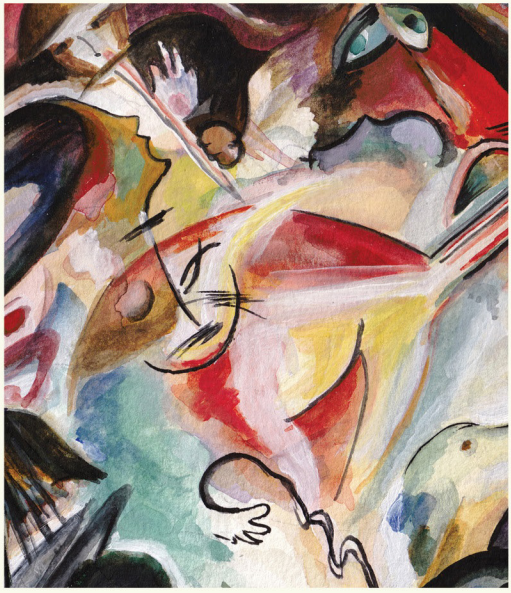
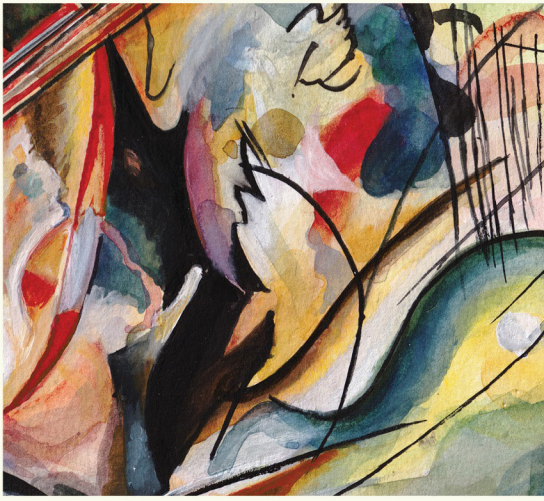
Jodie Lee Heap

The Creative Imagination





Indeterminacy and Embodiment in the Writings of Kant, Fichte, and Castoriadis

SOCIAL IMAGINARIES

The Creative Imagination

Social Imaginaries

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By Jodie Lee Heap
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Contents

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The inspiration for this monograph was born out of two encounters.

The first involved an emotional engagement with a range of psychoanalytic theories of the mind. Drawing on the writings of Freud, Klein, Lacan, and Kristeva, for example, I was introduced to, and subsequently drawn into, the remarkable and complex theatre of the human mind.

The second involved a profoundly moving exploration of Western philosophical theories of the imagination. Through the writings of Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Fichte, Holderin, Heidegger, Sartre and Castoriadis, I was presented with and consequently enamoured by an extraordinary range of attempts to define and give determinate form to the indeterminacy of the human imagination.

As such, the material for the context of this monograph was born many years ago – in the eighteenth century within the critical and revolutionary writings of Immanuel Kant and Johann Fichte, and in the twentieth century within the all-encompassing reflections of Cornelius Castoriadis. It has been privileged to experience and comprehend the grandeur of these great philosophical systems all of which provide a window into the complexity of the issues at play when attempting to define the at times, indefinable nature of the human mind.

My tumultuous journey through the labyrinth of these various theories and philosophical systems was, in the first instance, inspired by the intellectual commentary of John Cash, John Rundell and Peter Otto. A particular mention goes to John Rundell who, after many hours of thoughtful conversations, guided me through my own attempt to comprehend and give form to the central and compelling tenets of these remarkable philosophical systems. Also to Peter, for his ongoing support and mentorship over the many years that I have known him.

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Prelude

The Indeterminacy of Human Creation

> The truth of philosophy is the rupture of closure, the shaking of received self-evident truths, including and especially philosophical ones. It is this movement, but it is a movement that creates the soil upon which it walks. The soil is not and cannot be just anything – it defines, delimits, forms, and constrains. The defining characteristic of a great philosophy is what allows it to go beyond its own soil – what incites it, even, to go beyond. As it tends to – and has to – take responsibility for the totality of the thinkable, it tends to close upon itself. If it is great, one will find in it at least some signs that the movement of thought cannot stop there and even some part of the means to continue this movement. Both these signs and these means take the form of aporias, antinomies, frank contradictions, heterogeneous chunks.[1]

Castoriadis's commanding and pensive reflection on the truth of a great philosophy brings to the fore the significance of the notion of indeterminacy. Implicitly captured here through reference to movement, the indeterminacy that lies within a great work is that which inspires a movement of thought – indeterminacy forms the seed for the possibility of rupture, of formation and of creation. The labyrinth of corridors residing within the Platonic cave contain something much more than the "uncertainty of shadows."[2] They contain, as Castoriadis has suggested here, a series of "aporias, antinomies, contradictions, heterogeneous chunks." The presence of these imposing and unresolvable forms evoke a sense of indeterminacy leading to the *creation* of "*figures* (or of *models*) of the thinkable" – figures which by being brought into being and by closing in and upon themselves give form to something that has not been thought before.[3] Figures that through their very presence tear apart, recreate and close once again the horizon of meaning. Forming

one of the most important and enduring attributes of a great philosophy, the indeterminacy that resides within a great work is, as Castoriadis has highlighted, that which incites a movement of thought "beyond its own soil."

Centering the "truth" of Western philosophy around the indeterminacy of human creation certainly succeeded in rupturing the historical perception of philosophy as the "elaboration of Reason."[4] Forsaking the "hypercategory of *determinacy*" and the portrayal of "being as being–determined," Castoriadis has provided an innovative way of thinking about the history of Western philosophy arguing that "creation *implies* indetermination" because the totality of what is can never be completely and "exhaustedly" determined.[5] A philosophical truth can never exclude the possibility that something new can surge forth for the very fact of creation ensures there always remains the possibility for the "positing of *new determinations* – the emergence of new forms, *eide*, therefore *ipso facto* the emergence of new *laws*."

Arguably, Castoriadis's conception of the indeterminacy of human creation opens onto one of the most engaging and stimulating lines of enquiry that informs the vast breadth of his writings – the question of the imagination. Through an expansive consideration of and reflection upon Western philosophical attempts to define the imagination as a productive or creative power of the human soul, Castoriadis ruptured the inherited form of relation between imagination and reason by introducing the proposition that any movement of thought is contingent on the "unfolding of the works of the radical imagination."[6] In itself a figure of the thinkable, the radical imagination formed, for Castoriadis, the seed of indeterminacy underlying all forms of human creation. As an ontological power of formation and of creation, the unfolding of the works of the radical imagination gives ontological form to the being of human and to the being of the social-historical and through its incessant and unceasing unfolding, the radical imagination and its imaginary dimensions gives form to the possibility of thought itself and to the possibility of thinking about one's own thinking or thinking about what has already been thought before.

By laying a new ground upon which to envisage the ontological foundations of philosophy and of course, of the being of human and of the being of the social-historical, Castoriadis raised once again the "antinomical, untenable, and uncontainable" question of the imagination.[7] A question that has ruptured the trajectory of Western philosophical discourse on many occasions – through the writings of Aristotle, Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Heidegger, just to name a few. These great philosophers were of particular interest to Castoriadis simply for that fact that by defining or by unveiling the imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation, these philosophers challenged the grounding sense of being as being–determined, dismantling – even at times if only for a moment – the soil of determinacy that formed the ground of Western thought.

Given these philosophers premised the ontological foundation of the being of human upon the indeterminacy of the imagination, being was portrayed, however, as grounded upon something intangible – upon something that could not, as Castoriadis has argued, be "held and contained, nor put in place or in its place." Unable to contain the indeterminacy therein, these remarkable and lucid historical moments of reflection were soon followed by a "forgetting," a "covering over" and an "effacement of the question of the imagination." On Castoriadis's view, such was the case with the reflections of Kant, Heidegger, Hegel and even Merleau-Ponty who all succumbed in varying degrees to the indetermination evoked by their own revelations. Having discovered the creative potentiality of the imagination in the work of the genius, for example, Kant relegated the power of the imagination to reason promulgating the view the imagination was an instrument of the higher cognitive powers of the soul. Heidegger recoiled from his own "disquieting" disclosure that the Kantian unknown was the power of the transcendental imagination by failing to explore the imagination any further within his own writings.[8] Hegel, on the other hand, initially promoted the centrality of the power of the imagination but later retreated from these unpublished claims, restoring in the process the dominant conception of the imagination as a reproductive power of the soul.[9] And finally, Merleau-Ponty succumbed to the power of this unsettling theme by failing through a succession of hesitations to openly confront the origins of the schema of perception.

These series of brief reflections on the precarious history of the question of the imagination unequivocally unveil the challenging nature of conceiving the imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation. And yet, as a recurring theme approached from various angles, methodologies and contextual positionings, this portrayal of the imagination emerged out of a paradigmatic shift within Western philosophical thought whereby the imagination was no longer viewed as a mimetic function of the soul – as a mirror simply reflecting the external world.[10] Portrayed as a lamp projecting its own light, the imagination was envisaged as a source of its own truth – the metaphorical conception of which candidly moved the act of creation away from externally derived sources locating its operative realm within being itself. Emerging in a definitive and sustained form within Enlightenment thought, the idea of the imagination as being the source of its own truth was constructed upon the edifice of multiple systems of thought and was associated with the emergent concept of the "creative imagination."[11] Although imbued with various significations and associations, the seed for the concept of the creative imagination was sown by Kant's remarkable reflections on the transcendental power of the imagination. Defined as a power of the human soul capable of creating new forms, Kant laid the foundation for the idea of the creative imagination as

it developed and flourished in its varying significations across the emergent trajectories of Romanticism and German Idealism.[12]

In contrast to significations of the creative imagination as they appeared in the writings of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Schiller and Schelling, for example, the emergent signification of the creative imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation is of particular interest capturing what Castoriadis aptly refers to as the "radical character" of the imagination.[13] Of the fact that the imagination is in the ontology of the being of human not a reproductive or combinatory power of the soul but is a nonfunctional and radical power of formation and of creation that creates *ex nihilo*. Associated with an astounding series of proclamations, this signification of the creative imagination begins to take form in the writings of Kant, Fichte, Heidegger, Hegel, Freud, Merleau-Ponty and of course Castoriadis himself through their series of reflections on the work of the artist; on the work of reason; on perception; on the notion of truth; on the ontology of the being of human; and on the ontology of the being of the social-historical and the institution of society, its institutions and its culture. In this regard, this emergent signification of the creative imagination is indissociable from the dominion of the imaginary and the heterogeneous field of social imaginaries.[14] Encompassing the political, the ecological, the capitalist, the feminist, the global, the populist, the economic just to name a few, the heterogeneous and burgeoning field of social imaginaries comprises a series of horizontal, vertical, temporal and ontological traits – the conception of which acknowledges social imaginaries are diverse and pluralistic in nature, they encompass societal values or lack thereof, they encompass both the past and the future and finally, and perhaps most importantly, they inextricably point to the ontological capacity of human creation.[15]

Given the breadth and the significance of the role ascribed to the creative potentiality of the imagination and the imaginary, the question of the creative imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation must remain within our grasp. To purposively enact new ways of being and of doing – to think in an innovative way about something, to challenge the rhetoric of dominant imaginaries or the signification of being as being-determined – necessitates the capacity to draw on and embrace the indeterminacy of human creation. As Castoriadis reminds us, there always remains on an individual and collective level the possibility for the emergence of something new, of new ways of being, of new figures of the thinkable, of new social imaginaries. It is for this very reason that the untenable and uncontainable question of the creative imagination must be retained within the horizon of meaning in order to remind ourselves that "creation *implies* indetermination" – a declaration which acknowledges that creation is *ex nihilo* but it is not *in nihilo* or *cum nihilo*.[16]

To retain the idea of the creative imagination within the horizon of meaning involves, however, a reflection on the fact that any self-reflexive activity – any thought however original it may deemed to be – is, as Castoriadis has argued, but "a ripple, at best a wave, in the huge social–historical stream."[17] A claim that brings attention to the proclamation that any form of lucid and autonomous engagement with the question of the imagination involves the capacity "to think freely, and to think under the constraint of history." Albeit on the surface an antinomical proposition, as Castoriadis is at pains to point out, thinking freely does not occur in a vacuous and solipsistic state; it always occurs under the constraint of its own past. Thinking involves thinking about something that has already been figured or already been thought about before. The domain of knowledge or the domain of philosophical thought forms, therefore, a "spring and a source of strength," which as an interminable source of innovation incites the possibility for an ongoing movement of thought.

It is in the context of this positioning that the following elucidation of the question of the creative imagination as an ontological power of formation and creation will begin and of course end – an elucidation that attempts to retain the untenable and uncontainable nature of this question within the horizon of meaning through the development of two principle themes – indeterminacy and embodiment. Although and as will be argued, these two themes are in fact indissociable, they are encompassed within the emergent signification of the creative imagination as it appears in varying degrees and forms within the writings of Kant, Fichte and Castoriadis himself.

