbolism of Evil*) uses the term "imagination" in any systematic sense. It is the poetical perspective, he argues, which enables us to draw back from both the religious images of cosmology and the dream images of psychoanalysis, disclosing the symbolic function of the image in its nascent state. In poetry, Ricœur maintains, the symbol reveals the welling up of language—"language in a state of emergence"—instead of regarding it in its hieratic stability under the protection of rites and myths as in the history of religion, or instead of deciphering it through the resurgences of a suppressed infancy (14). In this sense, the poetic epitomizes the symbolic imagination.

Ricœur insists, however, that these three levels of symbolism are connected: the structure of poetic imagination is that of the dream as it draws from fragments of our past and future, and it is that of hierophanies that disclose the heavens and the earth as images of the sacred. In all three instances, what is at issue is not the image-as-representation but the image-as-sign, a crucial distinction to which Ricœur returns again and again, critiquing the

representational model of the image as mere negation or modification of perceptual reality (*à la* Sartre):

> It is necessary firmly to distinguish imagination from image, if by image is understood a function of absence, the annulment of the real in an imaginary unreal. This image-representation, conceived on the model of a portrait of the absent, is still too dependent on the thing that it makes unreal; it remains a process for *making present* to oneself the things of the world. A poetic image is much closer to a word than to a portrait. (Ricœur 1969: 13)

To be fair to Sartre, while most of his examples of the "unrealizing" function of imaging are drawn from visual representation, he seeks to establish the image as a dynamic act of consciousness rather than a quasi-perceptual thing in consciousness. Still, Sartre, like Husserl before him, fails to adequately grasp that signification and imagination are not two opposed modes of intentionality but are inextricably related through their common belonging to language. Ricœur therefore prefers Bachelard's position, which he approvingly cites: "The poetic image becomes a new being of our language, it expresses us in making us that which it expresses" (13).

The Symbolism of Evil concentrates on the cosmic symbol. Ricœur describes this initial phase of the hermeneutic project as a "re-enactment in sympathetic imagination" of the foundational myths where Western man sought to communicate his first experiences of the cosmos. Myths are understood as symbolic stories—or, more precisely, as "species of symbols developed in the form of narration and articulated in a time and a space that cannot be co-ordinated with the time and space of history and geography" (Ricœur 1965: 25).[2] This sympathetic reimagining of the cosmic images of our foundational myths demands that Ricœur abandon the original phenomenological dream of a philosophy without presuppositions. Indeed, it presupposes that which descriptive phenomenology often tended to ignore—language. The hermeneutics of symbols must begin from a full language, that is, from the recognition that before reflection and intuition there are already symbols. And precisely because language has become so formalized, transparent, and technical in the contemporary era, our need to rediscover language's inventive powers of symbolization is all the greater.

This task involves a critical project, for it is only by demythologizing the abuses of myth (as a false explanation of reality) that we can remythologize our contemporary language—restore to it the poetic and symbolic powers of imagination. "The dissolution of the myth as (false) explanation is the necessary way to restoration of the myth as symbolism," writes Ricœur (Ricœur 1969: 249). In short, we need to combine the critical gesture of modernity with the symbolizing gesture of myth if we are to develop an

adequate hermeneutic of human imagination. Instead of adopting the reductive approach of an "allegorical" reading—which would seek to uncover a disguised message beneath the symbols of myth—Ricœur advances a hermeneutic imagination that would, on the contrary, "start from the symbols and endeavor to promote the meaning, to form it, by means of creative interpretation" (Ricœur 1969: 351). This is, I suspect, what Ricœur has in mind when he suggests that it is by "interpreting that we can hear again" (351). Note well that the three kinds of symbol—cosmic, oneiric, and poetic—all find expression in a *linguistic* imagination. For "it is always in language that the cosmos, that desire, and that the imaginary come into words" (351).

The Oneiric Imagination

Whereas Ricœur concerned himself in *The Symbolism of Evil* with those symbols related primarily to mythic accounts of evil, in *Freud and Philosophy* he enlarges the enquiry to analyze the epistemology of the symbol as it manifests itself in the desires of the unconscious (Ricœur 1965: 23). The dream image shows, in exemplary fashion, how we can say things other than what we are ostensibly saying, how behind direct meanings there are indirect ones. Because of this double intentionality, symbols are what "make poets of every dreamer" (24).

The poet is the dreamer writ large. As symbols are essentially "image-words" that traverse "image-representations," imagination is not simply a "power of images" to represent absent objects. The visual images of dreams are sensory vehicles for verbal images that transcend them and designate other meanings than the literal ones. Thus, psychoanalysis recognizes that dream images call forth narrative interpretation. Precisely because dreams—like myths and poems—operate according to a depth-language of layered meanings, they can be recounted and deciphered. Dreams want to *tell* themselves. The dreamer feels closed off in a private world until the dream is recounted. And this power of recounting is exemplified, for Ricœur, in the poetic imagination that exposes "the birth of the word such as it was buried within the enigmas of . . . the psyche" (28).

But if poetry represents the positive pole of dreams, dissimulation represents its negative pole. The basic hermeneutic lesson to be gleaned from dreams, contends Ricœur, is that images are not innocent: they conceal as well as reveal meaning, deform as well as disclose intentions. The work of dream-images provides ample evidence that the symbolic levels of sense are far more complex and oblique than the traditional models of analogy and allegory would allow. Along with Marx and Nietzsche, Freud championed

a hermeneutics of suspicion alert to the distorting and falsifying potential of images. Psychoanalysis was thus a means of detecting the censoring function of dream images—its primary function being to "disclose the variety of elaborate procedures which interpose between apparent and latent meanings" (Ricœur 1965: 26).

But if psychoanalysis promotes a hermeneutics of suspicion, it also points toward a hermeneutics of affirmation. While the former examines how images disguise meanings drawn from our private or collective past by means of an "archaeological" reference back to an experience that precedes them, the latter shows how dream images can open up new dimensions of meaning by virtue of a teleological reference to new worlds of possibility. Because desire is the basic motivation of all such dream images, as Freud argued, these images are ways of *saying* this desire, which they do either by dissimulating it in other guises or by expressing a passion for possibilities not yet realized. The desire of dream images invents a future and thus aspires to a condition of creation, *poiesis*, poetry. It generates a surplus of meaning (*surcroît du sens*)—proof of a level of meaning that is irreducible to a retrospective correspondence between the image of one's dream and a literal event of one's past experience (27). This productive power of images ensures that any adequate hermeneutic of imagination must extend beyond an "archaeology of the unconscious" to include both a "teleology of desire" and an "eschatology of the sacred."

In *The Conflict of Interpretations*, Ricœur elaborates on this dual function of the hermeneutic imagination as *recollection* and *projection*:

> We may fully comprehend the hermeneutic problem if we are able to grasp the double dependence of the self on the [symbolic images of the] *unconscious* and the *sacred*—since this dependence is only made manifest through the modality of symbolism. In order to illustrate this double dependency, reflection must humble consciousness and interpret it through symbolic significations, rising up from *behind* or in *front* of consciousness, *beneath* or *beyond* it. In short, reflection must include an archaeology and an eschatology. (Ricœur 1974, 328–29)

He argues, moreover, that prophecy always needs demystification. By unmasking the falsifying function of certain dream images, with the help of a psychoanalytic model of "suspicion," we may find ourselves in a better position to restore aspects of these images as "signs of the sacred." Without the hermeneutic detour of suspicion, we would not be able to discriminate between those images that are merely a "return of the repressed" (in Freud's phrase) and those that serve as symbols of an eschatological horizon of possibility.

But it is rarely a simple matter of discriminating between regressive and progressive images. Every utopian image contains an archaic element and

vice versa. Images of the mythic past are often used to allude prophetically to an *eschaton* still to come, and the eschatology of imagination is always a creative repetition of its archaeology. "The progressive order of symbols," as Ricœur puts it, "is not external to the regressive order of phantasms; in plunging into the archaic mythologies of the unconscious new signs of the sacred rise up" (Ricœur 1974: 328).

A critical hermeneutic of imagination, for Ricœur, is one that demystifies the dissimulating property of phantasms in order to release the innovative power of images. Idols must be unmasked so that symbols may speak. And an additional reminder that hermeneutics receives from psychoanalysis is that the images of the unconscious are charged with multiple associations that are irreducible to the level of a one-to-one conceptual correspondence. Dreams provoke rational interpretation, but such interpretation never exhausts them. For, even when infantile or archaic images are deciphered in terms of their regressive reference to the past, there always remains a surplus that points toward an inexhaustible creativity of meaning. This is where Ricœur locates his wager that new meanings *can* emerge, that things as they are *can* change: "liberty according to hope," he writes, "is nothing other, when understood psychologically, than this creative imagining of the possible" (399).

This double axis of archaeological and eschatological reference signals the failure of all theories that seek to reduce the oneiric imagination to a system of speculative reason. There is always more to dream images than has ever been dreamed of in our philosophies. Moreover, it is due to this excess of imagination over reason that symbols call forth a multiplicity of meanings, which in turn give rise to a multiplicity of readings—psychoanalytic (Freud), religious (Eliade), and speculative (Hegel). This is why a hermeneutic of imagination culminates not in absolute knowledge but in a crossroads of interpretations.

The Poetic Imagination

Having concentrated on a hermeneutics of mythic and oneiric symbols in the 1960s, Ricœur turned much of his attention in the 1970s and 1980s to the poetic expressions of imagination. This phase of Ricœur's hermeneutic project includes *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975) as well as his three-volume *Time and Narrative*.

In *The Rule of Metaphor*, as in other works, Ricœur deals with imagination in a fragmentary rather than systematic fashion; it guides and motivates his delivery without ever occupying center stage. It is in this text that he tenders one of his most useful formulations of the distinction between verbal

and nonverbal imagination. Borrowing Kant's terminology, he identifies the former with the productive imagination and the latter with the reproductive. "Would not imagination have something to do with the conflict between identity and difference?" he asks. And he argues that the

> only way to approach the problem of imagination from the perspective of a semantic theory, that is to say on a verbal plane, is to begin with productive imagination in the Kantian sense, and to put off reproductive imagination or imagery as long as possible. Treated as a schema, the image presents a verbal dimension; before being the gathering-point of faded perceptions, it is that of emerging meanings. (Ricœur 1978b: 235)

Placing himself thus in Kant's camp rather than Hume's, Ricœur demonstrates that the metaphor works in the same way as the schema insofar as it functions as "the matrix of a new semantic pertinence that is born out of the dismantling of semantic networks caused by the shock of contradiction" (235). The metaphoric function of imagination involves a verbal aspect to the extent that it involves "grasping identity within differences," establishing the "relatedness of terms that are far apart" such that they confront each other rather than fuse together. This schematism of metaphor "turns imagination into the place where the figurative meaning emerges in the interplay of identity and difference" (236).

Yet the imagination needs images. Without any visual aspect, the verbal imagination would remain an invisible productivity, so the sensible moment of metaphoric imagination remains to be demonstrated. Here, Ricœur calls for a phenomenological psychology of *seeing-as* to complement a semantics of creative *saying*. If the productive imagination were confined to the purely verbal, it would cease to be *imagination*, so Ricœur seeks to graft a psychology of the imaginary on to a semantic theory of metaphor. "Seeing-as" provides a key as the sensible aspect of poetic imagination. It holds sense and image together in an intuitive manner. It selects from the quasi-sensory mass of imagery, producing a certain semantic order, and it can also work to bring conceptual meaning to intuitive fullness. Ricœur thus concludes that seeing-as plays the role of a schema that unites the *empty* concept and the *blind* impression: "Thanks to its character as half thought and half experience, it joins the light of sense with the fullness of the image. In this way, the nonverbal and the verbal are firmly united at the core of the imaging function of language" (207–8).