The inclusion of these three great philosophers directly engages with Castoriadis's own work of reflection and begins with his astute reinstatement of the significance of the writings of Kant who, as discussed, sowed the seed for the idea of the creative imagination. Forming an important interlocuter within Castoriadis's own attempt to define the creative potentiality of the imagination, Kant's discovery of the transcendental power of the imagination forms the ground of the following elucidation.[18] Similarly, Fichte also features as another significant interlocuter in many of Castoriadis's essays.[19] Given, however, Castoriadis failed to provide a detailed or sustained elucidation of his writings, Fichte remains an influential, albeit "enigmatic" figure.[20] Returning to Fichte's writings serves to bridge the divide between Kant and Castoriadis by unveiling the sources of innovation provided by Kant, which fuelled the trajectory of Fichte's conception of the imagination and by unveiling the sources of innovation lying within Fichte's own reflections that inspired Castoriadis's elucidation of the creative albeit radical potentiality of the imagination.

In the presence of Kant and Fichte, the following elucidation of the creative imagination will also return to Castoriadis's own work of reflection. Having reinstated the significance of the question of the imagination back into Western thought, Castoriadis's series of reflections extend the idea of the

creative imagination into new domains providing in the process another interminable source of innovation, which, in its ontology, incites the emergence of a new way of thinking about the creative imagination.

Accordingly, the following elucidation of the concept of the creative imagination as it emerges within the writings of Kant, Fichte and Castoriadis is, as will be argued, centred around the *experience* of these three unique movements of thought. Reference here to one's own experience highlights the fact that a detailed elucidation of these three attempts to define the imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation is accompanied by the evocation of a form of indeterminacy. The impending sense of indeterminacy residing within these great works may appear in a palpable and tangible form able to be grasped, contextualized and known, but it may also and primarily be experienced in the form of an unsettling or a disquieting feeling. Opening onto the notion of embodiment, the evocation of indeterminacy that arises in reading these great works may in fact present in the form of an unthinkable known, sensed in many respects on an embodied level in the form of a hunch, an intuition or an instinct. The *experience* of this form of indetermination forms an essential component of this exploration of the indeterminacy of human creation because something within these great works incites at an embodied level, the impetus for an ongoing movement of thought.

Within the context of this primary claim, an elucidation of the question of the creative imagination in the writings of Kant, Fichte and Castoriadis will be presented within the first Three Movements of the text. The First Movement will offer a detailed elucidation of Kant's reflections on the power of the imagination presented within the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Judgment*, the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* and the *Anthropology Mrongovius*. The use of the term "elucidation" here draws on Kant's own use of the term, which, and has been aptly highlighted by Heidegger, seeks to express the central tenets of a thesis through the "episodic" appearance of a "guiding idea."[21] Promulgating Kant's own supposition that the architectonic of the *Critiques* are grounded in the guiding seed of reason, this guiding idea is given form through a series of intermittent reflections, which, in the moment they come to light, never proclaim to be exclusive or conclusive.[22] Rather, these reflections serve as guide, steering the reader along a tumultuous journey in which Kant attempts to answer a series of questions pertaining specifically to humankind – to "What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?"[23]

Exploring what will be appropriately referred to as the "unknown" seed of indeterminacy residing within the writings of Kant, the First Movement comprises a series of six chapters. In their essence, these chapters capture and give form to Kant's own attempt to define the unknown source of all cognition lying hidden within the depths of the human soul – the source of

which, as will be argued, inspires the development and the maturation of Kant's own movement of thought. Beginning with an elucidation of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in particular of the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Deduction (A Deduction), the First Movement traces the emergent figure of the unknown by engaging with Kant's "modern" account of the imagination – a definition that has been ascribed, in principle, to the account of the productive imagination given within this specific edition of the *Critique*.[24]

Although introduced in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's modern and critical account of the productive imagination evolves over the course of his own movement of thought. Such is the case in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, specifically, in the B Deduction version of the Transcendental Deduction where Kant offers a revised definition of the productive power of the transcendental imagination. Tracing this revised definition through to the Schematism chapter of the *Critique* and beyond reveals the Kantian unknown takes on yet another, albeit tentative form paving the way for a second sustained confrontation with the productive power of the transcendental imagination presented in the *Critique of Judgment*. Contextualized in specific relation to the realm of aesthetics and to the creative work of the genius, Kant's second confrontation with the power of imagination portrays the imagination as a creative and embodied power of the soul indispensable to humankind's move from the domain of nature to the domain of freedom.

As will be become evident across the course of this Movement, the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment* contain a series of unresolvable and antinomical forms most of which pertain to Kant's attempt, albeit unsuccessfully at times, to define and give form to the hidden art of the human soul and to define the inexplicable and at times indissociable relationship between reason, imagination and the domain of freedom. Engaging with these tenuous, albeit thought-provoking moments evokes a movement of thought beyond hermeneutical and analytical interpretations of Kant's portrayal of the faculty of the transcendental imagination by openly exposing the unknown seed of indeterminacy underlying human creation as the productive and embodied power of the imagination, which is capable at times of the act of creation.

The antinomical form of relation between reason, imagination and freedom formed the impetus behind Johann Fichte's own movement of thought. Through an intimate and methodical engagement with the trilogy of the Kantian *Critiques*, Fichte endeavoured through the innovative form and content of his own system of transcendental idealism to define the seed of indeterminacy underlying human creation as "absolutely *incomprehensible*." Notable for its radical reconceptualization of the Kantian unknown,

Fichte's introduction to the absolutely *incomprehensible* seed of indeterminacy informs the Second Movement of this text. Comprising a series of three chapters, the Second Movement reveals the idea of the absolutely *incomprehensible* draws on the fundamental essence of Fichte's system of transcendental idealism, principally referred to as the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Presented in its original form within the text, the *Science of Knowledge [1794/1795]*, the *Wissenschaftslehre* represents a unique form of philosophical methodology attempting to portray through its own form and content the entire system of the human mind.

Central to grasping the *incomprehensible* nature of Fichte's innovative philosophical system are his reflections on the imagination presented within a series of public lectures given under the title, "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy." Situated within an engaging and thoughtful exploration of the realm of philosophy, these lectures are principally inspired by the presence of the creative potentiality of the Kantian unknown and offer a lucid and poetic portrayal of the productive imagination as *Geist*. Opening onto the domain of nature and the domain of freedom, these innovative series of lectures provide an important contextual background to Fichte's developed conception of the imagination presented within the *Science of Knowledge*. An original elucidation of this seminal text unveils how the essential nature of the Kantian unknown continues to inform Fichte's own elucidation of the ground of the entire system of the human mind and in particular of his conception of the productive imagination as an embodied power of ontological creation. Developing the notion of that which is absolutely *incomprehensible*, this highly original conception of the productive imagination is in itself premised upon the concept of the "creative imagination." As will be argued, the concept of the creative imagination informs and forms the central thesis of this remarkable text. Portrayed as an absolutely *incomprehensible* power of the soul fundamental to the ontology of being and to the possibility for purposive and creative forms of thinking, this emergent signification of the creative imagination paves the way for the conception thereof in Castoriadis's own work of reflection.

Accordingly, the Third Movement explores the "radical" seed of indeterminacy residing within the philosophical writings of Cornelius Castoriadis. Drawing explicitly and implicitly on the antinomies and aporias residing within the Kantian and the Fichtean presentations and for that matter, within the writings of Aristotle, Heidegger, Freud, Lacan and Merleau-Ponty, Castoriadis provided an innovative and thought-provoking account of the imagination, one which continued to conceptualize the imagination as an embodied power of ontological creation. Radicalizing historically conceived notions of the imagination and rupturing the Cartesian dualism of psyche/soma, Castoriadis introduced into Western philosophical discourse the concept of the radical

imagination and the radical imaginary. Notable for their inherent originality, these figures of the thinkable acknowledge the radical character of the imagination and extend the indeterminacy of human creation into the domain of the social-historical through reference to the realm of the imaginary.

Consequently, the Third Movement unveils yet another moment within the history of Western philosophical thought whereby the creative and constitutive power of the imagination is once again brought to the fore. Interestingly, however, Castoriadis creates his own series of aporias, antinomies, frank contradictions and heterogeneous chunks. In part, intentionally through his overt acknowledgement of the limits of his own ontology and in part, unintentionally through his attempt to elucidate the ontological implications of the radical imaginary. Imbued with the weight of a series of political and sociological endeavours and with the intangible domain of the imaginary, the figure of the radical imaginary covers over at times the source of the radical seed of indeterminacy underlying human creation, which is the unfolding of the works of the radical imagination – the unfolding of which occurs at the level of the corporeal, the psychical and the social-historical.

With this disclosure in mind, the five chapters of the Third Movement offer a comprehensive elucidation of Castoriadis's extensive and expansive series of reflections on the works of the radical imagination. By tracing the intricacies and the complexities of these reflections, the Third Movement will provide an original elucidation of the radical imagination and the radical imaginary as a power of ontological creation. Although Castoriadis's political project and his emphasis on the realm of the social imaginary inform these series of elucidations they do not form a fundamental component of this elucidation. Focusing on Castoriadis's reflections on the works of the radical imagination and unveiling the indeterminacies that arise therein are crucial to tracing the emergent narrative within that introduces the notions of indeterminacy and embodiment. Exploring these themes within Castoriadis's work of reflection opens onto the figures of the creative imaginary and the creative imagination – figures which, within the context of the horizon of meaning in which they are placed, begin to take on a particular signification - one that portrays the creative imaginary and the creative imagination as playing a determinative role in reimagining what has already been figured or thought about before. Inherently tied to the ability of humankind to embrace and purposively unleash their immense potentiality, the creative imagination becomes, on Castoriadis' view, a purposive power of ontological creation.

The *experience* of that which is unknown, absolutely incomprehensible and radical not only introduces detailed account of three remarkable attempts to define and give form to the indeterminacy of human creation through recourse to an emergent signification of the creative imagination it also, in its essence, incites an ongoing movement of thought – a movement of

thought, which provides a new way of thinking about the indeterminacy of human creation. Outlined in a tentative and fleeting form within the Fourth and final Movement of this text, this concluding movement of thought introduces the idea of the embodied seed of indeterminacy underlying human creation. By drawing on the indeterminacies lying within Kant, Fichte and Castoriadis's reflections on the creative potentiality of the imagination, this final movement provides the means in which the creative imagination can be thought about anew. In particular, by conceiving the creative imagination as a radically embodied power of the human soul – the conception of which attempts to bridge the mind body divide that has permeated Western thought providing in the process an embryonic seed for future elucidation.

Before embarking on a journey through the Four Movements of this text, it is important to acknowledge the following series of elucidations deliberately and purposively engage with the nomenclature particular to each great philosophy. Engaging with the unique terminology imposed by each philosophical system and with the contextual elements of the texts draws the reader into the complexity of the issues and the tensions at play when attempting to define what has not been defined before. All great philosophers necessarily create figures of the thinkable through their desire and inclination to define and give thinkable form to their guiding idea. The tension, ambiguities, contradictions or aporias that may reside within these figures or within the horizon of meaning in which these figures are placed are crucial. Not only do they provide the signs and the means in which the guiding idea can spring forth they also, as Castoriadis reminds us, provide the signs and the means, which incites a new movement of thought allowing the untenable and uncontainable question of the creative imagination to be retained within the horizon of meaning.

Engaging with the nomenclature particular to each great philosophy also reveals that each of these attempts to define and give form to the question of the imagination are, in themselves, given thinkable form through an ontological act of creation. Embracing the significance of Castoriadis's portrayal of the truth of a great philosophy reveals that each of these attempts to define the imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation has occurred through the *creation* of a new movement of thought. Kant's own movement of thought led to the creation, so to speak, of the methodology of a transcendental critique, Fichte's own movement of thought led to the creation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a system of the human mind and finally, Castoriadis's own movement of thought led to the creation of a work of reflection that overtly draws on the activity of elucidation. While the form of these philosophical methodologies will become clearer across the Three Movements within this text, for the moment, it is suffice to say that in their endeavour to give form to their guiding idea - one which promotes the imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation - Kant, Fichte and

Castoriadis inevitably created a new philosophical form through the dominion of the creative imagination.

NOTES

1. Cornelius Castoriadis, "Done and to Be Done," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 371.

2. Cornelius Castoriadis, "Preface," in *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), ix–x.

3. Castoriadis defines the "*figures* (or of *models*) of the thinkable" as the condition for the "organization of empirical knowledge or, more generally, of the object of thought." See: Cornelius Castoriadis, "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," in *World in Fragments*, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 269.