In addition to combining the verbal and the nonverbal, the metaphorical imagination also produces a new meaning by confronting a literal with a figurative sense. This *tensional* theory of metaphor, as Ricœur terms it, is most obvious in the case of a living metaphor in poetry. For example, in Gerard Manley Hopkins's line "Oh! The mind, mind has mountains," we

find a literal *is not* (the reader knows that literally the mind does not have mountains) accompanied by a metaphorical *is*. This power to transform such a contradiction into a new poetic meaning is evident in the metaphorical function of seeing *x* as *y*, for while we know *x* is not *y*, at a literal level, we affirm that it is, at an imaginative level. Metaphor thus thrives because it introduces the spark of imagination into a "thinking more" (*penser plus*) (Ricœur 1978b: 303). And this thinking more—fundamentally a seeing more and a saying more—attests to the curious paradox that the "concept of imagination, in the context of a theory of metaphor centred around the notion of semantic innovation," is also a "logic of discovery" (22). Here, Ricœur is close to the Aristotle of the *Poetics*, for whom it was vain to ask whether "the universal that poetry 'teaches' already existed *before* it was *invented*. It is as much found as invented" (306).

In *Time and Narrative*, Ricœur develops the ontological implications of "metaphorical reference." He shows how poetic language, whether lyrical or narrative, reveals a capacity for nondescriptive reference that exceeds the immediate reference of our everyday language. While poetic reference suspends literal reference and thereby appears to make language refer only to itself, it in fact reveals a deeper and more radical power of reference to those ontological aspects of our being-in-the-world that cannot be spoken of *directly*. *Seeing-as* thus not only implies a *saying-as* but also a *being-as*. Ricœur relates this power to redescribe being to the narrative power of "emplotment" (*mise-en-intrigue*). Borrowing François Dagognet's term *iconic augmentation*, he points out that the role of the image (*Bild*) is to bring about an increase in the being of our world impoverished by quotidian routine.

We owe a large part of the enlarging of our horizon of existence to poetic works. Far from producing only weakened images of reality—shadows, as in the Platonic treatment of the *eikon* in painting or writing (*Phaedrus* 274e–77e)—literary works depict reality by augmenting it with meanings that themselves depend upon the virtues of abbreviation, saturation, and culmination, so strikingly illustrated by emplotment (Ricœur 1984c: 80).

And he places the referential capacity of narrative works under that of poetic works in general, for if the "poetic metaphor redescribes the world, poetic narrative resignifies the world in its temporal dimension to the extent that narrating, telling, reciting is a way of remaking action following the poem's invention" (80). Indeed, human being-in-the-world in its most everyday sense—as Kant and Heidegger realized—involves a process of temporalization that makes our present actions meaningful by interpreting them in terms of a recollected past and a projected future. This capacity of temporal interpretation is that of transcendental imagination.

It is in his analysis of the *configurative* function of narrative, however, that Ricœur most explicitly identifies the role of productive imagination. By

narrative configuration, he means the temporal synthesis of heterogeneous elements—or, more simply, the ability to create a plot that transforms a sequence of events into a story. This consists of "grasping together" the individual incidents, characters, and actions so as to compose a unified temporal whole. The narrative act of emplotment, which configures a manifold into a synthesis, enacts what Kant defined as the productive power of imagination. As a power of grasping the many under the rules of the same, the narrative imagination introduces recollection and repetition into a linear sequence of events (natural time), thus making it into a recapitulative story (narrative time). "In reading the ending in the beginning and the beginning in the ending," explains Ricœur, "we also learn to read time itself backwards, as the recapitulation of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal conditions" (Ricœur 1984c: 67). Thus, Ricœur translates the schematism of imagination from the metaphorical act to the larger scenario of the narrative act, extending his analysis of the functioning of the poetical imagination from the unit of the *word* (symbol) and the *sentence* (metaphor) to that of the *text* as a whole (narrative).

Furthermore, as soon as one recognizes the schematizing and synthesizing power of imagination at work in narrative, the very notions of tradition and innovation become complementary. Thus, tradition must be understood not as the "inert transmission of some already dead deposit of material but as the living transmission of an innovation always capable of being reactivated by a return to the most creative moments of poetic activity" (68). So interpreted, tradition can survive from one generation to the next only by fostering innovation. And the reverse is equally true: if tradition cannot survive without innovation, neither can innovation survive without tradition. Once again, imagination plays this reciprocal role. "Innovation remains a form of behaviour governed by rules," writes Ricœur.

The labor of imagination is not born from nothing. It is bound in one way or another to the tradition's paradigms. But the range of solutions is vast. It is deployed between the two poles of servile application and calculated deviation, passing through every degree of rule-governed deformation (70).

And this dual function of imagination as a poetic creation of the new by reference to the old is not just a property of writing but also, equally, of *reading*. Indeed, Ricœur claims that in many contemporary works it is the imaginative task of the reader to complete the narrative sketched out and often deliberately fragmented by the written work: "If emplotment can be described as an act of the productive imagination, it is insofar as this act is the joint work of the text and reader." For it is the reading that accompanies the interplay of the innovation and sedimentation of paradigms that schematizes emplotment. Taking the example of Joyce's *Ulysses* as a narrative full

of holes and indeterminacies, Ricœur concludes that such a text serves as an added invitation to the creative power of the reader's imagination (Ricœur 1984c: 70).

The Utopian Imagination

At this final stage of narrative imagination—the reader's reception of the text—the hermeneutic circle returns to the world of action. The act of reading is the ultimate indicator of the "refiguring of the world of action under the sign of the plot." And as Ricœur is well aware, narrative plots are not confined to literature: a whole set of collective stories and histories, which need not bear the signature of any individual author, exercises a formative influence on our action in society. In his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, Ricœur names this the "social imaginary" (Ricœur 1986b: 64), which indeed is constitutive of social reality itself. Let us now explore his treatment of these two limit ideas, ideology and utopia, through which he examines the social imaginary.

One of the most controversial aspects of the social imaginary is precisely the role of ideology. Much of critical theory has equated ideology with false consciousness, for it was deemed necessary to expose our ideological fantasies in order to disclose our social reality. One of the first steps in such disclosure was to demystify the ways in which ideology alienates human consciousness by attributing the origin of value to some illusory absolute outside of the human. For humanity to return to itself and rediscover its own powers of making (*poiesis*), it must first debunk the pseudo-world of fetish images. Here again we meet with a hermeneutics of suspicion: a practice of interpreting (*hermeneuein*) discourse as "masked." Above all, this suspicion was directed to a specifically religious consciousness, considered by Marx and others as the most extreme example of human subservience and the most primordial expression of ideology.

Ricœur challenges such a reduction of the social imaginary to ideological distortion and argues instead for an affirmation of its utopian potentials (Ricœur 1986a, 1986b).[3] He acknowledges the legitimacy—even the necessity— of such a hermeneutics of suspicion. A genuine theistic hermeneutic should appropriate to itself the demystification of religion as "a mask of fear, a mask of domination, a mask of hate" (Ricœur 1978a: 219). But Ricœur then argues that the Marxist equation of the form of ideology with a specifically religious content, and its equation of the latter with the sole function of inversion and domination, leads to a reductive understanding of religion. While religion can serve the interests of class domination, it can also serve other interests, such as emancipation. Moreover, ideology is a broader and more extensive

phenomenon than Marx realized. With the demise of religion as the dominant superstructure of society, other discourses come to serve as the ideological means of justifying and integrating new orders of domination.

Ricœur thus proposes to go further than the masters of suspicion, arguing that critique must itself be subject to critique. He contends that the positivist claim to nonideological rationality is both naive and deceptive. Taking a cue from the Frankfurt School, he even suggests that such a claim itself constitutes a new form of ideology, for it justifies a new social order dominated by principles of disinterested objectivism that cover a system of technological manipulation. Many so-called Marxist societies, founded largely on the critique of ideology, often laid claim to a scientific materialism that becomes an ideology of domination in its own right. In short, the unchallenged cult of science can also become an opium of the people in the modern technological era.

Ideology, in the broad sense of social self-representation which Ricœur affords it, is in fact an unsurpassable phenomenon of sociohistorical existence. Social reality *always* presupposes some sort of symbolic constitution, and it frequently includes "an interpretation in images and representations of the social bond itself" (Ricœur 1981: 231). Ideology is an indispensable dimension of the hermeneutic circle in which our historically situated consciousness is obliged to operate. The best response to ideological imagination is not pure negation but a hermeneutic imagination capable of critical discrimination. Such a critical hermeneutic, Ricœur believes, would be able to operate within the social imaginary, while refusing any absolute standpoint of knowledge (Hegelian or positivist). Even the most scientific critique works within a hermeneutic circle.

Thus, while ideology is a creation of false consciousness, it is not only that. Once demystification has removed the masks of falsehood, there remains another task, that of a hermeneutics laboring to identify genuine symbols of liberation. This is the utopian function of hermeneutic understanding, which Ricœur sees as indispensable for a proper appreciation of our social imaginary. Symbolizations of utopia pertain to the futural dimension of our social imaginary. The hermeneutics of affirmation focuses not on the origin behind such symbols but on the end (*utopos*) in front of them, that is, on the horizon of aspiration opened up by symbols. In this way, it is possible to rescue social symbolizations from the distorting strategies of reactionary politics. The social imaginary can thus be divested of its deluding function and reinterpreted in terms of a genuine symbolic anticipation of liberty, truth, or justice.

Thus, the critical moment of demystification is not a desymbolization. Instead of reducing symbols to some putatively literal content, hermeneutic reason exposes the perversion of symbols in order to recover their genuine value. To the extent that certain social symbols play the role of ideological domination, they have already abandoned their "exploratory" role as

disclosures of possible worlds. Indeed, the abuse of the social imaginary usually occurs when such symbols are interpreted as literal facts rather than figurative intentions—for example, when a church declares that it is the kingdom or when a state declares that it is utopia (the sole possessor of freedom or equality). This, for Ricœur, is ideology at its worst—the misrepresentation of a utopian project as a literal possession. This is the language of ideological closure. The critical function of hermeneutic understanding is not therefore to dispense with the social imaginary, but rather to debunk the alienations of the social imaginary in order to restore its genuinely utopian projects of liberty (Ricœur 1984b).

Here, it is a question of the social imaginary taking the form of a projection whereby a community expresses aspirations for a better world. If one can say, therefore, that without the backward look a culture is deprived of its memory, without the forward look it is deprived of its dreams. And it needs both, for besides the authentic utopia of liberating rupture there can also exist a dangerously schizophrenic discourse that projects a static future cut off from the present and the past—a mere alibi for the consolidation of the repressive powers that be. In short, ideology as a symbolic confirmation of the past and utopia as a symbolic opening toward the future are complementary. If cut off from each other, they can lead to political pathology (Ricœur 1984a).

Thus, while ideologies are gaps or discordances in relation to the real course of things, the death of ideologies would be the most sterile of lucidities. For a social group without ideology and utopia would be without a plan, without a distance from itself, without a self-representation. It would be a society without a project, consigned to a history fragmented into events that are all equal and insignificant (Ricœur 1981). In other words, if the gap between the historical and the ideal becomes too rigid, the ideological function regresses to sterile conservatism or an escapism that denies reality altogether. In both instances, ideology functions as alienation and precludes the possibility of authentic historical action. Ideology can be considered retrievable, therefore, only when it knows itself to be ideology, a figurative-symbolic representation rather than a literal fact, and only when it ensures that the ideal is kept in close and creative relationship with the real, thereby motivating social action. Action is impossible when the disparity between the real and the ideal precludes the adaptation of our hermeneutic imagination to a historical reality constantly in flux.