4. Castoriadis, "The Discovery of the Imagination," in *World in Fragments*, 213.

5. Castoriadis, "Done and to Be Done," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, 369.

6. Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 337.

7. Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 214–15.

8. §31 Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, Fifth Edition, Enlarged ed. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 112.

9. Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, 215–16.

10. By drawing on the two common yet antithetic metaphors of a mirror and of a lamp, Abrams provided the means in which to conceptualize the momentous shift that occurred within Western thought during the Enlightenment. See: M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

11. It is also important to acknowledge, as Castoriadis has done so, that Aristotle's reflections on the imagination also defined the imagination as other than a mimetic power. See: Castoriadis, "The Discovery of the Imagination," in *World in Fragments*.

For a brief overview of the emergence of the concept of the "creative imagination" within Western thought see: James Engell, "The Essential Idea," in *The Creative Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981).

12. As highlighted by Engell, the writings of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Schiller, and Schelling, for example, portrayed the idea of the creative imagination as a unifying force that served to reunite humankind with nature. One such example is captured in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, which promoted the notion of *natura naturans* – of nature as a creative force, of "nature creating." Engell, "Schelling," in *The Creative Imagination*, 313.

13. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, 321.

14. For a comprehensive overview and critical investigation of the field of social imaginaries, see: Suzi Adams and Jeremy C. A. Smith, eds., *Social Imaginaries: Critical Interventions*, ed. Suzi Adams et al., Social Imaginaries (London, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019).

15. Suzi Adams, "Clarifying Social Imaginaries. Castoriadis, Ricoeur and Taylor in Discussion," in *Social Imaginaries: Critical Interventions*, ed. Suzi Adams and Jeremy C. A. Smith, Social Imaginaries (London, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019), xii–xiii.

As explored by Adams, the question of creativity was essential to Castoriadis's and Ricoeur's notion of the social imaginary although each approached the fact of creation from varying positions. See: ibid. Suzi Adams, ed. *Ricoeur and Castoriadis in Discussion*, ed. Suzi Adams et al., Social Imaginaries (London, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).

16. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, 321.

17. Cornelius Castoriadis, "The 'End of Philosophy'?" *Salmagundi* 82/83 (1989): 9.

18. Castoriadis engages with Kant's discovery of the imagination in the following essays: Castoriadis, "The Discovery of the Imagination," in *World in Fragments*; Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," in *The Castoriadis Reader*; Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Greek *Polis* and the Creation of Democracy," in *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*.

19. Castoriadis briefly refers to Fichte in the following essays: Cornelius Castoriadis, "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," in *Figures of the Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher, Meridian Crossing Aesthetics (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007). Castoriadis, "The Discovery of the Imagination," in *World in Fragments*. Castoriadis, "The State of the Subject Today," in *World in Fragments*. Castoriadis, "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," in *World in Fragments*. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," in *The Castoriadis Reader*. Cornelius Castoriadis, "Psychoanalysis and Philosophy," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); Castoriadis, "Done and to Be Done," in *The Castoriadis Reader*.

20. As Rundell as highlighted, "The work of Fichte remains an enigmatic absence within the orbit of Castoriadis' work." See: John Rundell, "Re-Reading Fichte's Science of Knowledge after Castoriadis: The Anthropological Imagination and the Radical Imaginary.," *Thesis Eleven* 119, no. 1 (2013): 6.

21. Martin Heidegger, "Kant's Thesis About Being," *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 4, no. 3 (1973).

22. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines the architectonic of all cognition as being grounded in pure reason. See: A835/B863 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 692.

23. A805/B833 ibid., 677.

24. Kearney refers to Kant's account of the imagination in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a "modern paradigm of the imagination" because in distinction to antecedent theories, Kant defines the imagination as a creative power of the soul. See: Richard Kearney, "The Transcendental Imagination," in *The Wake of Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1994), 155, 68.

First Movement

THE UNKNOWN SEED OF INDETERMINACY IN THE WRITINGS OF IMMANUEL KANT

Chapter 1

The Unknown Seed of Indeterminacy

> Before true philosophy can come to life, the old one must destroy itself; and just as putrefaction signifies the total dissolution that always precedes the start of a new creation, so the current crisis in learning magnifies my hopes that the great, long-awaited revolution in the sciences is not too far off.[1]

Faced with the impending demise and "putrefaction" of the esteemed realm of philosophy, Immanuel Kant made the remarkable observation that a crisis inevitably leads to the "creation" of something new. "Dissolution" is followed by "revolution." Implicitly evoking the notion of movement, Kant's astute observation formed the impetus behind his own form of philosophical revolution. Drawing upon the innovative lines of Copernicus's primary hypothesis, Kant radicalized the realm of metaphysics by offering a new way of thinking about the principles or the presuppositions of all forms of cognition – a way of thinking that would provide an "altered method" for metaphysics, redirecting the realm of philosophy along the "secure path of a science."[2]

Entitled the *Critique of Pure Reason*, this new way of thinking certainly succeeded in providing a new form of philosophical methodology. Presented in the form of a "critique" not a "doctrine" of pure reason, this new method of thought was based on the proposition that the mind does not passively conform to the constitution of objects [*Objekts*].[3] The possibility of any form of experience demands objects of the senses conform with the constitution of the mind. Although contradicting hitherto metaphysical presuppositions, this new way of thinking provided the only means in which to account for the presence of a priori forms of cognition and the possibility of their a priori

employment. For, and as Kant clearly states, "we can cognize of things *a priori* only what we ourselves have put into them."[4]

Arguably, Kant's discovery of a new way of thinking about the constitution of the human mind guided the realm of metaphysics along an uncharted and revolutionary course and yet it did so, by having its entire foundation grounded on an "unknown" source lying "hidden" within the depths of the human soul.[5] As Kant acknowledged in the introductory chapters of the *Critique*, the ground of the natural disposition to enquire remained a "certain mystery." As the limitless field of pure cognition cannot be grounded in experience or in the empirical employment of reason, the capacity to make new discoveries or the capacity to make synthetic a priori judgements required the presence of "something else (X)."[6] It required, as Kant suggested, the presence of an "unknown = X," which guides the mind toward the discovery of new forms of connection and of new forms of meaning.[7]

Bringing attention to the role of the unknown X allowed Kant to expose the fact that by "groping amongst mere concepts" the esteemed realm of metaphysics had indeed failed to raise and address the question of *how* the mind moves beyond the bounds of experience. Of *how* the mind confidently ventures into the "wings of the ideas."[8] Questions which, in Kant's own view, confronted and contained the "real problem" of pure reason – the problem of "*How are synthetic judgments a priori possible*?"[9]

Within the context of these introductory chapters to the Critique, Kant foreshadowed the answer to this primary question through an introduction to two distinct yet interrelated suppositions. The first supposition was based on the claim that the capacity to discover new forms of meaning required the activity of "synthesis."[10] As Kant explains, the capacity to make synthetic judgements a priori requires the presence of the unknown X, which, through the activity of synthesis, allows the discovery of previously unrelated conceptual forms. The understanding "depends" on the unknown X, for example, when attempting to discover the concept of a cause. In contrast, the second supposition was based on the tentative claim that "perhaps" there is a "common" yet "unknown root" of the two stems of human cognition.[11] Perhaps sensibility and understanding "arise [*entspringen*]" from an unknown source. A claim that emphasized the fact that the unknown root of the soul forms the active principle of the mind – the unknown X forms the ground of the mind's natural and pervasive disposition to enquire.[12]

In the presence of these two distinct yet interrelated suppositions, Kant endeavoured across the breadth of the *Critique* to "uncover the ground" of synthetic judgements a priori – representative of the ground of unknown X.[13] The possibility of guiding the realm of metaphysics along the secure path of a science and for that matter, Kant's own movement of thought was contingent on this aim.

Remarkably, however, in the process of uncovering the ground of the unknown root of all cognition Kant presented, what can be regarded to be, his most important "creation."[14] As has been widely discussed, the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* ruptured the hegemonies of Hellenic and Medieval paradigms by describing the imagination as an "indispensable function" of the human soul.[15] Bequeathing the imagination a central role in the production of all forms of cognition – including cognition or consciousness of oneself – Kant altered the trajectory of Western philosophical discourse by creating, what has been described as, a "modern" or critical account of the imagination.[16]

In part, the inspiration behind Kant's revolutionary account of the imagination can be traced back to the reflections of Wolff, Baumgarten and Tetens who all openly addressed the question of the imagination through the dominion of empirical psychology.[17] Baumgarten and Tetens proved to be of particular interest to Kant, especially Baumgarten's use of the term "aesthetics" and Tetens's series of reflections on the tripartite schematization of the psyche's mental capacities and on the representational power of the human psyche to *create* or invent new representations and to arrange these representations into entirely new forms.[18]

Although the empiricist conception of the imagination played an influential role in the development of Kant's critical depiction of the function of the imagination, Kant did in fact reflect on this faculty of the soul across the entire course of his writings. From the early series of lectures notes published under the title *Lectures in Metaphysics*, to the anthology of lectures titled *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, to the series of lectures on anthropology published under the title *Lectures on Anthropology*, to the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to the *Critique of Judgment* and finally to the series of political essays written during and immediately following the publication of the three *Critiques*, Kant defined the imagination as indispensable to the possibility of all forms of perception and of cognition including cognition of oneself, as indispensable to the capacity to make analytic, synthetic, aesthetic and moral forms of judgements and finally, as indispensable to the inventive or creative attributes of the genius.[19]

Given the imagination played a central role within Kant's attempt to define and give form to the human condition and given he continually revised his account of the function of the imagination across the course of his writings, it can be justifiably argued Kant's modern account of the imagination does not simply reside within the *Critique of Pure Reason* but unfolds across the course of a fluid, dynamic and reflective critique of the human condition – a critique that involved transcendental, anthropological, ontological, practical, historical and political concerns.[20] As has been suggested by Foucault, Kant's capacity to reflect on both the past *and* the present moment – representative of the capacity to reflect upon "difference" – allowed the "creation" of a modern

form of philosophical interrogation, laying the ground so to speak for a new way of thinking about the human condition.[21]

Although the capacity to reflect upon difference enabled Kant to create, modify and develop an emergent account of the imagination across the breadth of his writings, the question remains of why was this so? Why, for example, did Kant describe the imagination as an indispensable function of the human soul and then revise this definition in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*?[22] Why did he define the imagination as a productive rather than a creative faculty of the soul? And, finally, why did he limit the act of creation to the realm of aesthetics?

Undeniably, the answer to these series of compelling questions can be ascribed in part, to Kant's enduring commitment to his innovative and modern form of philosophical interrogation, which of course enabled the capacity to reflect upon the content of his own observations and in part, to his ubiquitous preoccupation with the domain of freedom. An example of both can be found in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant endeavoured through a critique of the a priori conditions of all cognition to disclose the fact that the limitless field of pure cognition was premised upon the "original seed" of pure reason.[23] By linking the human disposition for enquiry to pure reason, Kant defined freedom in this particular context as "an *absolute* causal *spontaneity* beginning from itself" – a definition that portrayed freedom as a transcendental idea that lies in us all.[24]

Arguably, however, the validity and the pervasiveness of the indissociable relationship between reason and the transcendental category of freedom was undoubtedly challenged by Kant's exemplary series of reflections on the power and function of the transcendental imagination.[25] Describing the imagination as an indispensable function of the soul and according the imagination a central role in the possibility of all forms of cognition including cognition of oneself, Kant inevitably created an unresolvable antinomy. Advancing the claim that the unknown root of all cognition was the transcendental power of the imagination Kant defined, albeit implicitly, the imagination as a faculty of the soul indispensable to the transcendental category of freedom. Despite attempting to redirect the realm of metaphysics along the secure path of a science, Kant was unable to secure this path on solid ground. The indeterminacy of the unknown X remained.

EMERGENT ANTINOMIES: REASON, IMAGINATION AND THE DOMAIN OF FREEDOM

The antinomical relationship between reason, imagination and the domain of human freedom not only resides within the *Critique of Pure Reason* but

also informs, for example, Kant's series of political essays written during the tumultuous period of the French Revolution.[26] Described by Kant as a form of "healthy mental recreation," these innovative series of essays offer a comprehensive, spirited and practical account of the human condition.[27] Although they can be criticized for their deterministic tendencies and for their teleological concerns, these political essays provide another example of the tenuous nature of the relationship Kant establishes between the faculty of reason, imagination and the domain of human freedom.

The seminal essay, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" provides an important point of departure by laying the ground, once again, for the indissociable relationship between reason and freedom. As declared in the opening paragraph, "enlightenment is [humankind's] emergence from self–incurred immaturity."[28] Enlightenment is the capacity to think without the "guidance of another" by drawing on the use "one's own reason" and "one's own understanding."

The capacity to think for oneself forms, for Kant, "the germ upon which nature has lavished most care" simply for the fact that it is tied to a philosophy of history.[29] As he explains, the "original destiny" of humankind is not simply individual enlightenment as exemplified by those who across the course of history have shown the "inclination" or the "vocation to *think freely*." On the contrary, the original destiny of humankind is "universal enlightenment" because the move toward an "age of *enlightenment*" encourages the progress of humankind through the natural development of the capacity to reason.[30]

The move toward an age of *enlightenment* required, however, a degree of social freedom. Reflecting on the political rule engendered by Frederick the Great, Kant observed that liberating humankind from religious and official forms of censure encouraged the development of the individual capacity to reason. In this regard, the freedom to make "public use" of one's own reason through forms of social engagement and commentary was crucial to an age of enlightenment.[31] And yet, the public use of one's reason when enacting a particular role in a "civil post or office" must, necessarily, be constrained. As Kant argues, when an individual has been "entrusted" to act in accordance with duties implied by a particular office, the individual is obliged to draw on their "private use" of reason. Although restricting one's own individual freedom, the private use of reason was, in Kant's view, a necessary boundary for the good of society.

In the essay titled the "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," Kant confirms the necessity for a demarcation between the public and private use of ones' reason through an astute reflection on two pervasive forms of desire "rooted" in human nature – the desire or the inclination to "*live in society*" and the desire or inclination to "*live as an individual*."[32] The desire to live in society relates to the sociability or the social nature of

humankind and is, for Kant, representative of the desire or the inclination of a "rational creature." Members of society endowed with this form of desire acknowledge that within a society, one's freedom must be restricted. In contrast, the desire to live as an individual emerges out of the unsociability or the unsocial nature of humankind and is representative of the desire or the inclination of an "animal." Members of society endowed with this form of desire attempt to direct everything in accordance with their own needs.

Within the social domain, the presence of these two forms of desire leads to the emergence of a form of social antagonism. Described as the "*unsocial sociability* of [humankind]," the presence of this form of social antagonism was, for Kant, essential to fulfilling the "highest purpose of nature." As he explains, the move toward universal enlightenment can only occur within a society that encourages the emergence of these varying forms of desire. Society does so, by ensuring each individual has the freedom to think for themselves and yet this freedom must be limited enabling the freedom of all members of society to coexist. The move toward universal enlightenment requires, therefore, a subtle yet palpable balance between freedom and the limits of this freedom – the balance of which, and as Kant argues, can only be achieved within a cosmopolitan society.[33] The capacity of a cosmopolitan society to balance the notion of freedom leads to the natural development of the capacity to reason encouraging individuals to *produce* forms of meaning beyond innate and natural forms.[34] In a cosmopolitan society, each individual is encouraged to discover and *produce* for themselves new forms of meaning by drawing on the use of their own understanding and their own reason.

Interestingly however, in the later essay, titled "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," Kant offered the antinomical proposition that the capacity to *produce* forms of meaning beyond innate forms involves something other than the use of one's own reason.[35] Opening onto a consideration of the practical domain of freedom, this unsettling proposition is introduced in a conjecture on the beginnings of humankind where human freedom first developed from its origins.

Premised on the sacred book of *Genesis* (Chapters II–VI), this conjecture begins with the proposition that the first human beings could stand, walk, speak, talk using concepts and think. Guided solely by innate forms of instinct, these early human beings acted principally in accordance with the laws and bounds of nature. However, and over time, "*reason* soon made its presence felt" seeking to extend humankind beyond the bounds of natural instinct. Through the discovery of new food sources, for example, humankind developed the capacity to become aware of and to desire difference. They could begin to invent forms of desire that did not correspond to natural instinct and yet they could only do so, as Kant goes onto argue, if reason drew on the "help of the imagination."[36] By encouraging the invention of

desires "*at variance*" with natural impulses, the imagination enabled reason to discover and extend beyond the limits imposed by natural inclination rendering possible the move from the "guardianship of nature" toward a "state of freedom." Accordingly, the conjecture on the first beginnings of the origins of human freedom disrupted the indissociable relationship between reason and freedom, confirming once again, the indeterminacy of the unknown X remains.

THE "DISQUIETING" NATURE OF THE UNKNOWN SEED OF INDETERMINACY

Although Kant's political essays provide a brief and playful example of the relationship he establishes between the power of the imagination and the domain of freedom, it was Heidegger who brought the significance of this relationship to the fore. In a comprehensive analysis and critique of the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Heidegger unveiled the hidden source of the Kantian unknown, which was, as he declared, the transcendental power of the imagination.[37]

Notwithstanding the significance of this discovery, the disclosure of the Kantian unknown was "disquieting." As Heidegger goes onto argue, an unsettled feeling was evoked. Not because of what was known or revealed but rather, because what was revealed and known presents as something that "pushes against us." What pushes against us and, as Heidegger suggested, what pushed against Kant himself was the discovery of the relationship between the transcendental power of the imagination, pure reason and the domain of freedom. The uncovering of the power of the transcendental imagination "brought the 'possibility' of the realm of metaphysics to an abyss."[38] Kant saw the unknown and when standing upon the edge of the precipice, he had a choice. But rather than embrace the transcendental power of the imagination, Heidegger proposed Kant "shrank back" from the dominion of his own revelations such that the presence of the "disquieting unknown" formed the incentive for the series of revisions made to the second edition of the *Critique* – revisions, which, in Heidegger's view, essentially retracted the indispensable and independent function of the imagination.[39] The imagination became in the second edition of the *Critique*, a function of the understanding.

Interestingly, however, and as discussed, Heidegger similarly succumbed to the power of this disquieting theme.[40] Rather than exploring and developing the transcendental power of the imagination within his own writings, Heidegger recoiled from its indispensable function focusing instead on the fact that transcendence was, for Kant, "rooted in original time."[41] Kant's revelation that the self-determines, affects and unifies itself through its own self-activity

revealed that pure self-affection is "time-forming." Pure self-affection is the "ripening of time itself" – a declaration, which revealed, for Heidegger, that the "rootedness in time" was that which enabled the transcendental power of imagination to be the "root of transcendence." It is for this very reason that Heidegger concluded with the proposition that "original time makes possible the transcendental power of imagination."

Although Heidegger's own recoiling from the power of the transcendental imagination covered over the significance of Kant's disquieting disclosure, the indeterminacy of the Kantian unknown still remains – a claim that is supported by the fact that Kant continued to reflect on the power of the imagination across the breadth of his writings. Tracing the emergence of this remarkable account from the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the *Critique of Judgment* is fruitful, if not essential. A close reading of these principle texts reveals Kant's modern and emergent account of the imagination does not present in a neatly surmised and reasoned form but unfolds in an intermittent or "episodic" fashion over the course of his own movement of thought. The fluidity of this account of the imagination imparts to the reader a palpable sense of the difficulties encountered in the attempt to define and give form to the undisclosed depths of the human soul. Engaging with this struggle and the ensuing series of antinomies and aporias is crucial. Not only does it provide a tangible sense of the complexity of the issues at play in the attempt to define the transcendental ground of the human condition, it also provides the means in which the unknown seed of indeterminacy residing within the Kantian thesis can come to the fore – an undertaking, which, through its own trajectory, presents a new way of thinking about Kant's modern account of the imagination. A way of thinking that lays the ground for the emergent concept of the creative imagination.

NOTES

1. Letter from I. Kant to J. H. Lambert, December 31, 1765, in: Arnulf Zweig, ed, *Philosophical Correspondence, 1759–99. Immanuel Kant.*, trans. Arnulf Zweig (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1967), 49.

2. Kant's wish to provide an "altered method" for metaphysics was based on his observation that compared to revolutionary developments within mathematics and natural history, metaphysics "has been a mere groping, and what is the worst, a groping among mere concepts." See: Bxv–Bxviii, Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 110.

3. B25 ibid., 133.
   Bxvi–xvii ibid., 110.

4. Bxviii ibid., 111.
5. A10 ibid., 132.

Of interest, this paragraph was omitted in the second edition of the *Critique*. See: Footnote [b] A10.

6. A8 ibid., 131.
7. B13 ibid., 1143.
8. A5/B9 ibid., 129.
9. B19 ibid., 146.

The use of italics within the quote replicates the emphasis Kant placed on particular words or passages in the original editions of the *Critique*. In their translation, Guyer and Wood use bold font for emphasis. See: Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, "Introduction," in *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 76.

10. A9–10/B13–14 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 142–43.
11. A15/B29 ibid., 152.
12. Kant was obviously tentative about his proposal that there was an unknown root of all cognition, as exemplified by the following statement in the *Anthropology*:

> Despite their dissimilarity, understanding and sensibility by themselves form a close union for bringing about our cognition, as if one had its origin in the other, or both originated from a common origin; but this cannot be, or at least we cannot conceive how dissimilar things could sprout forth from one and the same root.

7:177 Immanuel Kant, "Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View," in *Anthropology, History and Education*, ed. Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 287.

13. In the first edition of the *Critique*, Kant referred to the need to "uncover the ground of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments." See: A10 *Critique of Pure Reason*, 132.
14. The use of the term "creation" here draws on Kant's use of the term in the opening epigraph.
15. Kant refers to the "indispensable function" of the imagination in A78 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 152.

Reference to the Hellenic and Medieval paradigms draws on Kearney's introduction to these terms. See: Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1994).

16. A distinction resides between Kant's pre-critical and critical writings, especially in relation to his account of the imagination. In the lectures published in the *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Kant initially defined the imagination as a formative power of sensibility. Sense, as a formative power, was divided into a series of faculties, which included the faculties of illustration, imitation (which contained the reproductive imagination), anticipation, imagination (which contained the productive imagination), correlation, and cultivation. See: Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, eds.,

Lectures on Metaphysics The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 53–55.

Some notable reflections on Kant's seminal account of the imagination include: Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, Fifth Edition, Enlarged ed. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990). Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990). Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Discovery of the Imagination," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). John Rundell, "Creativity and Judgement: Kant on Reason and Imagination," in *Rethinking Imagination, Culture and Creativity*, ed. Gillian Robinson and John Rundell (London: Routledge, 1994). Kathleen Lennon, *Imagination and the Imaginary* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015). Rolf–Peter Horstmann, *Kant's Power of Imagination*, ed. Desmond Hogan, Howard Williams, and Allen Wood, Elements in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

17. See Makkreel's discussion of the influence of Wolff and Baumgarten on Kant's pre-critical reflections on the imagination in: Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 9–25.

Allison also provides a detailed analysis of Tetens's influence on Kant. See: Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Deduction: An Analytical–Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 143–46.

18. Kant directly acknowledged Baumgarten's employment of the term "aesthetics" in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. However, and in distinction to Baumgarten, Kant granted the term a transcendental status as exemplified by the chapter, "Transcendental Aesthetic." See Footnote *: A21/B35 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 173.

De Vleeschauwer provides a detailed consideration of Tetens's influence on Kant's depiction of imagination and even suggests Kant borrowed "the factor of imagination." See: Herman–J de Vleeschauwer, *The Development of Kantian Thought*, trans. A. R. C. Duncan (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962), 85–88.

19. Samantha Matherne provides an overview of the role Kant accords the imagination in perception, cognition, and aesthetic and moral judgments. See: Samantha Matherne, "Kant's Theory of the Imagination," in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination*, ed. Amy Kind, Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

20. Makkreel also argues that Kant provided an ongoing reflection on the power of the imagination across the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment* revealing that, for Kant, the imagination was central to both the constitution and the interpretation of experience. See: Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 1.

21. As Foucault suggests, Kant's essay, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" formed a significant moment within the "history of thought" because his use of a form of critical interrogation within this essay presented a new or "modern" form of philosophical narrative. See: Michel Foucault, "What Is

Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. P. Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 33.

The use of the term "creation" here draws, once again, on Kant's use of the term in the opening epigraph.

22. In his own copy of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant replaced the reference to the "indispensable function" of the imagination with the "function of the understanding." See Footnote [a]: A78 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 211.

23. In the final chapter of the *Critique*, Kant concludes that the architectonic of all human cognition arises from pure reason. See: A835/B863 ibid., 693.

24. A446/B474 ibid., 484.

Kant introduced the category of transcendental freedom in the chapter titled, "Antinomy of Pure Reason" where he confronts the idea that causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only causality in which all appearances of the world can be derived.

25. Rundell also explores the tension between imagination, reason, and freedom within Kant's oeuvre. See: Rundell, "Creativity and Judgement: Kant on Reason and Imagination."

26. These series of essays comprise the text: Immanuel Kant, *Kant Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet, Second Enlarged ed., Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Kant's use of the terms "man" and "mankind" have been replaced with the terms "human" and "humankind."

27. "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," in *Kant Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 221.

28. "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'," 54–55.

29. Ibid., 59.

30. Ibid., 58.

31. Ibid., 55–56.

32. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," 44–46.

33. "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?' " 56.

34. "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," 43.

35. "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," 221–23.