In the final analysis, critical hermeneutics provides a satisfactory basis for a dialectical rapport between imagination and reason. The hermeneutic circle includes both our belonging to the traditional representations of history and our critical distance from them. The phenomenon of belonging involves the recognition that our understanding always presupposes a historically situated preunderstanding; it rules out the possibility of reaching some nonideological

vantage point where scientific reason could assume absolute knowledge. Of course, precisely because of this belonging, we are also subject to the alienating possibilities of the ideological imaginary, hence the need for critical "distantiation." We need, concludes Ricœur, a hermeneutic imagination of nontotalization that requires both ideology and utopia while avoiding the twin extremes of dogmatic detachment and attachment. For when reason pretends to surmount all ideological mediation, it becomes a new ideological function in its own right. The critique of ideology is therefore a task that "must always be begun but which in principle can never be completed" (Ricœur, 1981: 245). And so, as we have seen throughout this chapter, Ricœur's ultimate wager is a hermeneutics of creative imagination—in which creativity is ever-active and never-ending.

Notes

1. Edited by Sarah Horton. Material from this chapter previously appeared in "Between Imagination and Language" and "Between Ideology and Utopia" in Richard Kearney, *On Paul Ricœur: The Owl of Minerva* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004). This essay was completed before the publication of Ricœur's *Lectures on Imagination*, edited by George H. Taylor, Patrick Crosby, and Robert D. Sweeney (Ricœur 2018), which systematically summarizes and expands on many of his earlier fragmented theories of images and imagining.

2. But to say that a symbol is always a sign is not to say that every sign is a symbol. The sign always stands for something, but a symbol aims at two or more meanings at the same time. Thus, to take Ricœur's example from *Symbolism of Evil*, the biblical image of defilement refers both to the literal function of this image as a sign of physical uncleanliness and to its symbolic allusion to man's impure or deviant relationship to the sacred. Because there is no *direct* discourse for the confession of evil, symbolism becomes the privileged means of expression. Ricœur concludes that symbolic images are donative in that a primary meaning gives rise to a secondary one that surpasses the first in its semantic range and reference. And a symbol is not an allegory: while an allegory relates one meaning directly and unambiguously to another, a symbol works by enigmatic suggestion or evocation, designating a surplus of meaning that exceeds the obvious one. Allegories have one meaning, symbols two or more.

3. See Section III, "Idéologie, utopie et politique" of Ricœur 1986a, and especially "L'idéologie et l'utopie: deux expressions de l'imaginaire social," 379–93.

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Chapter 11

Social Imagery in Nonlinguistic Thinking about Social Topics

On the Strength of Fantasy in Thinking about Social Conflicts

Dieter Lohmar

We know little about the really functioning methods of thinking. We tend to believe that we are using exclusively language-based methods of thinking. But based on a phenomenological investigation, we might also arrive at a completely different view. In my view, we are extensively using sequences of scenes in fantasy mode (phantasmatic scenes) to imagine and think effectively about our most important social issues. You might object that this is just not true; our thinking takes the form of propositions that are connected by the rules of logic! It is difficult to find an answer in this controversy.[1] In this contribution, I would like to provide some evidence based on phenomenological analyses about the occurrences of scenic phantasma in our everyday thinking. We are using fantasy images and scenes to imagine other persons, their attitudes, their evaluations, and their possible future actions. My thesis will be that many fantasies concern complex problems in social surroundings represented by scenic phantasma (or "social imagery") and thereby reveal to be a prominent mode of nonlinguistic thinking.

First, I am going to shortly characterize the nonlinguistic mode of thinking that is to be found with phenomenological means in everyday human thinking. It strongly depends on the use of phantasma to get an idea of and to consider complex social themes. After this, I will discuss some shortcomings of linguistic processing of social topics and establish some of the most important methodological requirements that enable us to think through social topics and decisions on this basis. A third part is dedicated to examples of the representation of social conflicts in scenic phantasmatic ways of nonlinguistic thinking. In the end, I will shortly delineate a characteristic slow mode of nonlinguistic thinking about very complex social topics, which is still working in the nonlinguistic thinking in our consciousness.

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A word on the phenomenological method: I am going to analyze some standard situations of thinking about social topics by reflecting on fantasy scenes that give a clear idea of these problems and perhaps also a solution to them. This thinking happens in imagination with the help of scenic phantasma—thus in imagination—but this does not imply that the problems we are considering are only imaginary. The problems are usually very real but the means we use to produce a clear idea of them, or to remember them, rely upon fantasy images and series of such images that unite into scenic phantasma. Therefore, we might say that we "imagine" problems without the risk that they appear only as fancy problems.

If I make up my mind about a problem with help of imagination, it becomes a psychological fact and calls for an empirical investigation into psychological circumstances, as happens in empirical psychology. This is not the full sense of a phenomenological investigation, but only empirical research on single case. In phenomenology, there is the additional claim that even when I am discussing only a special example, I am nevertheless able to gain insight into the essential structures of my conscious activity. It is not even necessary that you in your own thinking would be able to find the same example; it suffices if you can find something similar with a comparable function. "Phenomenological research" is "empirical" insofar as it concerns the essential structures of the performance of our factual and possible consciousness, and it is as eidetic research also an *a priori* investigation.

My first aim is to convince you that humans mostly use phantasmatic scenes to think of complex social situations and problems and not language-based concepts. In the phantasmatic scenes, the most important elements of a conflict or a decision are represented in a series of imagined pictorial elements (accompanied by feelings), which we might interpret as short-term video sequences. The contribution of linguistic elements in this procedure is quite peripheral.

The System of Scenic Phantasma

I am now going to offer you some characteristic examples of the system of scenic phantasma of past and future events combined with feelings. This system is a symbolic medium in its own right and not only a marginal side effect of language-based thinking. This medium is suitable for the representation of knowledge, problems, and possible future solutions in solitary thinking, although it cannot be used for public communication.

Scenic phantasma occur in our wakeful life, in daydreams, and in dreams. A close analysis will reveal that particularly in the mode of daydreams, scenic phantasma belong to the nonlinguistic system of symbolic representations

that is still operative in human experience. Scenic phantasma may sometimes seem to be only momentary; they may appear like single views of something meaningful, but even then, they have narrative elements related to situations and stories. Often they appear like a short and condensed video clip or they consist of a series of scenic images that are enriched by emotions and valuations; beside this, they entail intentions of other persons, their valuations, and cofeelings of their emotions.

Let us start with an example: While I am confidently and optimistically immersed in my everyday activities, I may think over my morally problematic plans to act. Suddenly, I notice a phantasmatic appearance of my close friend's face or of my grandfather, looking at me skeptically. It seems as if he is going to say, "This is not a good way to act; don't do it, think it over." In light of his emotional valuing of my plans, I immediately modify my inconsiderate plans and change my course of action.

Scenic phantasma are not to be thought of as real pictures through which other objects are depicted. A picture is usually somewhat different from the object depicted, like a black and white photo that misses the object's colors or size. Scenic phantasma are functioning more like experiential scenes that appear exactly the way the object would appear to me, that is, in our example concerning the object's size, color, and perspective, exactly like the person looking at me in a real situation. As important properties of the normal fantasy are missing here, perhaps this mode of fantasy already indicates that the contents represented are more real than in free fantasy. By incorporating my perspective, this special mode of fantasy has an interesting consequence for the imagined content: Somehow, I am also there, right in the scene, but as a *spectator* who implicitly incorporates my special perspective on that scene, sometimes—like in the example given—as the one who is looked at, taken along with the emotional reaction. We have to realize that most scenic phantasma are not voluntary, as is easily seen when visual images suddenly impose themselves upon us.

Before I go into further details of nonlinguistic systems of representations, I would like to mention some details concerning the relation between the intuition of states of affairs (cognition) and the different modes of symbolic representation of the same fact, which we use to think about them. It is crucial to realize that the method of representation need not be language, that there are nonlinguistic alternatives. Additionally, even in the use of language, there is only a loose connection of the concrete language we use to form a representation of our ideas.

Even in the case of our mother language, the connection between language and thinking is not as strict and inflexible as we tend to believe. We are able to express our insights in different ways in the medium of our mother tongue, but we can also *think* in a language other than our mother tongue. Most of us

have had the experience of spending some days in a foreign country and using a foreign language we are well familiar with. After a short while, our thinking (even in dreams) takes the form of this other language. This experience suggests that language concerns only the surface of the whole phenomenon of thinking. This is in accordance with what we know from phenomenological analysis of cognition: While intuition constitutes the most basic level of cognition, meaning-bestowing acts and either scenic phantasma or language expressions constitute the next level.[2] In using such a symbolic medium, the intuition transforms itself either into a firm conviction (which also obtains a symbolic form) that this state of affairs is "true" or into a modality of this security like "most probable," "quite probable," and so forth. And we are able to use this symbolic idea of a state of affairs for the hypothetical manipulation of future states of affairs while thinking through our options.

Thus, with a symbolic representation of a conviction we are able to awaken and to retain in mind the same object of cognition. Additionally, we are able to draw further conclusions from the former cognition and manipulate our future possibilities (also ponder different hypotheses concerning the course of history in the past). These basic thinking performances allow me to manipulate the possible future of an object or event in different situations, to ponder possible consequences, obstacles, and solutions.

Generally thinking must have a medium of symbolic representation. The latter, however, need not be language. But language gives us a hint about the most important feature of such a system of symbolic representations: I must be able to produce the material carriers of symbols at any time. For example, I must be able to produce spoken or written words at any time either in public speech or in inner speech or I must be able to produce a phantasmatic scene that incorporates the contents of a cognition, its context, and its possible consequences.

Shortcomings of Language
in Processing Social Themes

Language entails serious shortcomings if we use it to represent social problems. The most important point is that it is nearly impossible to represent the high complexity of social situations by means of language alone. A first reason for this is that the fine grades of relevance and probability of events are not easy to represent by conceptual means. For example, professionals in psychological questioning prefer to use a scaling for relevance, probability, and satisfaction (e.g., on a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rank your confidence that the person, *a*, will fulfil your expectations in the following situation?). This sounds like using language, but in systematic consideration

scaling takes up an element of *analogical semantic* that is completely different from the *conventional semantic* of language concepts.[3]

A further reason is that propositions can only entail two to three objects in relation. Everything more complex asks for a series of representations that are to connect in a kind of "story." Social situations usually entail more persons together with their different alternative plans, gradually working motives, and tendencies, mirrored in their history, a history that need not to be uniform but can entail contradicting experiences with the same person or object. For example, when I wonder about the most probable decision that someone is bound to make, I arrive in the end at something like a judgment: My strongest tendency to believe in one of the person's alternatives to act is directed at action a and not b or c, and I base this belief on the experiences h, i, j, k, l, m, and not on the contradicting experience n, o, p, and so forth. According to my tentative knowledge of his motives a, b, c, and so forth, b appears to be most compelling. Needless to say, it is difficult to limit such a list of relevant factors.

We also have to be attentive to how concepts relate to the processes of making up our mind about the person's most probable decision. The concepts we use report only on the outcome of thinking processes in a *feeling of security* concerning the most probable alternatives we are going to accept (respectively the action we are going to perform on this ground). There is an insurmountable problem of an adequate conceptualization of quantitative factors like probability, security about the facts, security about the decisions the other persons may prefer, the degree of relevance that a specific outcome has for me, and so forth. On another level, this difficulty concerns also the interrelations of all this with factors like the pressure of time: Will I have to act *now* without further checking, that is, on the basis of relatively weak unexamined evidence to grasp a unique chance? Do I tend to take a certain action because the outcome of this action is of highest worth for me? The list of concerns can be prolonged.