36. Hannah Arendt provides some important reflections on Kant's use of the imagination within these political essays. See: Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, 1982).

37. §31 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 112.

38. §31 ibid., 117–18.

39. §31 ibid., 112.

40. Castoriadis also refers to Heidegger's recoiling from the power of the transcendental imagination. See: Castoriadis, "The Discovery of the Imagination," 215–16.

41. §35 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 137–42.

Chapter 2

The Productive Imagination – A Power of Synthesis A Priori

Not only did the publication of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* achieve its goal of providing a new way of thinking about the realm of metaphysics, it also as discussed, provided the ground for a modern, critical and emergent account of the power and function of the human imagination. Presented within a transcendental deduction of the ground of the possibility of all forms of experience, this account of the imagination is exemplary in nature but nonetheless obtuse, on many accounts. Kant does in fact acknowledge that this deduction – which forms the heart of the *Critique* – is "connected with so many difficulties."[1] Endeavouring to travel down a "path" that has "thus far" been "entirely unexplored," Kant is acutely aware of the complexity of the issues at play and the problems encountered in an attempt to give form to and to define that which has not been defined before - to define with the precision of a legal claim, the laws and the facts that underlie the "very mixed fabric of human cognition."[2] Described as a "deep penetration" into the primary grounds of the possibility of cognition, Kant's journey into the depths of the human soul unveiled, what can be regarded to be, a series of original and paradigmatic reflections on the power of the imagination.[3]

In principle, the ground is laid for this entirely new and critical account of the imagination through the prefatory claim of the Transcendental Aesthetic that all cognition "arises [*Entspringt*]" from two "fundamental sources in the mind."[4] The first source of cognition arises from the faculty [*Vermögen*] of sensibility. Representative of a *receptive* representational capacity of the soul, the faculty of sensibility enables the mind to be "affected in some way." By allowing an "object [*Gegenstand*]" to be "given [*gegeben*]" in inner sense in the form of a sensible representation [*Vorstellung*] or intuition, the faculty of sensibility allows the immediate representation of an object of the senses.[5]

The second source of cognition arises from the faculty of understanding.[6] Representative of a *spontaneous* representational capacity of the soul, the faculty of understanding cognizes the object that is given in intuition. Spontaneously "bringing forth" an objective representation in the form of a concept, the faculty of understanding allows the sensible intuition to be cognized or thought about as an object.

Although all forms of cognition arise from these two fundamental sources of the mind, Kant is keen to highlight the fact that on their own, these representations do not "yield a cognition."[7] Understanding is incapable of intuiting something and sensibility is incapable of thinking something. As he succinctly states, "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind." The form of a cognition as a whole can only arise through the "unification" of the disparate realms of sensibility and understanding. Or, more specifically, through the unification of the intuition with a concept – a process, which makes concepts sensible by adding an object to the concept in intuition and a process, which makes intuitions understandable by bringing the intuition under a concept.

Highlighting the necessity for a form of unification between sensibility and understanding allowed Kant to establish a critical point of difference between his own conception of the fundamental sources of all cognition and that espoused by the commentary of "psychologists" such as Wolff, Baumgarten and Tetens.[8] In contrast to the dominant rhetoric of empiricist conceptions, which attributed the receptive nature of the mind to the capacity of sensibility, Kant promoted the view that the minds capacity to bring forth a sensible representation of an object involved something much more than the mere capacity for receptivity. The receptive nature of sensibility may enable the mind to be affected in a "certain way," but, and as Kant pointed out, it does not have the power to determinatively organize sensible impressions into the cognizable form of an image [*Bild*] of an object [*Gegenstand*].[9] *Another* "action [*Handlung*]" of the mind is required – namely, an action that allows the determinative "synthesis" of the manifold of sensible impressions bringing the manifold of intuition into the form of an image amenable to the understanding.[10] Unrecognized by psychologists of the time, this active realm of the mind formed, for Kant, the "necessary ingredient" of all forms of perception.[11]

THE POWER OF SYNTHESIS – AN ACTION OF THE IMAGINATION

The introduction to the necessity for the activity of synthesis not only provided a new way of thinking about the representational capacity of the human mind, it also opened onto, albeit implicitly, the source of the unknown X. Kant lays

the ground for this unspoken supposition in the following paragraph through a general and introductory reflection on the activity of synthesis:

> Synthesis in general is, as we shall subsequently see, the mere effect [*Wirkung*] of the imagination [*Einbildungskraft*], of a blind though indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom conscious.[12]

Introducing the idea that the activity of synthesis is a seldom conscious "effect" of the imagination, Kant definitively set the stage for a modern account of the power and function of the imagination. In contrast to the empiricist view that portrayed the imagination as a reproductive representational capacity of the mind, Kant defined the power of the imagination as "indispensable" to the formation of *all* forms of cognition.

The underlying premise of this radical claim was based on the proposition that the spontaneous and determinative power of the imagination acts upon the determinable manifold of a priori or empirical sensibility allowing it "to be gone through, taken up, and combined in a certain way."[13] By actively synthesizing the manifold of sensibility into a "certain form," the power of the imagination "first brings forth a cognition" in intuition. Albeit in a "raw and confused" form in need of further analysis, the form given in intuition has a "certain content" that is in its essence, amenable to a form of unification with the understanding.

The significance of this claim was not lost on Kant. The revelation the imagination played an indispensable function in giving form to all forms of perceptual or sensible representations [*Vorstellungen*] led Kant to significantly modify his prefatory claim that all cognition arises from two fundamental sources in the mind. As he concedes in the first section of the Transcendental Deduction (A Deduction), the conditions for the *possibility* of cognition are in fact grounded not in two, but in *three* "original sources" or "capacities or faculties [*Vermögen*] of the soul."[14] Unable to be derived from any other faculty of the soul, these three original sources were defined as the three transcendental faculties of "sense, imagination and apperception."[15]

THE POWER OF THREEFOLD SYNTHESIS – AN ACTION OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL IMAGINATION

The sudden and extraordinary acknowledgement that the imagination formed one of the three original faculties of the human soul layed the foundation for the claim that the possibility of experience must be grounded in these three subjective sources of the soul and their corresponding actions

– in the faculty of sensibility and its action of synopsis, in the faculty of the imagination and its action of synthesis, and in the faculty of the understanding and its action of spontaneity.[16] The action of synopsis leads to the *apprehension* of representations as "modifications of the mind in intuition," the action of synthesis leads to the *reproduction* of representations in the imagination and the action of spontaneity leads to the *recognition* of representations in a concept.

Based on the acknowledgement that these three original faculties of the human soul provide the conditions for the possibility of all experience, Kant also revised his earlier claim that a cognition in the form of a whole can only arise out of a form of unification between the intuition and the concept. As he now concedes, the formation of a cognition as a whole must arise out of a series of "compared and connected" representations given through the various actions of these three subjective sources of the soul. These various representations must be compared and connected into the form of a whole otherwise each individual representation would remain "isolated" and "foreign" to one another, unable to lead to any determinate form of cognition.

In the context of this revised epistemological claim, Kant introduced the supposition that the formation of a cognition as a whole does not simply involve the action of synthesis, previously described. Rather, the formation of a cognition as a whole can only occur through a "threefold synthesis," which serves to unify the series of representations given through the various actions of the faculties of sensibility, imagination and understanding.[17] The action of synopsis is associated a "synthesis of apprehension" leading to the *apprehension* of a representation in intuition. The action of synthesis is associated with a "synthesis of reproduction" leading to the *reproduction* of representations in the "empirical imagination." And, finally, the action of spontaneity is associated with a "synthesis of recognition in the concept" leading to the *recognition* of these representations in the concept. On Kant's view, therefore, the threefold synthesis plays an indispensable role in the possibility of experience by unifying the apprehension, the reproduction and the recognition of representations in the form of a whole cognition or, more concisely, in the form of an empirical product of the understanding.

Synthesis of Apprehension

Following the introduction to the three subjective sources of cognition and the necessity for a threefold synthesis, Kant endeavoured through a knowingly obscure and remarkably brief transcendental deduction to disclose the primary ground of all experience. Representative of an endeavour to disclose the ground of the unknown X, this transcendental deduction is centred around

the provision of a subjective and an objective deduction of these original sources of the soul.

The second section of the A Deduction provides a subjective deduction and begins with an exploration of the first subjective source of cognition – the synthesis of apprehension in the intuition.[18] As the synthesis of apprehension is an action that leads to the *apprehension* of representations [*Vorstellungen*] in intuition then, and as Kant argues, each representation must present in a unified form. Given all representations necessarily belong to inner sense and are subjected to its formal condition, which is time, each representation must be "contained in one moment" and able to be distinguished as a moment in time.

In order for a representation to be contained in a moment in time, the manifold of intuition must undergo a synthesis of apprehension. Although no direct reference to the power or function of the imagination is included in this brief deduction, in the Third Section of the A Deduction, Kant does in fact concede that the "active faculty [*Vermögen*]" involved in the apprehension of the manifold of intuition is the imagination or, more specifically, the transcendental imagination.[19] Negating the empiricist conception that images of objects are given through sensibility, Kant confirms the contentious notion it is the power of the transcendental imagination that allows an image of an object to be given in intuition. As he explains, the determinative and spontaneous power of the transcendental imagination is "exercised" immediately upon the receptive synopsis of the sensible manifold, which through a synthesis of apprehension apprehends the manifold of sensibility. If exercised immediately upon the receptive synopsis of the empirical manifold of sensibility, the empirical synthesis of apprehension plays a role in apprehension of the form of an empirical representation – as a perceptual or sensible representation [*Vorstellungen*]. And if exercised upon the receptive manifold of inner sense, the "pure synthesis of apprehension" plays a role in the generation of an a priori representation – including the representations of space and of time. Given all representations in intuition must be contained in a moment in time, the deduction of the first subjective source of cognition concludes with the implicit supposition that all representations in intuition are in fact grounded a priori in pure intuition, as the representation of time.

Synthesis of Reproduction

The power and function of the transcendental imagination also plays an indispensable role in the second subjective source of cognition – the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination.[20] Reference here to the term "imagination" refers specifically to the "empirical imagination" – a subjective state of the mind in which representations are simply reproduced and associated with one another, "even without the presence of the object [*Gegenstand*]." In other

words, and in line with the empiricist conception of the imagination, Kant acknowledges the mind has the capacity to reproduce or associate representations in the empirical imagination even in the absence of an object in order to keep a particular line of thought or to advance from one line to another. If the mind did not spontaneously advance in a methodical manner from one representation to another, the mind would simply comprise a mere play of representations unable to produce a cognition as a whole. The drawing of a line in thought requires, for example, the first parts of the line are reproduced in the empirical imagination in order to produce a representation in the form of a cognition as a whole.

In Kant's view, however, the capacity to keep a particular line of thought or the capacity to associate a certain word with a certain thing is based on a "law of reproduction." This law ensures the succession of reproduced representations in the empirical imagination takes place according to "certain rules." These rules are enacted through an "empirical synthesis of reproduction" ensuring representations are reproduced in the empirical imagination in association with a certain word or with a certain thing. In this regard, the synthesis of reproduction forms a transcendental action [*Handlung*] of the mind with Kant defining this action in the Third Section of the A Deduction, as being grounded in the "reproductive faculty [*Vermögen*]" of the transcendental imagination.[21] As a faculty of the transcendental imagination, the reproductive imagination ensures the reproduction and association of representations in the empirical imagination proceeds according to a series of a priori rules.

Notwithstanding the fact that the reproductive faculty of the transcendental imagination forms the ground of the reproduction of representations in the empirical imagination, Kant admits this empirical synthesis of reproduction must in itself be grounded on an a priori action.[22] As he explains, experience is only possible if it proceeds according to a series of a priori principles – principles which serve to unify a priori the manifold of representations into the form of a cognition as a whole. Given the necessity for the presence of a series of a priori principles, the deduction of the second subjective source of cognition concludes with the supposition that the synthesis of reproduction is an action that is grounded in a "pure synthesis" by the transcendental imagination.

Synthesis of Recognition

Following the introduction to the role of the transcendental imagination in the apprehension and the reproduction of representations, the final subjective source of cognition provides a deduction of the synthesis of recognition in the concept.[23] As Kant explains, the recognition of representations in a concept is, necessarily, an action *and* a representation of a unified consciousness.

In order to illustrate the essence of this claim, Kant refers to the activity of addition. The act and process of counting and the concept of number represents consciousness of the unity of synthesis *and* it represents a process of synthesis through which the concept of number and hence an object is cognized. In this regard, the recognition of a concept as an empirical product of the understanding is only possible through the unified action of consciousness itself.