These concerns do not only refer to me and my thinking and deciding but also to others. Persons make their decisions dependent on many relations to other persons and these attitudes may also be quite flexible depending on the situation and the context. If you try to spell out, using language-based concepts, this complexity and the contextual dependence of the person's decisions, you will usually start to tell one or more extensive stories about the person in question. Then, you will arrive at a long story representing a complex idea: (1) You are not sure whether the person will really cooperate with you, but in the end (2) you have the clear tendency to believe that he will, even though (3) there are some experiences that provide sufficient reasons for doubt, and so forth. Thus the story to tell will be quite long.

To have this kind of complex idea is simpler in a scenic presentation of the person's attitude and behavior. The representation need not to be one-dimensional, it need not consist of a Yes–No alternative. Normally, there are multiple facets of the person's character that we are able to present in phantasma of his or her facial mimics. Thus, the question arises: How can I sceni-cally represent a multitude of the person's (changing) attitudes toward me?

In fact, this is quite easy. Think of a colleague with whom you work suc-cessfully in most cases, but who occasionally appears with an air of high-nosed arrogance rejecting your plans and opinions. Both "faces" or aspects of his character may be represented in scenic phantasma, either one after the other, or even as mixed in an alternating and changing way, thereby giving rise to uncertainty in my future planmaking. The modal character of possibil-ity and uncertainty is thus present in the changing and merging faces of your colleague. We might interpret this changing image as a nonlinguistic form of the logical "or." The colleague's attitude toward other persons and his thinking about pragmatic options in a changing situation may be represented phantasmatically in the changing images that indicate the colleague's readi-ness to change his plans and cooperate with other colleagues as well as to oppose my plans.[4]

Some language-based concepts you may use while speaking about the character of a person like "wavering," "unsteady," "unpredictable," and "incalculable" might name some of the problems, but only on a meta-level. This diagnosis on a meta-level cannot support a solution, because there is no way to use the concepts for the realistic calculation of the decision's outcome. For example, it does not entail a representation of the grades of certainty one might have concerning one's motives. If I come to the conclusion that although I lack absolute certainty that my colleague will support my aims, I nevertheless believe that the reasons that speak for cooperation are stronger than the motives not to cooperate, thus in judging and speaking about my con-clusion, I am only uttering the result of a consideration and calculation that is already done and done without concepts. My confidence in the greater weight of his motives to follow me is a result of a kind of "calculation" in the *emo-tional dimension*.[5] I can only speak about my feelings in view of the "whole" of the complex factors in this situation. This is an everyday difficulty we have to overcome: we have to find our way from the heterogeneous experiences that characterize our past and reach a decision about the uncertain future.

The language-based concepts we use simply do not allow for a correct representation of the quantitative aspects of the grounds of our decision. In this regard, the use of numbers is only a humble substitute for the quantita-tive aspects to find a representation for these most important factors. Pro-fessionals in therapy might ask you, "On a scale from 1 to 10, how content are you?" But they might also ask, "If you view this scale and think of the

farthermost left as indicative of absolute insecurity about a certain factor of your decision, and the farthermost right as expressive of full security, where would you localize your personal sense of security?” In both cases, there is no exact measurement at stake but more of an *analogical representation* of the probability or, in a more subjective view, the *strength* of the respective feeling of security. We can represent security only in this vague analogical way. But when we use language, we have to rely on the concepts that report only the outcome of quantitative comparison, such as “I believe stronger in *b*,” “more reasons support *c*,” and so forth. But language-based concepts do not represent the quantitative aspect of our fear or security. This situation is somehow similar to using algebraic concepts without the basis of measurement and numbers. This is, however, only part of the whole difficulty.

What we also need for such an evaluation is a *comprehensive idea* that entails the totality of all of the factors that are to be found in my past experience and also entail a collection of the most probable developments due to alternative decisions. Only if we reach such a condensed form of most relevant factors are we in the position to “wait” for a felt reaction of our mind that somehow “calculates” all the different factors. Thus, the felt reaction to this condensed form of all alternatives with their probability is the basis for our decision making. We have a graded feeling of certainty (belief) in a certain activity or future development as a result. We somehow *feel* that the other will most likely make up his or her mind this way rather than that. We might also arrive at the same feeling again while reflecting on the situation on another occasion (this would provide us with a meta-cognition of second order concerning the sense of our certainty). Only in this way can we arrive at a solid basis for our decisions.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is *in fact* a greater certainty in the alternative I believe in. Sometimes, we tend to choose also actions based on unlikely developments because the relevance of the outcome is high, appealing, and attractive. Thus, we have to realize that the felt probability of our former experiences is not the only factor influencing our actions.

Let us come back to the *comprehensive idea* of the whole situation that is necessary for our decision making. If we try to form a language-based representation of some of the factors, such as the past experiences we have had with a special person, we are in need of quite extensive representations. It is by no means easy to obtain an exhaustive idea of my knowledge of the different past experiences with any person. A language-based representation of the experiences I had with a special person may easily reach the size of a novel. The medium of language is not really useful for a comprehensive representation of my whole knowledge about the most probable reactions of the person I am thinking about. Still, we need such a synthetic idea of probable alternative actions to decide and act.

A useful alternative would consist of a "short version" of the previous history taken together with a concise view of the possible actions the person is likely to make in the concrete situation. If we gain an idea of this kind, we are able to *feel* which course of action he or she is most likely to take. Feeling is the mode of finding the right *weight* of one motive in relation and concurrence with other motives moving him or her at the same time. Only in the "currency" of feeling are we able to "calculate," that is, to appraise one factor against other completely different factors that affect the decision: the pressure of time, the relevance of the aim to reach, the probability of a lucky or bad development, and so forth. This ability of the human mind is not as extraordinary as one might think at first glance. For example, we are able to find a solution in situations entailing the felt preference of a restaurant over other restaurants because of quite incomparable factors, such as price, the quality of food, or the probability to get a free table, and so forth. We are easily able to solve complex problems such as this in everyday situations.

Having addressed the difficulties of a pure language-based representation of complex problems in social situations, let us consider the topic in a more abstract manner. I am not criticizing language in general, and I readily concede that language is an important system of representation, which is useful for thinking and communication. Yet there are also nonlinguistic systems of representation, such as the scenic-phantasmatic system, which still function in human consciousness by enabling thinking and deciding, although not communication. Language is highly differentiated; it leads us up to the highest level of conceptual abstraction—but we have to realize that this is not the central function of a system of representation for thinking and deciding in everyday concerns. Here, I would like to present characteristic shortcomings in the language-based mode of thinking when representing complex social problems. We have found three characteristic shortcomings: (1) the difficulty in obtaining a "condensed idea" of a complex situation entailing contradictory past experiences, uncertain decisions, and mixtures of motives; (2) the inability to represent a quantitative grading of probability and of graded relevance. (3) These two difficulties lead to the third, which concerns the slow mode of language-based thinking. This list may be prolonged, but already in its present form, it leads to the realization that we are able to process social problems not only in the language-based mode of thinking alone.

From this point of view, the following appears unavoidable: There must be a more fundamental system of representation besides language that enables us to act in complex situations.[6] The insight into the shortcomings of language processing of social themes calls for a reconsideration of the significance of fantasy pictures (i.e., the scenic phantasma).

Social Topics in Scenic Phantasma

Recall the example of my colleague wondering whether to cooperate with me or not: it already provides us with the realization that we can represent alternative decisions of other persons. I would now like to discuss another case of nonlinguistic thinking about the other person's motives and probable actions. I have a colleague who lives in a house divided into several flats inhabited by students. Once, when she came home late, she placed her bike in the entry hall of the building, where it would not be in anyone's way. While she was locking up her bike, the following phantasmatic scene suddenly popped in mind: An athletic student living on the third floor was looking at her with a grin on his face, as he was unlocking the valves on the inner tube of the bike. After "seeing" this phantasmatic scene, she changed her course of action, took her bike some steps away from her house and locked it up there.

What is the meaning of this phantasmatic scene? What motivates my colleague's conclusion and the change in the course of action? Her phantasma are connected with the previous interaction she had with the students from the third floor. Some weeks ago, she interrupted a very noisy party around 4 AM in the morning. There is a longing for revenge on the part of some of the students, and especially on the part of the student she saw in her phantasma. The scene represents two aspects: the motive for revenge (the grinning face, the hateful look) and the opportunity to take revenge without being noticed. Thus, if we wanted to spell out the message of this short phantasmatic scene in words, we would say: This student wants to take his revenge by causing damage to your bike, yet only if his act of revenge remains unnoticed. Therefore, her reaction to lock up the bike elsewhere relies on a quite reasonable conclusion, although it does not rely on language-based concepts. The full scene does not only present the person and his motive in the hateful look but also the concrete way he would realize his revenge. Since here we do not face a memory image, but a scene that concerns the person's future plan, the scene need not be realistic. There are distinct signs of its unreality, for example, the fact that the student looks at her grinning.

The same is true in the already mentioned example where I am thinking over a problematic action and suddenly notice a phantasmatic appearance of the face of a close friend, looking at me skeptically. On the one hand, my thinking activity has a realistic character insofar as I correct my inconsiderate plans and change my course of action. On the other hand, this act of consciousness does not concern a real event (i.e., I do not actually see the other person looking at me), but only his probable valuation of my possible future actions.

There is another important characteristic of scenic phantasma that distinguishes them from memory images: They are not experienced as pictures through which other objects are depicted. Rather, they are more like experiential scenes, which, to follow up on the previous example, appear exactly the way as if my close friend would be really looking at me. Thus, implicitly I am also there, incorporated in the scene as the *spectator*, in my special perspective on that scene.

It seems difficult to imagine a scenic image of a person's character and of his or her probable behavior toward me, in particular within complex constellations involving others. Scenic phantasma offer a simple solution to this difficulty. We already presented an example of a wavering character, but we can also think of simpler cases. In "remembering," or just thinking of a brutal former classmate, I can see his face looking at me with his evil eyes, clenched fists, ready to give me a beating. But this "image" is not simply his; it is a characteristic scene that encapsulates me, in which I am writhing with pain from his beating and in fear of his further beatings, while in the background I can also see a group of my friends, unwilling to help me. A scene such as this one presents central aspects not only of the person's character, but also of his or her future behavior within a social context.

In reflecting on nonlinguistic thinking about social themes using the mode of scenic phantasma, we might try to look for the "most simple case" and it might seem that it consists of the interaction of two persons. In my view, such an approach is mistaken: even in seemingly simple social imagery, such as the one concerning the sorrowful expression on my grandfather's face, the images of other persons are already involved. They are vaguely there in the background, and they certainly do not share my grandfather's generally positive attitude toward me. Singular others, for example, when they judge me, may give expression to the whole group, such as my community. If we reflect on the way we imagine singular others, their imaginatively appearing faces already entail the general attitude toward me, which we find expressed in their "appearing" faces. Moreover, from their facial expressions, I can easily judge how they evaluate my actions, that is, whether they are furious or charmed by me, and so forth. There are also faces mirroring "neutral" criticism that does not stem from personal annoyance, such as fury. A "neutral" facial expressions may perhaps inform me only about the general standards of our community. If we use language in this kind of situation, we use impersonals such as "one" should or should not do this. The imaginative others remind me only of the commonly shared rules, and this is already mirrored in their neutral facial expressions. We can thus also incorporate the community's judgments and evaluations into our scenic phantasma that at first glance concern only singular persons.

The Slow Mode of Nonlinguistic
Thinking on Complex Topics

All of the examples we have discussed so far concern nonlinguistic modes of thinking and judging, yet all of them were quite abrupt. The speed with which a decision is reached is difficult to determine in an exact way, but it may be a rather good criterion for an abrupt decision ("fast mode" of nonlinguistic thinking) if we are able to come to a solution already in the situation that asks for a decision. Nevertheless, there are problems that ask for extended reflections that can only be undertaken in a relaxed situation without the immediate pressure to reach the decision. As we will see, there is also a "slow mode" of nonlinguistic thinking based on scenic phantasma. It unfolds in a series of "replays" of the same situation that involve slight modifications.

The *slow mode* of thinking leads to a decision or a conclusion, whose establishment rests either upon the adjustment of one's feelings toward different solutions that may solve the problem, or upon a new arrangement of one's motives and actions. This slow mode of nonlinguistic thinking is operative in humans[7] when they have to solve complex tasks, which entail their own behavior and valuation. For example, buying a certain house is such a difficult task.

Scenic phantasma perform a consistent representation of our everyday longings, wishes, and fears, but they can also lead to and represent the solution to a complex problem. There is a characteristic way of proceeding in the case of really complex problems that use the scenic-phantasmatic system. This slow mode consists of a kind of recurring repetition of short series of phantasmatic scenes (we might speak of daydreams in this case) that entail in each replay a small modification of some of the factors. This "replay-plus-modification" method of nonlinguistic thinking may appear as having recurring daydreams of problematic situations. This is by no means the whole truth, because the replay in question can also be interpreted as a "reasonable" activity of thinking, dedicated to serious and complex problems of past, present, and future reality.

We may wonder, why do special sorrowful daydreams have to be repeated over and over again? Quite likely, such repetitions derive from our own order of relevance for possible events. Certain daydreams must be lived through over and over again as long as the urgent needs, tasks, and oppressing fears they reflect remain the same and unaltered. But in such replays or daydreams, *not everything is repeated in an unaltered way*; here, we have to be attentive to small modifications in these apparent repetitions, modifications in "fantasy" that represent real options in real action.

I will give an example that concerns such a basic activity as driving a car. Consider the following situation: I have been intimidated by an aggressive

driver and due to the circumstances, I have given way to his demands. Afterward, this annoying situation might repeatedly remerge in my daydreams, and each time it would reawaken furious feelings. Yet if you are attentive, you will realize that in circumstances such as this one, we do not face an identical repetition of the same imaginary scenario. Reflective self-observation makes me realize, among other things, small variations of my own behavior. After a while, with further replays, it can lead to the realization of the right reaction: had I done this, it would have stopped him! To be sure, this insight is irreal, accompanied by a regretful feeling, and it cannot change the past. But it is nevertheless a kind of *action on future reality*, that is, a *plan*: It enables me in a similar situation, if it were to occur, to act appropriately and to resist unjust demands. The same is true of events that I am anxiously expecting. The resulting scene is a future-related plan, a consequence of thinking through the situation on the basis of my foregoing experiences. Nevertheless, it may turn out that the best solution is a change in my own behavior: Don't be so dogmatic in everyday circumstances! Avoid conflicts such as this one! In such a way, I draw consequences from problematic experiences by replaying them in fantasy and on this basis finding out what the most appropriate solution would be. But this insight asks for some repetitions; perhaps, also, I have to sleep on the affair.

Such a slow mode of nonlinguistic thinking is quite broadly spread in solving complex problems where there are several uncertain factors like the probability of different future developments, different options of influencing a situation by my own behavior, and so forth. We may consider complex decisions, such as renting or buying a house, decisions that oblige us to go through a series of alternatives that we have to ponder so as to find out which solution will meet our dispositions best. For example, if I hate being bound by substantial debts, quite likely I will choose to rent a house. If I am a person who tries to avoid conflicts with neighbors at all costs, I will rent a single-unit detached house. By contrast, if I value both my privacy and contact with my neighbors, I will rent or buy a row home, and so forth. When forced to make decisions such as this one, the alternatives will repeatedly appear as I try to find out which of the possible alternatives may fit me best.

Even if we have the possibility to think by means of language, it is very difficult to avoid such a slow mode of nonlinguistic thinking. The main reason for this is the already mentioned, principal difficulty we find in a language system: Propositions can only connect two or three elements in a relation and everything that is more complex, such as the decision to buy a house or to marry one's partner, cannot be done in a reasonable way in language mode. But we should also keep in mind that the time-consuming slow mode of decision making cannot be used in all situations because of the usual pressure of time. Yet there are also methods for solving simple problems in a reasonable time with the help of the nonlinguistic systems of scenic phantasma.

In the end, we have to realize that the broadly spread conviction that humans mostly think using language is misleading. There is a basic and extensive level of nonlinguistic thinking in fantasy modes. We can nevertheless have access to this mode of nonlinguistic thinking in phenomenological reflection, and this becomes especially obvious reflecting on the function of our everyday *social imagery*.

Closing Remark:
On Social Imagery as a Branch of Productive Fantasy

In my view, fantasy is always productive—concerning the fact that it presents to me something in an intuitive mode that is not given (sometimes even cannot be given) in perception. From this point of view, the seemingly more reproductive forms of fantasy, like memories, are also productive, that is, reproductive. Nevertheless there is a broad variety of mixed forms of fantasy, starting from more reproductive pictures of memories until the products of free fantasy, which seem to be in every respect productive.[8]

My special point of view in discussing social imagery is the function of scenic phantasma in thinking about everyday but very complex social problems. It turns out that fantasy images and scenes are the very fundamental moving principle of our basic nonlinguistic thinking. Fantasies are the condition of possibility to conceive of true complex social constellations, that is, to have an idea of the whole of the (present, past, and future) factors that play a role in this situation, as well as in the possible developments of my and others' actions and the person-independent course of events. The most important reasons for this performance are the possibilities of fantasy (and the accompanying emotions) to represent the great complexity of factors, as well as the different graded motives that guide my (and others') actions. Fantasy is the condition to conceive my (and others') possible future (and past) actions and this allows me to register my emotional reaction to this different events. Therefore, this mode of thinking enables me to project my future quite realistic. Fantasy is an intuitive idea of something that is not present and perhaps not yet (or no more) existing and therefore it is always productive.

Notes

1. See for the thesis that we are able to think without the use of language (Lohmar 2016a).
2. See Lohmar (2012: 377–98).
3. See Lohmar (2016a: chapter 3, 3).

4. The "language of the look" is also an important element of nonlinguistic thinking and communicating. See Lohmar (2016a: Chapter III, 2, 1).

5. See for the emotional aspects of the scenic phantasmatic system of nonlinguistic thinking (Lohmar 2016b).

6. There are also arguments for nonlinguistic thinking in humans with concern of an obvious gap in the history of human evolution. The characteristic cooperative style of human social life with mutual obligations must have been the human lifestyle since around two million years while the ability to speak verbally dates not earlier that around 120,000 years. See Lohmar (2016a: Chapter II, 1).

7. Some neurological research indicates that also most mammals are using this slow mode of nonlinguistic thinking; see Lohmar (2016a: Chapter III, 4).

8. To conceive of pure reproductive and on the other side pure productive fantasy makes sense in Kant's criticism and his view on the intertwinement of *a priori* conditions to have objects and cognition of them. I will here not take up this line of thought that I view to be strongly dependent on the decision to accept the framework of Kant's access.

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Chapter 12

Productive Kinesthetic Imagination

Gediminas Karoblis

In this chapter, I will discuss productive kinesthetic imagination by targeting two separate, but interconnected aims. First, I will elaborate the concept of kinesthetic imagination in general along the lines or in confrontation with the previous general phenomenological investigations of imagination worked out by Edmund Husserl (mainly in 2005, but also in other volumes) and Jean Paul Sartre (2010; 2012). Despite differences between these two lines of investigation, Paul Ricœur (1981) labeled them as reproductive and dependent on perception. According to him, these theories do not give a sufficient account for productivity of imagination as one finds provided, for example, in Kantian philosophy. Therefore, my second aim is to explore how the distinction between productive and reproductive imagination, as Ricœur problematized it, applies to kinesthetic imagination.

While developing phenomenology, Husserl noted that achievements in one particular domain of investigations might bring certain impulses and, eventually, more fruitful results in another one. Thus, for example, scrupulous phenomenological investigations of the lived and the physical body significantly enriched analysis of intersubjectivity and empathy (Husserl 2006). Husserl also realized that the analysis of the internal consciousness of time had thrown a new light on many problems and concepts he discussed elsewhere (Husserl 1991). However, phenomenological investigations in certain domains have been less often and less systematically submitted to an effort of such cross-fertilization. Therefore, I inquire if it is the case with kinesthesis and imagination.

Finally, to add another dimension to my phenomenological analysis, I will employ phenomenological notation, developed by Eduard Marbach (1993). This move requires very short introduction of basic tools of phenomenological notation. There is not enough space to present the system as a whole

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(Marbach 1993, 2010) in a short chapter. Therefore, I will only pick those elements of it that are necessary and sufficient for my analysis. These elements, of course, will require certain additional explication when introduced. It will suffice to mention now that Marbach uses triplets of upper-case letters (such as IMA for imagination, PER for perception, PRE for presentification [Gegewärtigung], and REP for representification [Vergegewärtigung]) to designate mental activities and lower-case letters (such as x, y, a, s) to designate intentional objects. In addition, a pair of parentheses, "(. . . .)," designates intentional correlation between an actually occurring mental act and its object(s), a pair of square brackets, "[. . . .]," designates intentional modification of a mental activity contained within another activity (Marbach 2010), and "a pair of wedge-shaped brackets "‹. . .›" will designate that which is latently implied in the activity in question (Marbach 1993: 108). Finally, a horizontal stroke or a foundation-stroke ("――――") will serve to designate that any representifying mental acts (Vergegenwärtigung) involve presentification (Gegenwärtigung), in terms of embodiment of a person performing mental acts, but also in terms of a physically present carrier as foundation for the representifying (a canvas for a picture or a screen for a film, for example). To reflect positionality, two signs will be used: the sign of belief " ├ " and the sign of neutrality "─."

Kinesthetic Flow and Imagination

The idea of kinesthetic series corresponding to visual appearances of a perceived object is the major achievement in Husserl's lectures on Thing and Space (Husserl 1997). Here, analysis of visual perception of a thing leads Husserl to discovery of correlation between two series. One is the series of appearances (let's name it a-series). Another is the series of corresponding oculomotor movements and, more generally, kinesthetic movements of the head and the body as a whole (let's name it k-series) as necessary basis for the former. Phenomenological reflection shows that the series of oculomotor movement does not just make the series of appearances possible, but it also runs in determinate correlation with it. To make this distinction sharper and specify what kinesthetic series implies, one should take into account configurations and movements of the body. Here, several aspects are important. These aspects will provide the basis for an argument delivered further regarding Sartre's theory of imagination. First, Husserl's analysis of correlation between a-series and k-series *sensu stricto* applies only to kinestheses of oculomotor movement. It means, by the kinesthetic oculomotor position k_x at the moment t_x, one perceives the correlated fixed appearance a_x. It also means, that the position k_x is situated within the flow of positions $k_1 \ldots k_n$.