Given consciousness and the synthesis of recognition in a concept are inseparably united, Kant promotes the view the synthesis of recognition in a concept must proceed according to a series of a priori rules. These a priori rules are grounded in an original and transcendental condition, which – in the form of the "transcendental apperception" – precedes and makes possible all activity within the empirical imagination or empirical apperception.[24] In the form of the "pure, original, unchanging consciousness," the transcendental apperception is a representation of a unified condition for, and as Kant acknowledges, the mind can only think of its own identity if it has "before its eyes" the identity of its own unified actions. The mind can only think of its own identity if the apprehension, reproduction and recognition of representations are subordinated to a transcendental unity in accordance with a series of a priori rules.

Even though the recognition of a concept involves the transcendental unity of apperception, Kant is keen to highlight the fact that this form of unity is contingent on the presence of a non-empirical "transcendental object = X."[25] In the form of a pure concept, the transcendental object does not contain any determinate intuition. It simply provides objective reality allowing the intuition to be made understandable insofar as all intuitable representations stand in relation to the presence of the transcendental object. The presence of the transcendental object thus renders possible the unified form of consciousness, which must be represented in the recognition of a concept.

Although ambiguously and briefly introducing the presence of the transcendental object as enabling the intuition to be made understandable, the underlying premise of this final deduction is based on the supposition that the unity of consciousness must be grounded in a transcendental principle of unity. In Kant's view, this transcendental principle of unity is *supplied* by pure apperception in the form of "the standing and lasting I."[26] As the "correlate" of all representations in the mind, pure apperception forms the active principle in the mind because it "yields" the principle of the synthetic unity. Given pure apperception provides the principle of unity ensuring the possibility of the unified form of consciousness a priori, the deduction of the final subjective source of cognition concludes with the supposition that the recognition of representations in a concept is in fact grounded in pure apperception.

THE POWER OF SYNTHESIS A PRIORI – THE PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

Despite Kant's "deep penetration" into the primary ground of all cognition being imbued with a degree of "obscurity," the A Deduction does succeed in defining the ground of the three subjective sources of cognition as pure intuition, pure synthesis of the imagination and pure apperception.[27] Pure intuition (as the representation of time) grounds the form of all perceptions, pure synthesis of the imagination grounds all acts of reproduction and association a priori and pure apperception grounds the identity of oneself and the identity of empirical consciousness a priori.[28]

The introduction to the grounding presence of pure apperception would appear to lay claim to resolving the form of the unknown X. However, Kant abruptly dismantles this implicit supposition in the Third section of the A Deduction. In its essence, the Third Section presents in the form of an objective deduction of the possibility of cognition a priori and is premised upon the supposition that pure intuition, pure synthesis of the imagination and pure apperception must all belong to "one consciousness." Even though pure apperception yields the principle of the synthetic unity of consciousness, the possibility of a synthetic unity is conditional on a form of synthesis a priori, which functions to unite these subjective sources of cognition into the form of one consciousness. On Kant's view, this action of synthesis a priori does not pertain to the reproductive synthesis of imagination, which simply rests on the conditions of experience.[29] Rather, this a priori form of synthesis involves a "productive" synthesis of the imagination. By connecting the manifold of appearances a priori, the productive synthesis of the imagination forms the *ground* of the possibility of all experience ensuring the objective unity of all empirical consciousness in "one consciousness."[30] Defined as an action of the "productive imagination," the productive synthesis of the imagination forms the "necessary condition" of all possible perception and the "affinity" of the *entire* manifold of appearances is a "necessary consequence."[31] In other words, the affinity of all appearances that are apprehended, associated, or reproduced in intuition converges into an experience through the productive synthesis of the productive imagination.

Given the constitutive and unifying role of the action of a priori synthesis, the productive imagination is defined as a "faculty of a synthesis *a priori*" – a faculty whose "transcendental function" simply aims for necessary unity in the synthesis of the manifold of representations. Accordingly, the production of a cognition as a whole – representative of experience itself – is contingent on the transcendental function of the productive imagination. Indeed, Kant is well aware of the epistemological significance of these claims for, and as he concedes, the acknowledgement that the transcendental function of the

imagination is indispensable to the possibility of experience is "certainly strange." Nonetheless, he continues to expand on and develop this disquieting theme in the following deduction through reference to the concept of the "pure imagination:"

> We therefore have a pure imagination, as a fundamental faculty of the human soul, that grounds all cognition *a priori*. By its means we bring into combination the manifold of intuition on the one side and the condition of the necessary unity of apperception on the other. Both extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must necessarily be connected by means of this transcendental function of imagination, since otherwise the former would to be sure yield appearances but no objects of an empirical cognition, hence there would be no experience.[32]

In what can be regarded as forming a groundbreaking claim, this remarkable paragraph describes the pure imagination as the power of the soul that grounds all cognition a priori. Through the action of synthesis a priori, the transcendental function of the pure imagination ensures necessary unity within consciousness itself by uniting the heterogeneous realms of sensibility and understanding. Forming the indispensable "condition" of the necessary unity of apperception, the transcendental function of the pure imagination produces the representation of time through a pure synthesis of apprehension, and it produces the unified form of consciousness rendering possible experience itself. Situating human receptivity *and* human subjectivity as being premised upon the transcendental function of the pure imagination, Kant introduced into Western thought a modern conception of the imagination portraying the imagination as a "fundamental faculty of the human soul."

Despite these series of epistemological and ontological claims confirming the indispensable function of the productive imagination, Kant did not regard the productive imagination as a creative power of the human soul. By according all determinate potentiality to the activity of the bare representation of the I – as pure apperception – the transcendental function of the imagination was, for Kant, a power, which merely *produces* the unified form of consciousness for the I. As he goes onto state, pure apperception "yields a principle of the synthetic unity of the manifold in all possible intuition."[33] Pure apperception supplies the principle for the condition for self-consciousness rendering "intellectual" the transcendental function of the imagination.[34] Necessarily, within the realms of a critique of pure reason, the I as pure apperception forms the active principle of the mind.

However, and as this reading of the A Deduction has shown, this dominant line of enquiry is interrupted and interceded by Kant's disclosure of the indispensable function of the pure imagination. As he concedes, the constitutive powers of the pure imagination allow the a priori representation of time

to spring forth and through this springing forth pure imagination unifies the entire manifold of intuitions a priori producing the determinate form of a unified consciousness. Arguably, the ontological implications of this claim reveal the a priori power of the pure imagination forms the "common root" of sensibility and understanding because it gives form to pure intuition through the production of the representation of time and it gives form to pure apperception through the production of the unified form of apperception. As the possibility of any form of cognition, including cognition of oneself, requires the indispensable function of the imagination, then, and as Heidegger himself has declared, the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* introduces the disquieting proposition that the unknown X is the power of synthesis a priori by the pure imagination.[35]

NOTES

1. A98 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 228.
2. A84–85 ibid., 219–20.
3. A98 ibid., 228.
4. Kant outlines this prefatory claim in the first section of the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements. See: A 19 and A50 ibid., 155, 93.

   Kant defines a "cognition" as an objective perception, which can either be an intuition, which is "immediately" related to an object and is "singular," or it can be a concept, which is "mediately" related to an object and is "common to several things." See: A320 ibid., 398–99.
5. A19 ibid., 155.

   Kant highlights that the object given in intuition is a representation of an object and should not be regarded in the same way as objects outside the power of representation. See: A104 ibid., 231.
6. A 19/A50 ibid., 155, 93.
7. A51–52 ibid., 193–94.
8. Although no mention is made here to Wolff, Baumgarten, or Tetens, it is nonetheless implied in Kant's suggestion that "psychologists" believe the faculty of sensibility produces images of objects. See in Footnote * in: A120 ibid., 239.
9. A77 ibid., 210.
10. A78, ibid., 211.
11. See Footnote * in: A120 ibid., 239.
12. A78 ibid., 211.
13. A77–78 ibid., 210–11.
14. A94–95 ibid., 225.
15. It is important to acknowledge that this critical conception of the imagination as a transcendental faculty of the soul significantly departed from the conception

outlined in Kant's series of pre-critical writings. In the *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Kant defined the imagination as a formative power of sensibility. The faculty of sensibility was divided into the faculties of illustration, imitation (which contained the reproductive imagination), anticipation, imagination (which contained the productive imagination), correlation, and cultivation. See: Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, eds., *Lectures on Metaphysics* ibid. (Cambridge, 2007), 53–55.

16. A97 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 227–28.
17. The threefold synthesis is explored in A99 to A110 under various headings. See: ibid., 228–34.
18. A99–100 ibid., 228–29.
19. A120–21 ibid., 238–39.
20. A100–02 ibid., 229–30.
21. A121 ibid., 239.

Kant originally introduced the idea of the reproductive faculty of imagination in the series of lectures that comprise the *Lectures on Metaphysics*. In a reflection on the relationship between empirical and rational psychology and the realm of metaphysics, Kant proposed the reproductive imagination was a formative power of sensibility that "draws forth" past representations [*Vorstellungen*] and connects these representations with representations of the present. See: Ameriks and Naragon, *Lectures on Metaphysics* 54, 252.

22. A100–02 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 229–30.
23. A103 ibid., 230–31.
24. A107–08 ibid., 232–33.
25. A109 ibid., 233.
26. A123 ibid., 240.
27. A98 ibid., 228.
28. A115–17 ibid., 236–37.
29. A118 ibid., 238.
30. A122 ibid., 240.
31. A123 ibid.

Kant initially introduced the idea of the productive faculty of imagination in the *Lectures on Metaphysics*. However, in these series of pre-critical writings, Kant regarded the productive imagination as a "*faculty of fantasy*," which "plays with us" in dreams and in fantasy. See: Ameriks and Naragon, *Lectures on Metaphysics* 55.

32. A124 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 241.
33. A117 ibid., 237.
34. A124 ibid., 240.
35. §35 Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, Fifth Edition, Enlarged ed. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 141.

Chapter 3

The Productive Imagination – A Power of Representing

Although the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* succeeded in directing the realm of metaphysics along a new path it presented, as Kant himself acknowledged, with a series of "difficulties and obscurities" which inadvertently led to "several misunderstandings."[1] One such misunderstanding was attributed to the "obscurity" of the Transcendental Deduction (A Deduction). Endeavouring to unveil the unified form of self-consciousness as being grounded in pure apperception, the A Deduction offered the disquieting and antinomical revelation the unknown root of all cognition was in fact grounded upon the transcendental power of the imagination.[2] Although providing an exemplary and modern account of the power and function of the imagination, the acknowledgement the transcendental imagination formed a "fundamental faculty of human soul" challenged the foundational premise of the entire *Critique* leading, as Heidegger once suggested, the realm of metaphysics into an abyss.[3]

The publication of the second edition of the *Critique* addressed this principle concern through a series of revisions, the most important of which can be located within the revised Transcendental Deduction, known as the B Deduction.[4] Presented in the form of a completely revised epistemological deduction, the B Deduction is centred around a modified account of the spontaneous and determinative actions of the faculties of the understanding and imagination, whereby the power of the imagination was defined as a function of the understanding.[5] As has been suggested, most famously by Heidegger, this revised definition of the imagination served in principle to retract the foundational premise of the A Deduction.[6] Rather than being portrayed as a "basic transcendental faculty in its own right" indispensable to the possibility of all forms of experience, the transcendental imagination became, for Kant, a power of the soul conditioned by the faculty of the understanding.

Despite the fact that the power of the transcendental imagination is defined as a function of the understanding, a close reading of the core concerns of the B Deduction reveals this revised epistemological deduction is premised upon a marked and notable development in the representational power of the imagination. Envisaging the unified form of self-consciousness as embodying the capacity for intuitive *and* discursive modes of thinking, the B Deduction necessarily developed rather than retracted the representational powers of the imagination in an attempt to address the obscurities of the A Deduction. In principle, through the provision of an objective deduction of *how* the categories can be applied through the logical functions of judgement, the action of which brings given representations, whether that be intuitions or concepts, under the unity of apperception in general.[7] Accordingly and in distinction to the A Deduction, which provided a detailed deduction of how an intuition is made understandable (to bring the intuition under a concept), the B Deduction provides a detailed deduction of how a concept is made sensible (to add an object to the concept in intuition) – a deduction that inadvertently confirmed once again, the power of the transcendental imagination forms an indispensable function of the human soul.

THE POWER OF SYNTHESIS – AN ACTION OF THE UNDERSTANDING

In what could be described as an attempt to restore the indissociable relationship between pure reason and the domain of freedom, the B Deduction of the second edition of the *Critique* opens with a revised definition of the activity of synthesis. Completely transforming the epistemological foundation of the A Deduction, this revised definition proposes synthesis in general is a spontaneous "act [*Actus*]" of the "power of representation [*Vorstellungskraft*]."[8] Representative of an "action [*Handlung*] of the understanding," the power of representation spontaneously *combines*, through the activity of synthesis, the manifold of sensible and non-sensible intuitions and the manifold of concepts in one act of a unified consciousness.