Of course, even if the object perceived is not in motion, it still endures in temporal flow. Having one's eyes fixed, one still perceives the correlated flow of appearances $a_1 \ldots a_n$, of the same fixed object, until the object perceived or the perceiver starts moving. Yet also in case of "complete" stasis, both a-series and k-series are submitted to the same temporal flow and might be expressed as strict correlation between manifolds $k_1 \ldots k_n$ and $a_1 \ldots a_n$. Such fixation, however, usually does not last very long. It is important to note that kinesthetic ocular position (k_x) correlates not only to a profile, a given side of a perceived object, but is also determined by changing appearance due to focus, that is, "approaching to" (or zooming in) and "distancing from" (or zooming out) the perceived object. Thus, perceiving a document on a computer screen, one might kinesthetically "grasp" appearance of a letter, the word, in which this letter appears, or the sentence in which this word appears on the screen, and so forth. Each change in focus constitutes new position in the manifold of the running k-series and correlates to corresponding phase in the manifold of the running a-series. All this might happen without any movement of the head or the body. Yet, in general, kinestheses of eyes are embedded (or embodied—both words apply) in kinestheses of the head, and the kinestheses of the head—into the kinestheses of the body. I would like to call this extended k-series of bodily configurations. The extended k-series configures the complex kinesthetic system as surrounding or wrap for more determinate oculomotor k-series, which strictly corresponds to to a-series. Let us try to describe the foundational relations within this kinesthetic system.

Whether one perceives, or remembers, or imagines, one marginally remains conscious of one's embodiment in one's present surroundings (Marbach 1993: 83–84). Therefore, in his analysis of imagining, Marbach introduced into the formula of imagination general consciousness of present surroundings (PREs) of an imagining person. Having included this reflective finding into the "formula" of imagination, Marbach has not specified other aspects of such embodiment. However, in the present context of analysis of the correlation between a-series and k-series, one can note that PREs imply the complex foundational kinesthetic system. Using foundational stroke, Marbach puts PREs in all formulae of mental representation, since, in wakeful life, one never loses marginal consciousness of one's surroundings. It looks like this (84):

$$\overline{}$$
$$\text{(PRE)s}$$

Figure 12.1 Phenomenological notation which applies the foundation-stroke to indicate the present surroundings.

From the previous analysis, it has become obvious, however, that the foundational relations must be presented as follows:

$$\frac{\text{(PER)a}}{\text{‹PRE: EYE›k}}$$

$$\frac{\text{‹PRE: EYE›k}}{\text{‹PRE: HEA›k}}$$

$$\frac{\text{‹PRE: HEA›k}}{\text{(PRE: BOD)k}}$$

$$\frac{\text{(PRE: BOD)k}}{\text{(PRE)s}}$$
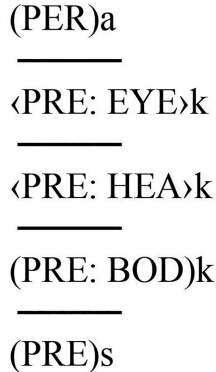
Figure 12.2 Phenomenological notation which applies the foundation-strokes to indicate the relation between the body (parts) and the present surroundings.

This designates that perceived appearing (PER)a is implicitly founded in kinestheses of the eyes ‹PRE: EYE›k. Kinestheses of the eyes themselves are implicitly founded in the kinestheses of the head ‹PRE: HEA›k that in their own turn are founded in the kinestheses of the body (PRE: BOD)k. The reason for putting all these levels in different brackets is the following. One must have some sort of marginal and actual, but not implicit, consciousness of both—the body in general and the surroundings. Otherwise, one would counterintuitively reject one's constant awareness of bodily surroundings in general, but this would be very strange, "ethereal" experience of mental activities as if suspended in the air (Marbach 1993: 83). Or, one would reject minimal bodily self-consciousness by assuming that one's bodily self as it dissolves in bodily surroundings, particularly in practice of skilled or immersed coping in the world. The ongoing McDowell-Dreyfus debate focused precisely on this point, which I cannot adequately address in this short chapter devoted to another purpose. Therefore, in constructing the figure 12.2, I am just taking sides without explicit argument: I assume that both the body and the surroundings must be presentified in consciousness actually, not implicitly. It is not necessary, however, once general bodily consciousness is given, to have the same kind of actual marginal consciousness for each specific part of the body, such as head-consciousness, eye-consciousness, or hand-consciousness. It is sufficient that the latter consciousnesses are implied in the

former. Therefore, awareness of the body parts is implicitly integrated in the overall bodily awareness. Finally, the body is embedded in its present surroundings (PREs).

Of course, there is a difference in how all these foundations work. The foundational grounding referred to in the top foundational stroke (see figure 12.2) is the determining one—the one of strong equivalence. Not only for a singular appearance is a singular ocular position given, but also the other way round: every singular ocular position makes possible one singular appearance. Other foundations work otherwise: there is a certain freedom within determining limits of these kinestheses. Let us take a fixed position of the head. It is still possible to perform a wide range of ocular movements within the visual field limited by the fixation of the head (think of Stephen Hawking here!). The correlation here is not the one of strict equivalence, but rather of logical and physical implication whereas the limits of the given fixed position of the head define the array of possible eye movements. The question is whether it works the other way around: whether one ocular position fixed on one appearance can be founded in more than one position of the head (by position here, I mean corporeal configuration in relation to surroundings, not only in relation to other body parts). In other words, it is possible that a manifold of eye movements can be performed with one's head fixed—think of the eye positions in classical Indian dance! Yet can one also perform a manifold of head movements with one's eyes fixed—is there such a skill in a dance? This would allow then to correlate one a-series to manifold of extended k-series. Purely logically it seems possible, since strict determination exists only between oculomotor k-series and a-series of appearances. The rest of the body, so to speak, can be arranged in relatively free relation to the eyes. Nevertheless, it seems that under normal physical conditions, the perfect *Deckung*, to use Husserl's term—the complete overlapping of two a-series while having two distinct extended k-series—cannot happen as long as one considers movements tightly interconnected with eye movements, such as head movement. However, it seems possible that some free marginal bodily configurations such as finger movement or foot gesture make no change in the a-series. Therefore, one should conclude that, except for ocular k-series (and perhaps, implicitly, head k-series), which determines a-series, the kinesthetic system as a whole allows certain semidetermined configurational flexibility on all kinesthetic levels in relation to a-series and between foundational levels themselves. It is also obvious that motility of the body, particularly of the body parts that are located further from the eyes, makes no or very little difference for kinestheses of the eyes. The same kind of analysis can be repeated for tactile, aural, and other "appearances." In these, k-series

and a-series correlation will work differently, of course. Let's postpone this analysis for future work.

A different volume of *Husserliana* (Husserl 2005) demonstrates that Husserl employed the achievement in analysis of the kinesthetic mode of perception in his investigations of phantasy, image consciousness (Bildbe-wusstsein), and memory. Husserl refers to kinestheses as constitutive part of a nexus of "actuality" reproduced in memory (Husserl 2005: 671). Further-more, for him "kinesthetic data running off in a firmly ordered manner and data of sensation running off along with them in fixed co-ordination" (673) guarantee distinction between recollection of an event, which has really occurred, and a made-up event in a phantasy world. While remembering, one again discovers this coupling of k-series (series of kinestheses) and a-series (series of perceived appearances) running off in fixed coordina-tion. Whereas in phantasy, despite necessary correlation of the same kind in general, a continuous determining running off cannot be achieved. If it were achieved, we would run into the difficulty which Husserl described in the following way:

> If we suppose that sensuous phantasy data (phantasms) run off in clear deter-minacy like kinesthetic data running off in a firmly ordered manner and data of sensation running off along with them in fixed co-ordination, and if we suppose that everything is just as it is "in reality," would not a phantasy world of things thereby become newly constituted, and would it then be a phantasy world at all? Would it not be a real world and a world that presents itself as real? But is that not nonsense? (673)

Thus, for Husserl, the kinesthetic system is first of all "a system of real possibilities, of real capabilities . . . and the supposition of a corresponding characteristic that limits freedom" (672). Further, Husserl claims, "If we consider the consciousness that is modified 'in the manner of phantasy,' it is characteristic of this consciousness, in contrast to unmodified consciousness, that it is not capable of any constitutive productions, at least not directly: There are no phantasy objects understood as existing objects. There are no existing phantasy worlds" (671). It seems that in his approach, as presented in these quotations, Husserl posits obstacles for both aims in this discussion on productive kinesthetic imagination. First, kinestheses in principle seem to constrain the freedom of phantasy rather than enhance it. Second, even if kinestheses were somehow involved in phantasies, it would remain unclear how kinesthetic imagination could acquire the power of constitutive produc-tion beyond the existing world.

Nevertheless, Ricœur's concern that "philosophy of the imagination has a preference for images that can be regarded as mental or physical replicas (photographs, pictures, drawings, diagrams) of an absent thing" (Ricœur

1981: 167) does not apply to Husserl's theory of imagination. Of course, for Husserl, in the broadest sense, reproduction (*Reproduktion*) is synonymous with phantasy (*Phantasie*). In other words, to avoid confusion, for him reproductive acts are different from perceptive ones because they correlate with *phantasma* and not *percepta*. In this sense, Husserl understands *phantasma* very broadly. Moreover, in 1918, Husserl changed his basic attitude to phantasy starting to describe it as playful (*Spielerisches*) rather than depicting consciousness (*Abbildendes* Bewusstsein) (Husserl 2005: 616). Furthermore, a couple of years later, in the analyses of active syntheses, Husserl admits that imagination as playful consciousness has positional and productive constitutive power (Husserl 2001). Yet, in the same article, Ricœur also notices that philosophy of imagination "tends to neglect heuristic fictions in a logic of invention, fictional narratives (such as tales, dramas, novels), and political fictions (ideologies and utopias)" (Ricœur, 1981: 167). In light of this critique, the question remains: do only narrative forms of playful imagination have the capacity for productivity and should we therefore discard all forms of kinesthetic imagination as reproductive?

Sartre's Theory of Imagination

Strangely enough, Sartre's analysis of imagination, which pays a lot of attention to kinestheses, eventually does not help to answer questions regarding kinesthetic imagination. Sartre, in fact, develops his theory of imagination by taking as his point of departure a standpoint that Husserl himself aimed to reject. Sartre from the very beginning accommodates imagination into the broader family of the acts of pictorial consciousness. Sartre thinks that a picture of Pierre, a caricature, and even a pure imagination of him are three moments of the same act (Sartre 2010: 18). He is concerned in overcoming what he calls "the illusion of immanence" (5) and it is important for him to stress that an intentional object of imagination is not a mental representation, but an object in the world. For example, Sartre would imagine Pierre who is in Berlin whereas Sartre is in Paris, but the intentional correlate of this imagination is still Pierre in Berlin and not a Pierre's representation (in Sartre's mind) in Paris.

Rejecting the same idea of phantasy as mental representation, Husserl and Sartre eventually part their ways in their proposed theories. Husserl aims to show that, contrary to Hume's proposal, phantasms are not "weaker pictures" of perceptual impressions. They are mental acts of different kind. Although Husserl admits that perception normally serves as originary source for reproduction (remembering or imagining), he insists that one should not include into the definition a comparison in terms of quantity: as if by definition

reproductions were less vivid than perceptions. There are limit cases of extremely vivid memories or extremely indistinct perceptions that contradict such presupposition. As we saw in the previous section, Husserl found other criteria to secure the veracity of perception and therefore, he could discard the criterion of vividness. Such a line of thinking brings Husserl to sharper distinction between pictorial and pure imagination. He thinks that Hume came to his idea of the pictures in the mind by applying the principles of the former to the latter and by making insufficient distinction between both. This is wrong, Husserl thinks, and he contrasts the immanent structure of pure imagination and its fictional objects to transcendent structure of pictorial imaging and its depicted objects. The latter has a triple structure of a physical carrier (*Bildding*), a pictorial subject (*Bildsujet*), and a pictorial object (*Bildobjekt*). Pure imagination, according to Husserl, doesn't need to have similar triple structure: it is a mental act that representifies an intended object in pure, which is completely nonperceptive mode. Though, one might add, it is quasi-perceptive. Thus, in principle, Husserl sticks to binary logics here. Marbach (1993: 77) presents this reflective finding in the following way: "I will consider only Sartre's example of imagining Pierre in Berlin and I will leave aside a longer formula, which includes 'pure I' and present surroundings" (83–90).

$$ - (\text{REP} - [\text{PER}]) \vdash \text{x} $$

Figure 12.3 Phenomenological notation elaborated by Marbach as the result of the phenomenological analysis of the activity imagination.

The formula reads as follows. In true belief that he exists (starting to read from the right side of the formula " $\vdash$ x"), one imagines Pierre in the manner of neutrality by means of representifying (reading again from the left side of the formula as expressed here by a pair of parentheses " $-$ (REP . . .)") a neutralized quasi-perceiving of Pierre (as expressed here by square brackets " $-$ [PER]"). The mode of neutrality is stressed in order not to confuse imagining Pierre with remembering, because the latter mode would involve belief. It is important to stress that Husserl did not assume that a mental representation of Pierre is an object ontologically separate from Pierre existing in the world. For Husserl just as for Sartre, x—that is, Pierre—would be the same object given in two different modes: staying in Berlin and imagined by Sartre in Paris. Moreover, since Pierre is not a fictional character, he as an intended object is posited (in the formula) not in the manner of neutrality, but with belief—as actually existing Pierre. For Husserl, noetic analysis helps to distinguish perception, imagination, and remembering as different mental acts—the latter two being modified forms of quasi-perceptive consciousness.

Nevertheless, Husserl felt no need of a physical carrier as a base for this modified consciousness. Sartre, though, thinks otherwise. He believes that all forms of imaging/imagination (a picture, a caricature, and even a pure reproduction) have the same triple structure that Husserl had attributed to pictorial consciousness. Indeed, for Sartre, certain matter analogous to a physical beholder of a picture (*Bildding*) should exist even in pure phantasy. According to Sartre, such matter could be knowledge, affections, or kinestheses. Thus, in contrast to the reflective finding, which Marbach, following Husserl, represented in figure 12.3, one could also follow Sartre and describe pure imagination in the same way as pictorial consciousness, which yields the following formula (constructed following the analysis of pictorial consciousness provided in Marbach 1993: 125–46):

$$- (REP - [PER]x) \vdash x$$
$$(PRE: KIN)y$$

Figure 12.4 Phenomenological notation of pictorial consciousness elaborated by Marbach and applied to Sartre's analysis of imagination.

It means that even in the case of pure imagination, when Sartre representifies Pierre in the manner of neutrality by means of representifying a neutralized quasi-perceiving of Pierre, he must actually presentify him in certain foundational kinesthetic (as in the figure 12.4 below the stroke) or affective vehicle that would give the basis for representification like a physical canvas gives for a picture. Like in pictorial representation on a physical canvas, the known problem of a double object (x appears twice in the formula) emerges. One sees a friend through the picture and in the picture. The same must happen in imagination: on the one hand, x must be immediately quasi-perceived, that is, Pierre must immediately quasi-present himself to Sartre's consciousness. On the other hand, x must be immediately perceived in a carrier, that is, Pierre must be perceived in the medium of either kinesthesis, knowledge, or affection. Such a carrier perhaps may be certain kinesthetic enactment of Pierre like latent imitation, or perhaps some kind of affective signature of him that necessarily accompanies such imagination. Nevertheless, this statement seems to be quite counterintuitive. Yet Sartre is ready to follow all consequences of his view. Therefore, he asks "how can the kinaesthetic sensations function as matter for an imaging consciousness that aims at an object furnished by visual perceptions?" (Sartre 2010: 74).

Let us look closer at a few examples analyzed by Sartre. In the first example, Sartre "paints" a figure of eight by his finger. He notices that as soon as

the visual form is fixed, kinestheses disappear having done their work. Thus, after the discussion of his example, Sartre concludes,

> So, on this side of clear image consciousness there exists a zone of semi-darkness where there glide around rapidly almost ungraspable states, empty pieces of imaging knowledge, that are almost already images, symbolic apprehensions of movement. Let one of these pieces of knowledge be fixed for a moment on one of these movements, and the imaging consciousness is born. (Sartre 2010: 83)

It is not our aim here to pursue hierarchies of senses, but Sartre here seems to assume that a fulfillment of imagination is quasi-visualization. In his theory, the kinesthetic element is an ephemeral physical vehicle for a mental quasi-visualization. However, his experiment does not even raise the question of an imagined kinesthesis, because in both examples kinestheses are executed in action, not in mind: "My eyes are open, I look at the index finger of my right hand, which is describing curves, geometrical figures in the air. . . . Now I close my eyes and, with my finger, I execute movements similar to the preceding ones" (75–76). Therefore, even if Sartre admits enough space for kinesthetic anticipation in his analysis, he means the "form alone that would be irreally visualised on the real kinaesthetic impression" (80). However, as we have learned from Husserl, as long as one establishes an uninterrupted continuum of kinestheses in protention, even if one consti-tutes an irreal visual object, that is, *visual imagination* described by Sartre, one still does not establish *kinesthetic imagination*. One actually deals with kinesthetic presentification (*Gegenwärtigung*), rather than representification (*Vergegenwärtigung*).

Let us take another example; Sartre employs an imagined moving swing. Perhaps, this example could serve as an example of kinesthetic imagination. Sartre describes his experiment in the following way:

> It is thus that, some years ago, when I tried to represent myself a swing animated by a lively movement, I had the clear impression that I was moving my eyeballs slightly. I then tried to represent a moving swing while keeping my eyeballs still. I therefore forced myself to direct my gaze at the page number of a book. Then this happened: either my eyes moved again in spite of me, or I could not at all represent to myself the movement of the swing. (81)

For Sartre, this example provides the proof that the eyeballs' kinestheses are presentified both in the case of directing the gaze at the page number of a book and in the case of imagining the movement of the swing. There is one a-series of appearance of the page number corresponding to the k-series of kinestheses of the eyeballs, both running off in a temporal flow. In addition,

running off the same temporal flow, Sartre struggles to establish another, imagined a-series of the quasi-appearances of the moving swing corresponding to another k-series of kinestheses of the eyeballs. Sartre claims that he cannot actually sustain these two manifolds at the same time, because in both cases two actually running off k-series contradict each other: in one case, the fixed eyeballs constitute the k-series and in another case—the swinging eyeballs. For our purpose, it is especially important that Sartre believes that in his example, kinestheses show up as physical carriers of imagination. His reflective analysis of imagining the movement of the swing yields the following analysis as presented below in the formula of phenomenological notation:

$$\frac{- (REP - [PER] - x) - x}{(PRE: KIN)y}$$

Figure 12.5 Phenomenological notation which results from the reflective analysis of Sartre's example of the imagining of a swing.

This reads as follows. Sartre imagines the movement of a fictional swing ("— x") by means of representifying a neutralized quasi-perceiving of the fictional swing ("REP — [PER]— x") and by means of presentifying foundational kinestheses of his eyeballs ("(PRE: KIN)y"). The example truly confirms the determinate correlation between a-series and nonextended k-series. But it does not confirm Sartre's theory of kinestheses as physical carriers of imagination. Because in the formula, one might just put a longer chain of foundational strokes, pointing the reflective finding that the consciousness analyzed is not pictorial, but rather structured as it was shown in figure 12.2.

$$\frac{\frac{\frac{- (REP - [PER])}{\langle PRE: EYE \rangle k}}{\langle PRE: HEA \rangle k}}{(PRE: BOD)k} \quad - x$$

Figure 12.6 Phenomenological notation which combines figures 12.2 and 12.5 and scrutinizes the kinesthetic foundation of imagination.

It becomes clear from the following considerations. A-series in the case of imagining a swing is not actually a running off presentified series of appearances, because the movement of the swing is not actually perceived, but imagined. Therefore, these "appearances" are quasi-perceived

quasi-appearances. The a-series is constituted not in the manner of belief, but in the manner of neutrality; it is fictional. At the same time, Sartre clearly claims that the k-series, which in his example is the series of the eye movements, is presentified and is actually running off while perceiving and while imagining. And precisely because one k-series is "swinging" for the imagined swing, so to say, and another k-series is fixed for the perceived number of the page, two series contradict each other and create the difficulty Sartre has identified. Yet despite two k-series contradicting each other, Sartre has no problem in distinguishing the fictionality of the swing from the reality of the page number. So there must be a ground of a certain kind that allows for this distinction. Following Husserl's argument, one must admit the disproportion between two pairs of manifolds that might be defined here as k-series and a-series compared to k'-series and a'-series. They cannot be running off on the same planes of reality, because then the imagined movement of the swing would be perceived as really occurring event in the real world and the contradiction would be experienced not just between two k-series, but also between two a-series. One would experience the page number and the swing as if they were flashing perceptions in the same place negating each other. This is not the case. To support Sartre's contradictory experience and at the same time not to fall into violation of the principle of reality pointed by Husserl, one must admit that the k'-series that correlates to the a'-series of the imagined swing is imaginary k-series and must not be confused with actually running k-series. In Sartre's example, it is the imaginary "swinging" k'-series that is the reason of contradiction to k-series of the eyeballs fixed on the page number. This happens in the following way: the imaginary k'-series gives rise to anticipated k'-series and precisely on the plane of anticipation contradicts another k-series anticipated by the intention to keep the eyes fixed on the page number. The contradiction between the fixation of the page number and the swinging of the swing occurs on the level of anticipation. But only one k-series can run in the real world and it can correlate to one a-series. Thus, the model offered by Sartre, motivated by his will to dissipate the illusion of the immanence, is not sufficient. Sartre's example cannot be explained unless one introduces the concept of imagined kinesthesis. But once this concept is introduced, then the theory of kinesthetic carrier is unnecessary.

Finally, before moving back to Husserl's analyses, I will add one more remark. Sartre did not notice in his example that he might have imagined the movement of the swing in a different way. He might have imagined himself as if kinesthetically embodied in the movements of the swing. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, one might fix one's eyes or head and still move one's body. The same applies to imagination: it *is* possible to fix one's eyes on the page number of a book while imagining oneself swinging.

The difference between the third- and the first-person perspective applies to imagination as well.

In third-person manner of imagination, one's visual representification of the movement of the swing is founded in implied quasi-presentifications of the kinestheses of the eyes, which is separated from the presentified embodied first-person structure founding third-person manner of imagination. Although in the third-person manner one implies in imagination oneself as eyes without body (eyes as the residue after the first-person "disembodiment"), yet in first-person manner it is impossible to imagine one's eyes and one's body separated. In first-person manner of imagination, one's kinesthetic quasi-perception constitutes an imaginary kinesthetic quasi-ego that must not be founded in any other kinesthetic carrier in contrast to what Sartre's model would suggest. It is significant that the difference between first- and third-person type of imagination occurs as the virtual break between the eyes and the rest of the body. In the third-person manner, the "eyes" of imagination (and, as Sartre has shown, actual kinestheses of the eyeballs imitating the imagined ones) "go" with the imagined object, while the rest of the "body" of imagination does not engage "following" the eyes and is rather "attached" to the actual body. Whereas in first-person manner, the "body" of imagination is motile, disengaged from the body in actual surroundings, in the same way as the "eyes" were motile in the first case. Therefore, the determined correlation of imagined k-series of eyeballs and imagined a-series of appearances might be completely dropped, thus constituting only imagined k-series or, so to say, *blind imagination*. Therefore, while Sartre's model with some amendments applies to the cases of visual imagination he analyzed, it does not apply to cases of kinesthetic (first-person) imagination and must be substantially reconsidered.