In principle, this revised definition of the activity of synthesis is based on the observation that the action of synthesis arises from the *activity* of, rather than from the *receptivity* of, the subject. As Kant argues, the combination of the manifold of representations [*Vorstellungen*] in general must be "executed" as a spontaneous act of the understanding, which is, in itself, a representation of the self-activity of a unitary consciousness. In contrast to the fundamental premise of the A Deduction, this revised epistemological conception introduces the claim that the representation of the act of combination is not given [*Gegeben*] through the mere receptivity of the senses.[9] Nor

does it "arise" from the combination of representations. Rather, the representation of the act of combination is added to the representation of the manifold, making possible the act of combination. For, and as Kant succinctly states, "we can represent nothing as combined in the object [*Objekt*] without having previously combined it ourselves."

The central premise of this revised epistemological deduction reveals that what is represented in the mind must be accompanied by the cognition that one is reflecting on what is represented. In other words, all representations in the mind are accompanied by the representation "I think [*Ich denke*]."[10] The I think necessarily resides in a form of relation to the manifold of intuition and to intuitive forms of representations and yet, it can never arise out of this sensible manifold. The I think can only be given through the spontaneous act [*Actus*] of pure or original apperception and through this representation consciousness becomes "one and the same." Consciousness presents, therefore, as the transcendental unity of self-consciousness given through the representation, I think.

By distinguishing between the intuitive and intelligible realms of being, the foundational premise of the B Deduction clarifies the fact that the transcendental unity of self-consciousness forms the objective unity of consciousness, whereas the subjective unity of consciousness pertains merely to the determination of inner sense through which an empirical representation is given.[11] Conceived in this way, the representation of objective unity does not arise out of the act of combination, as indicated in the A Deduction. Rather, the representation of objective unity makes the concept of combination possible.

Given this revised conception of the transcendental unity of self-consciousness, the B Deduction is in fact premised upon a reconsideration the ancient proposition "*quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonnum*": every being is one, true and good.[12] As outlined in the second edition of the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements (§12), the predicates of one, true and good originate and are grounded in a rule of the understanding that has, as Kant explains, been "falsely interpreted." The categories of quantity, namely unity, plurality and totality, have been "carelessly" made into the properties of things in themselves when they should have been considered as belonging to the logical requirements of all cognition.[13] The quantitative unity and homogeneity contained within the concept concurrently establishes a qualitative unity because the concept can only be cognized through the synthetic unity generated by the combination of the manifold of cognition in one consciousness. In other words, the categories, as the logical criterion for the possibility of cognition, presuppose the act of combination. As the categories allow for the connection of heterogeneous forms of cognition in one consciousness, they form the objective ground upon which judgements can be made. On the basis of this consideration Kant offers the revised

proposal that consciousness must be grounded upon a form of unity that is "higher" than the unity outlined within the A Deduction (§10).[14] Or, to be more specific, consciousness must be grounded upon the form of a "qualitative" unity.

The reference here to the necessity for a higher and qualitative form of unity clearly establishes a significant point of difference between the epistemological foundations of the A and B Deductions of the *Critique*. In distinction to the category of unity outlined in the A Deduction, which proposes the transcendental unity of self-consciousness is given through the transcendental function of imagination, Kant now defines the category of unity as an affair of the understanding alone. The necessary unity of self-consciousness takes place by means of the higher qualitative unity contained within the category – a claim that in principle omits the necessity for the transcendental function of the imagination introducing in its place two varying forms of a priori synthesis, namely "*synthesis intellectualis*" and "figurative synthesis." Respectively pertaining to the intelligible and the sensible realms of being, these two forms of a priori synthesis play specific roles in the formation of a cognition as a whole and thenceforth, in the formation of consciousness itself.

SYNTHESIS INTELLECTUALIS

In a brief and highly obtuse section of the B Deduction (§24), the activity of *synthesis intellectualis* is introduced in order to accommodate the claim that the categories arise independently from sensibility – that there is a distinction between the intelligible and the sensible realms of being with the power of judgement mediating between the two.[15] The categories of quantity, of quality, of relation and of modality serve, therefore, as functions for logical judgements rendering possible the cognition of an empirical intuition.[16]

As the pure concepts of the understanding reside as "mere forms of thought" in which no determinate object has yet been cognized, they must, as Kant argues, undergo an a priori synthesis or combination of what is manifold in them.[17] Drawing on the contemporaneous nature of the category previously defined, the synthesis or combination of the manifold in the concepts of the understanding must relate only to the unity of apperception and occurs "without the aid of imagination" – it is a "purely intellectual" action of synthesis or of combination that arises out of the faculty of the understanding. As this a priori form of synthesis pertains directly to the understanding, *synthesis intellectualis* forms, for Kant, the objective ground of all a priori forms of cognition.

FIGURATIVE SYNTHESIS – AN ACTION OF THE PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

Although *synthesis intellectualis* forms the objective ground of the possibility of cognition a priori, the capacity to think of an object does not lead to the cognition of an object. Developing the prefatory claims of the *Critique*, Kant offers the proposition that the categories as mere forms of thought can only acquire objective reality when they are applied to an object given in intuition in the form of an appearance.[18]

The necessity for the act of application introduces the second form of a priori synthesis – namely, the activity of "*figurative* synthesis" or "*synthesis speciosa.*" Drawing on a similar theme outlined in the A Deduction, the introduction to the action of figurative synthesis is based on the proposition that the synthesis of the manifold of sensible intuition "is possible and necessary *a priori*." As the imagination is the determinative power of the soul, which acts upon the determinable manifold of sensibility, figurative synthesis involves, for Kant, the "transcendental action [*Handlung*]" of the imagination.[19]

However, and in distinction to the underlying premise of the A Deduction and in relation to the revised definition of the activity of synthesis given in the B Deduction, figurative synthesis is defined as an "effect [*Wirkung*] of the understanding on sensibility."[20] What Kant means by this description is that the understanding "produces" the combination of the manifold by "affecting" inner sense through the transcendental action of the imagination. The understanding directs the action of the imagination on sensibility through the action of figurative synthesis enabling consciousness of the determination of the manifold. To draw on Kant's own example, "we cannot think of a line without *drawing* it in thought, we cannot think of a circle without *describing* it." The drawing a line or describing a circle is an act of the understanding because through this determinative action both time and space become representable rendering possible the cognition of a line or of a circle.

The Productive Imagination – A Representing Power

Although this brief and somewhat obtuse description of figurative synthesis defines the transcendental action of the imagination as a function of the understanding, it is important to acknowledge here that accompanying the renunciation of the independence of the activity of the imagination is a significant development in its representational power. This principle, albeit obscure line of enquiry is intimately tied to two interrelated actions Kant accords the power of the transcendental imagination. Figurative synthesis may be conceived as an effect of the understanding on sensibility and yet

Kant is presenting the view, albeit implicitly here, that the action of figurative synthesis is rendered possible or is executed by two interrelated actions of the imagination.

The introduction to the necessity for two interrelated actions of the imagination pertains directly to the form of the manifold of sensibility and the necessity for its synthesis and determination. As Kant argues, "in us a certain form of sensible intuition *a priori* is fundamental."[21] One level, this certain form pertains to the form of inner sense and the representation of time. As the representation of time grounds all intuitions, time can only be made representable through the a priori power of synthesis, which, as an effect of the understanding on sensibility, unites the manifold of sensibility rendering possible the cognition of a line or of a circle.

On another level, however, this certain form pertains to the fact that the manifold of sensible intuition must also contain the mere form of an object as an appearance before the categories as mere forms of thought can be applied. The cognition of a line or a circle requires the sensible presence of a figure of a line or of a circle in intuition. Given the principle intent here is to provide a deduction of *how* the categories can be applied to objects in intuition, Kant is introducing the claim that the categories can only be realized through a determinative act of figuration, which provides the categories with an object in intuition.

In other words, and moving once again against empiricist conceptions of the imagination, Kant is proposing here that the imagination plays a fundamental role in the act of figuration by producing out of its own activity the form of an object in intuition. Remarkably, however, this determinative act of figuration is not described in any great detail rendering this section of the *Critique* open to ongoing interpretation.[22] Albeit obscure, however, there remains an enticing trail, one that begins with a sudden and unexpected redefinition of the faculty of the imagination. To reiterate, the A Deduction defined the imagination as the "faculty of synthesis *a priori*," which aims at nothing but necessary unity.[23] Forming the transcendental function of the imagination, the power of synthesis a priori by the productive imagination was described as an indispensable function of the soul playing a central role in the possibility of all forms of experience, including experience of oneself.

In contrast, the B Deduction suddenly describes the imagination as "the faculty for representing [*Vorzustellen*] an object [*Gegenstand*] even *without its presence* in intuition."[24] On initial consideration, it would appear this revised definition accords with the definition of the reproductive imagination given in the A Deduction, as has been argued by some.[25] However, and as Kant does in fact acknowledge, a consideration of the reproductive power of the imagination, which is subjected to empirical laws, pertains merely to the

realm of psychology for it does not and cannot provide any insight into the possibility of cognition a priori. [26]

The inclusion of this revised definition of the imagination points to something much deeper and perhaps more troublesome – it points to the fact that an object must be given in intuition otherwise the concepts of the understanding would forever remain as mere forms of thought unable to be applied to actual or possible experience. The possibility of any form of determinate cognition, the possibility of the realm of mathematics and the possibility for synthetic judgements a priori for that matter, requires the mind embody a power to represent objects even without their presence in intuition.

The implications of this remarkable claim propel the representational power of the imagination into a new domain for Kant is suggesting here the imagination is something much more than a power of synthesis a priori.[27] As this revised definition clearly states, the imagination is a power of the soul, which can represent an object in intuition for the understanding. Kant's choice of terminology here is critical for, and as he describes, the power of the imagination "gives" an intuition, which, in the form of an object, "corresponds" to the concepts of the understanding.[28] The use of these particular terms highlights the fact that through a form of figurative interplay between the manifold of sensibility and the conceptual requirements of the understanding, the power of the imagination confers the receptive realm of intuition with a "certain form" amenable to the conceptual realm of the understanding. In this regard, the representing power of the imagination does not simply reproduce in the empirical imagination the form of an object that has already been given in intuition. Rather, and on Kant's view, the transcendental imagination embodies the power to represent in intuition the form of an object for the understanding even without its presence.

On one level, this proposition simply develops and expands on the revelations of the A Deduction by proposing the empirical synthesis of apprehension is the activity, which confers a form of figuration to the empirical manifold of sensibility producing the form of an object in intuition. On another level, however, and in relation to the possibility of the realm of mathematics, this proposition also introduces the disquieting and unspoken claim that the imagination embodies the power to impart a degree of figuration to the manifold of sensibility a priori. In other words, the representing power of the imagination produces an object in intuition for the understanding, simply out of its own determinative activity. To draw on Kant's own examples, the cognition of a line or the cognition of a circle requires the power of the imagination represent in intuition the mere figure of a line or the mere figure of a circle in accordance with the conceptual requirements of

the understanding. In this regard, the representing power of the imagination plays an indispensable role in the capacity for any empirical or a priori form of cognition.

The Productive Imagination – A Power of Synthesis A Priori

Although briefly according the imagination with the remarkable and spontaneous power to produce out of its own activity the determinate form of an appearance in intuition, Kant acknowledges these forms must in themselves be determined a priori in accordance with the synthetic unity of apperception enabling the formation of a cognition as a whole. The figure of a line or the figure of a circle given through the representing power of the imagination must undergo a form of synthesis a priori rendering the representation of time representable. As Kant argues, "time . . . cannot be made representable to us except under the image of a line, insofar as we draw it."[29]

In order to embellish on this claim, Kant draws here on the definition of the imagination given in the A Deduction for, and as he describes, the action of figurative synthesis involves the "transcendental synthesis of imagination."[30] As the power of synthesis a priori has as its aim necessary unity in the manifold of representations, the transcendental synthesis of the imagination forms the action, which determines the manifold of sensibility a priori in accordance with the categories. It is in the context of this claim that the B Deduction also describes the imagination as "a faculty for determining [*Bestimmen*] the sensibility *a priori*." As a determining power, the transcendental synthesis of the imagination allows the categories to "acquire objective reality" by making representable the representation of time.

Given the indispensable roles accorded to these actions of the imagination, the B Deduction presents, albeit ambiguously, the claim that figurative synthesis involves the representing power of the imagination, which represents an object in intuition for the understanding *and* it involves the determining power of synthesis a priori, which unifies the manifold of representations enabling the categories to acquire objective reality. Conceived in this way, the transcendental action of the imagination in figurative synthesis plays a determinate (as a representing power) *and* a determining (as a power of synthesis *a priori*) role in making a concept sensible. By providing the form of an object in intuition and by determining the object in time, the transcendental action of the imagination renders possible the cognition of a line or a circle. The epistemological significance of this remarkable claim is perhaps downplayed, however, for, and as Kant himself suggests, the "spontaneous" nature of the imagination leads him to "occasionally" refer to the action of figurative synthesis as the "*productive* imagination."