Productivity of Kinesthetic Imagination

Now we will move back to Husserl's analyses and the obstacles to the concept of productive kinesthetic imagination we identified in the first section. First, Husserl seems to suggest that the fluency of kinesthesis is the principle of reality, so to say, and, second, that kinesthesis seems to prevent us from constructive productivity of imagination, pulling us back not only to the real world, but also precisely to the bodies we are, so to say. From this point of view, Ricœur seems to be right in his argument: Husserl's and Sartre's focus on the irreality of imagination confronted with the reality of kinestheses seem helpless in explaining its power in transforming the world. However, Ricœur himself latently accepts the idea that one must get rid of corporeality, so to

say, in order to enter the field of fiction that for Ricœur corresponds to the field of poetics and language:

> A bad psychology of imagination in which imagination is conceived as a residue of perception prevents us from acknowledging the constructive role of imagination. In the same way, a bad psychology of feeling is responsible for a similar misunderstanding. Indeed, our natural inclination is to speak of feeling in terms appropriate to emotion, that is, to affections conceived as (1) inwardly directed states of mind, and (2) mental experiences closely tied to bodily disturbances, as in the case in fear, anger, pleasure, and pain. In fact both traits come together. To the extent that in emotion we are, so to speak, under the spell of our body, we are delivered to mental states with little intentionality, as though in emotion we "lived" our body in a more intense way. Genuine feelings are not emotions, as may be shown by feelings which are rightly called poetic feelings. Just like the corresponding images that they reverberate, they enjoy a specific kinship with language. They are properly displayed by the poem as a verbal texture. (Ricœur 1978: 155–56)

In this parallel that Ricœur draws between psychology of imagination and psychology of feeling, one could read the urge to get rid of "the spell of our body" in order to achieve productivity in imagination. In full agreement with Geniusas's concerns that he voiced about this part of Ricœur's hermeneutic account of imagination, which gives insufficient ground to address "nonlinguistic power of imagination" (Geniusas 2015: 237), I can add a guess that perhaps the reason for such a move has been Ricœur's agreement with the idea that the kinesthetic sphere in principle pulls us back to reality, rather than opens new spaces for fiction. Ricœur's own paradigmatic examples are fictional narratives and political fictions. Both are embedded within the linguistic domain. In the contemporary context of emerging fully immersive virtual and augmented realities, however, such attachment of fiction to linguistic domain seems much less plausible. Not denying Ricœur's achievement, a different kind of theory is needed, the kind of theory that takes full account of kinesthetics. This article is only the first step toward a phenomenological theory elaborated for this purpose. Therefore, it can only point toward rather than offer a full elaboration of new kind of paradigmatic examples such as Kinect technology, immersive computer games, and so on. Nevertheless, already now one could guess the implications of future analyses of these paradigmatic examples.

We must think more broadly. In spite of the above-mentioned obstacles that Husserl presented in the *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory* volume (Husserl 2005), they do not seem to be completely compatible with other positions Husserl takes in his multifaceted explorations. May we not at all think about kinesthetic phantasies? In need of discussion of an imagined

temporal object, Husserl himself, modifying his beloved example, imagines a dancing Centaur (Husserl 2009: 396). Yet, one needs to avoid confusion here. In perception, kinesthetic data do not relate to other sense data, such as visual or auditory, in a similar way as these sensory fields relate to each other. Kinesthetic series runs a transcendental path in relation to other sense data whereas the fields of senses are transcendent to each other. The same applies to phantasy. Daniel Schmicking in his article on imaginary loudness (Schmicking 2005) identifies the tacitly imagined body correlated to an imaginary sound, which means that, like in perception, the series of phantasy sounds correlates to the series of phantasy kinestheses:

> Husserl has focused his analyses on quasi-visual scenes. But in like manner an audio-imaginary (quasi-auditory) scene is related to the implicit imaginary body. When this perspectival organization of perception is transmitted to imagery then there might as well be a quasi-distance of imagined sounds and hence a correlative quasi-loudness. (173)

Since the tacitly imagined body is always implied in a phantasy, the quasi-kinesthetic series is also implied. Then, it follows that a phantasy that is not quasi-kinesthetic does not exist. This is a nice conclusion, but it is far from sufficient for an investigation of kinesthetic imagination proper. There are significant complications. The k-series in perception and in phantasy have different features. Husserl persistently claims that the k-series in perception belongs to the same continuum and sustains the fixed temporal continuity. Whereas, the quasi-kinesthetic series in phantasy is free and can be run off at any speed in any chunks (Husserl 1991: 49–50, 379), except for the real-time speed and the real-life fulfillment in order to avoid confusion with reality (Husserl 2005: 671). Even if phantasy objects can be revisited in recollection and their individuality sustained, a phantasy world does not exist in one uninterrupted plane (*Lage*) like the common world. Different phantasy worlds have nothing to do with each other and with the common world. To put it briefly, kinesthetic imagination must fulfill the necessary requirement of the irreality and the freedom applicable to any imagination. It must be neutrally posited as another world, a world of phantasy. Yet, how can it be achieved if imagination freely posits an imaginary a-series, but by necessity implies k-series? Although the latter one is also imaginary, there is no k-freedom, so to say, in such world. Therefore, we still do not have an answer to the question if there is an independent kind of kinesthetic phantasy, not in the transcendental sense provided above, but in the transcendent sense applied, for example, in distinguishing between visual and auditory phantasies. And, if there are such kinesthetic phantasies, what are their distinctive features?

Of course, there are such phantasies! Phantasies of flying or making love could be obvious examples. The further answer to this question is indirectly provided in the Husserlian description of the body in the *Ideas II* (Husserl 1989: 159). If we consider the body as the organ of the free will, then the phantasy body—not the one that is just implied in phantasy!—must be positively imagined as free, in fact, much freer than the actual body of mine. Kinesthetic phantasy, then, is precisely positing my bodily movement in phantasy, that is, in the mode of irreality. It posits it either as pure irreality, for example, a jump over the Himalayas, or as relative irreality, for example, a quadruple jump (four spins) in figure skating.

A few brief notes should be added. First, kinesthetic imagination does not require quasi-visualization of my body for the same reason why ordinary non-phantasy movement does not require visualization. I don't need to visualize myself swimming when I am swimming. I am just doing it. In the same way, one is capable in positing a movement in pure phantasy as quasi-movement in the mode of neutrality and in the mode of first person. In such phantasy movement, one does not see oneself as if from the side, but one as if enacts this phantasy movement, for example, imagines oneself flying, swimming, and so forth.

Finally, kinesthetic anticipation differs from kinesthetic imagination. The attitude of neutralizing, irreality, and disjointness from the continuous flux of perception, as it is obvious from the previous discussion, identifies the latter, whereas the former remains within the attitude of belief and continuum of passive syntheses. In contrast to this idea, but still acknowledging that for different reasons imagination can be grouped with memory, or with anticipation, Helena de Preester claims that "the motor theory of imagination implies that acts of anticipation in general and acts of imagination resemble each other more than memory and imagination do" (De Preester 2012: 516). Of course, perhaps one can choose one's allies depending on case and needs. The motor theory of imagination could be admired as a nice contribution to the theory of enactive perception. But there are reasons why we should discard it in our discussion. To mention just one, this theory precisely misleads us in that it prevents the possibility of adequately addressing the problem of productivity of kinesthetic imagination. It might seem that if kinesthetic memory is densely conflated with kinesthetic imagination, then, of course, the latter might very easily be conceived as entirely reproductive in the sense that kinesthetic imagination just associatively recomposes kinesthetic memories. Still, wouldn't a closer association of kinesthetic imagination with kinesthetic anticipation help to create a better account of productive kinesthetic? Hardly. And obviously not in Ricœur's sense. Kinesthetic imagination would be conceived as more efficient, more involved in the world, but hardly in the sense of constructing new worlds, planning big movements (such as military affairs), or fancying huge political utopias. The temporal horizons of close

anticipation and distant "anticipation," such as in big planning or utopia, are not quite the same. In fact, Husserl identifies this as the theme related to the distinction between "pure" phantasy and "binding" phantasy (Husserl 2003:185). Close kinesthetic anticipation is "binding" in principle. Although it might evoke imaginary "ghost" movements, that are really possible or in the process of realization, even if they might be "negated" or recalled by the ultimate act of will. This "productivity," however, is not the one meant by Ricœur. Therefore, we might compare productive kinesthetic imagination only to distant kinesthetic anticipation (or better, expectation), except that the latter strictly speaking is marked only by the sign of belief, whereas the former can also be marked by the sign of neutrality.

   The idea of productive kinesthetic imagination might be explained through the following example from the history of dance. The choreography of Nijinsky's *The Afternoon of a Faun* (1912) had to be conceived in distant and holistic anticipation even if, perhaps, while dancing in Fokine's ballets Nijinsky closely anticipated or fancied in motion, but did not perform in action certain possible variations of one or another movement. Here—precisely!—reproductive kinesthetic imagination cannot explain Nijinsky's achievement. Nijinsky's first choreography is completely different from the previous creations of the previous choreographers including Fokine. Neither is it a "reproduction" of movements depicted on ancient Greek vases, as if he had found a numbered series of vases depicting figures (profiles) of a dance. Nor even is reproductive the work done by Claudia Jeschke and Ann Hutchinson-Guest (1991) in order to decipher Nijinsky's notation of *The Afternoon of a Faun* that remained incomprehensible until 1990s. They obviously needed to employ productive kinesthetic imagination based on signitive consciousness in order to achieve their aim. They succeeded in deciphering the choreography, when they found the same system of notation used for another piece of dance that was well-known for those who went through the training in ballet. In fact, we even don't know whether Nijinsky, who a few years after the performance wrote it down from his memory, did not make any changes. Finally, one seems to find a strange mixture of utopian and constructive productivity (Geniusas 2015) in a work of the artist Christian Comte who made a short film (2012) from the numerous photos of *The Afternoon of a Faun* taken by Adolf de Meyer. Is this film a reproduction of Nijinsky's dance? Or rather a production of a new work of art based on the concept of Nijinsky?

Conclusion

Kinesthetic imagination has not been properly addressed in phenomenology before. Therefore, I had to start from the fundamentals provided by Husserl and Sartre. For both, bodily kinestheses set fundamental structures of

perception. More specifically, these are grounded in the determined correlation between the series of appearances and the series of eye-kinestheses. The latter are embodied in extended kinestheses: movements of the head, other body parts, and locomotion in general. Unfortunately, Sartre's deliberation to consider kinestheses as physical carriers of mentally visualized objects, like in picturing, prevented him from addressing imagined kinestheses as such. Even his example of the imagined swing is the case of mental visualization of a kinetic object rather than kinesthetic imagination. In principle, Husserl's theory does not foreclose development of the concept of kinesthetic imagination, although one should keep apart kinesthetic imagination proper and transcendental kinesthetic structures of imagination correlating to similar structures in perception. The latter is the one that puts constraints on our phantasies. In fact, only the former can in principle be addressed as capable of becoming productive in the sense proposed by Ricœur. Moreover, once the concept of kinesthetic imagination is clarified, one is not limited to narrative forms of productive imagination. It has long ago become obvious through the history of nonnarrative dance. For sure, choreographers productively employ kinesthetic phantasy before displaying it on stage as repetitively performable and perceivable dance works. Moreover, fully immersive computer games supported by manipulating mechanical devices point to the future in which kinesthetic experiences of the people will be produced by designers. Not only virtual or augmented visualizations, 360° pictures observed in 3D goggles, but also virtual enactments, Kinect games, and tactile "environments," such as "virtual swimming" or "virtual flying," will become part of our everyday lives in the near future. To create these new worlds of experience will require not only skills in programming or engineering, but also productive kinesthetic imagination.

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