SYNTHESIS OF APPREHENSION – AN ACTION OF THE EMPIRICAL FACULTY OF THE PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

Given the definition and the role ascribed to the action of figurative synthesis, the B Deduction is accompanied by a revised deduction of the activity of synthesis of apprehension. In distinction to the definition given in the A Deduction, synthesis of apprehension is now defined as an action "through which" perception become possible.[31] Clearly intent on establishing a point of difference between his own conception of the ground of all cognition and that espoused by empiricists, Kant defines perception as the empirical consciousness of something *as* an appearance in intuition. In other words, perception involves the synthesis of apprehension by the empirical faculty of the productive imagination, which represents in intuition the form of an appearance, and it involves the act of combination in accordance with the I think, which determines the appearance making representable the representation of time through the transcendental synthesis of the imagination.

As an example, Kant refers here to the apprehension of the empirical manifold of a house. In order to make the empirical intuition of house into a perception, the productive imagination must represent the shape of the house in agreement with the category of quantity. Torn between intuitive and conceptual demands, the empirical faculty of the productive imagination unifies the apprehended manifold of empirical sensibility into the image of a house through the action of synthesis of apprehension. Once the productive imagination has represented the image of the house for the understanding, the image becomes determined as a perception in accordance with the synthetic unity of apperception through the transcendental synthesis of the manifold of representations. Accordingly, and by means of the action of figurative synthesis, the category of quantity given through the *synthesis intellectualis* is in "agreement" with the empirical intuition of the house leading to the formation of a logical judgement.

On the face of this description, it would appear the productive imagination simply produces and determines the form of an object for the understanding. However, Kant is introducing the claim here, albeit implicitly, that the productive imagination must embody the a priori power to represent in intuition the form of an object when in fact no object has ever been given in intuition. As Kant has argued, the capacity for perception does not simply pertain to sensibility for it does not and cannot produce the *form* of an object in intuition. On the contrary, it is the transcendental power of the imagination, which confers a form of figuration to the manifold of intuition through its a priori power to produce, or create for that matter, the *form* of an object. On Kant's view, therefore, the representing power of the productive imagination

plays a constitutive role in the capacity to cognize the world through the concepts of nature. By giving form to intuition, the productive imagination not only renders possible the representation of time, but it gives *form* to representations *in* time. Heidegger's claim the action of figurative synthesis forfeits the independence of the imagination overlooks, therefore, the essential and founding claim of the B Deduction – of the fact that the productive imagination is portrayed as a representing power indispensable to the formation of a cognition as a whole.[32]

SYNTHESIS SPECIOSA – AN ACTION OF THE A PRIORI FACULTY OF THE PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

Notwithstanding the significance of the role of the productive imagination in giving form to the possibility of a cognition as a whole either as an empirical or as an a priori product of the understanding, Kant continues to expand on and develop the representational power of the imagination in an attempt to resolve the "paradox" of the B Deduction.[33] Having defined the transcendental unity of self-consciousness as comprising objective and subjective realms of being Kant is forced to address the question of *how* the I that thinks can be distinct from the I that intuits itself and yet coexist within the unity of consciousness? Or, more specifically, of *how* the I, as an intelligent and thinking subject, can cognize itself as an object [*Objekt*] only insofar as the I is given in intuition simply in the form of a phenomena?

In order to resolve this pervasive paradox, the B Deduction offers a revised deduction of the original synthetic unity of apperception – one which is premised on the claim that within the original and unified form of consciousness "I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor *as* I am in myself, but only *that* I am."[34] As a "mere form of a thought," the I think is the representation of an intelligible entity or a noumenon given through the intellectual combination arising from the action of *synthesis intellectualis*.

In order for the I think to determine its own existence as a unified consciousness capable of thinking *and* of intuiting itself, the I think requires a form of "correspondence" between the intelligible realm of the I am and the sensible realm of inner sense. As Kant argues, this correspondence can only occur in relation to the form of inner sense. In other words, and drawing on the conception of figurative synthesis previously described, a form of correspondence necessitates the representation of time be made representable and it necessitates the presence of an object in intuition. Kant ambiguously confirms these two claims by suggesting the determination of the I think can only occur through two particular actions. As he explains, the manifold of inner intuition must be combined in a "particular" [*Besonderen*] or special way

and the manifold of representations must undergo a "special" [*Besondern*] or particular act of synthesis.[35]

The reference here to the term *Besonderen* confirms the fact that these two actions of the mind must occur through the action of figurative synthesis as a *synthesis speciosa*. The first action pertains directly to the earlier claim that the representing power of the imagination "gives" a corresponding intuition to the concepts of the understanding. As the I think is the "thinking of an object in general" and as the I think requires a "determinate sort of intuition," it can be argued here that the representing power of the productive imagination must give to the I think the form of an object when in fact no object has ever been given in intuition – a supposition that confirms the disquieting claim that the productive imagination must embody the a priori power to produce or create out of its own determinative activity, the original form of an object in intuition.

The second action pertains directly to the description of *synthesis speciosa* as the "first application" of the understanding on sensibility. Representative of a special act of synthesis, this second action involves the determining power of the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, which as an action of the understanding, determines the form of the object given in intuition as a phenomena for the I think.[36] By combining the manifold in accordance with inner sense as the representation of time, the I think determines itself not "*as I am*, but only as I *appear* to myself." The action of *synthesis speciosa* – representative of the action of the a priori faculty of the productive imagination – thus forms an indispensable function of the soul enabling the I think to have cognition of itself but only in the form of a phenomenon.[37]

Conceiving the action of *synthesis speciosa* in this way promotes the view Kant necessarily revised the definition of the imagination in the B Deduction in order to accommodate the fact that consciousness comprises intelligible and sensible realms. As the noumenon is not an intuition and can never be given in inner sense, the I think can only be determined as a unified consciousness once it "appears" to itself as a phenomenon through the representing and the determining power of the imagination. Once it has before its own "eyes" an object of its own actions.

Parallels can be drawn here with the definition of the productive imagination given in the anthology of lectures comprising the text, the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*.[38] In the section titled, "On the power of imagination," the productive imagination is defined as "a faculty of the original presentation [*Darstellung*] of the object [*Gegenstand*] (*exhibitio originaria*), which thus precedes experience." Within the context of Kant's depiction of *synthesis speciosa*, the use of the term "presentation" [*Darstellung*] or "exhibition" here is critical. Not only does it imply the productive power of the imagination is something much more than a power of "synthesis *a priori*," it suggests the I think can only ever "appear" to itself

when an object is presented or exhibited in intuition through the power of imagination.[39] The metaphorical implications of the term "appear" suggests the action of *synthesis speciosa* enables the I am to visualize itself through the determination of an original object in intuition and through this action the I think determines its own existence as a thinking *and* intuiting subject.

Notwithstanding the significance of the use of the term "exhibition" here, Kant's reference to the necessity for a special act of combination and for a special act of synthesis renders the definition of figurative synthesis as a *synthesis speciosa* unquestionably significant. Representative of the first action of the understanding on sensibility, *synthesis speciosa* is the action, which enables the I think to cognize itself as an object [*Objekt*] only insofar as the I think appears to itself in the form of a phenomena. Kant thus confers the a priori faculty of the productive imagination with an indispensable function for the determination or the cognition of one's own existence as an entity that both intuits and thinks is only possible through the transcendental actions of the a priori faculty of the productive imagination. By providing the determinate form of an object in intuition and by determining this intuition as a moment in time, *synthesis speciosa* is the action of the soul that confers the moment of transcendence.

Despite the fact that this revised definition of the imagination propels the representational power of the imagination into new and unexplored domains, within the second edition of the *Critique*, there lies a deep and perhaps unresolvable antinomy. On Kant's revised view, the imagination is a faculty of representing and determining an object in intuition and yet it does so according to the requirements of the faculty of representation – the faculty of understanding. In this regard, the imagination functions simply to represent and determine in intuition the form of an object *for* the understanding. By according the category of unity to a higher qualitative unity and by retracting the definition of the imagination as a "basic transcendental faculty in its own right," the second edition of the *Critique* preserves, as Heidegger has suggested, "the mastery of reason" reestablishing in the process the indissociable form of relation between pure reason and the domain of freedom.[40]

Heidegger's conclusion that Kant "shrank back" from the disquieting power of the transcendental imagination overlooks, however, the fundamental premise of the revised second edition of the *Critique*.[41] By separating the intuitive and the intellectual realms of being and by introducing the need for a higher qualitative unity, Kant invariably developed rather than retracted the representational power of the imagination. In fact, it can be argued the B Deduction of the *Critique* continues to develop a modern account of the imagination, introducing the radical claim that the power of the transcendental imagination is not simply a power of synthesis a priori. As the imagination is the power of the soul that can represent in intuition objects out of its own

spontaneous activity, the imagination confers intuition with a determinate form of figuration a priori rendering possible the capacity for all forms of cognition, including cognition of oneself as an intuiting and thinking subject. Notwithstanding Heidegger's declaration, the B Deduction forfeits the independence of the transcendental function of the imagination in preference for the understanding, the definition of figurative synthesis or *synthesis speciosa* accords the productive imagination an indispensable role in the formation of a cognition as a whole and in the formation of the human subject as a unified consciousness. Accordingly, the B Deduction of the second edition of the *Critique* introduces the disquieting proposition that unknown X is the power of representing by the a priori faculty of the productive imagination.

NOTES

1. Bxxxviii Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 120.

2. Rundell also promotes the view that the Kantian unknown X is the transcendental synthesis of the productive imagination. See: John Rundell, "Kant on the Imagination: Fanciful and Unruly, or 'an Indispensable Dimension of the Human Soul,' " *Critical Horizons* 21, no. 2 (2020).

3. A124 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 241.

§31 Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, Fifth Edition, Enlarged ed. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 118.

4. In the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant provided a brief description of the revisions made in the second edition. See: Bxxxviii Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 120.

There have been many discussions concerning the motive behind the revised second edition of the *Critique*. Longuenesse, for example, offered the astute proposition that Kant included the B Deduction in order to account for the possibility of two models of thinking. See: Béatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, trans. Charles T. Wolfe (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 33.

Similarly, Allison suggested the B Deduction enabled Kant to clarify the distinction between the intellectual and sensible conditions of human cognition. See: Henry Allison, "The Transcendental Deduction," in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

Heidegger suggested the alternative view that the A deduction provides a "psychological interpretation" and the B Deduction provides a "logical interpretation." See: § 31 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 119.

5. In his own copy of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant amended A78 to suggest that the "imagination is a function of the understanding." See: Footnote [b] A78 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 211.

6. §31 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 112–20.

Other commentary suggesting Kant retracted from the power of the transcendental imagination also include: Richard Kearney, "The Transcendental Imagination," in *The Wake of Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1994), 171. Cornelius Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

In contrast to these claims, Longuenesse argues Kant did not eliminate the role of the imagination within the B Deduction. See: Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 60.

7. B143 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 252.
8. B129–130 ibid., 245.
9. B131 ibid., 246.
10. B132 ibid.
11. B139 ibid., 250.
12. B113–115 ibid., 216–17.
13. Kant introduces the categories in §10. See: B103–109 ibid., 210–14.
14. B131 ibid., 246.
15. B150 ibid., 256.
16. B143 ibid., 252.
17. B150 ibid., 256.
18. B150–51 ibid.
19. B154 ibid., 258.
20. B152–56 ibid., 257–59.
21. B150 ibid., 256.
22. Some examples of varying interpretations of figurative synthesis include: Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).
23. A123 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 240.
24. B151 ibid., 256.
25. As described in the A Deduction, the reproductive imagination reproduces *Vorstellungen* "even without the presence of the object" leading to a transition in the mind. See: A100 ibid., 229.

Schlutz regards the revised definition of the imagination given in the B Deduction as the reproductive imagination. See: Alexander M. Schlutz, *Mind's World: Imagination and Subjectivity from Descartes to Romanticism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 88.

On the other hand, Longuenesse contests this claim. See: Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 205–08.

26. B152 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 257.
27. Makkreel also promotes the view that in the B Deduction the imagination bears its own formative power even though it is conceived as a function of the understanding. See: Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 30.
28. B151 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 257.

29. As the representation of time is an a priori intuition it must be determined by the I think such that the representation of time is made representable. See: B156 ibid., 259.
30. B152 ibid., 257.
31. B160 ibid., 261.
32. §31 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 115–16.
33. B153, 155 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 257–58.
34. B157 ibid., 259.
35. Interestingly, Kant introduces the necessity for these two particular and special actions in two different sections of the B Deduction. See: B139, B158 ibid., 250, 60.

    The term *Besonderen* can also be translated as "special." See Glossary: ibid., 758.
36. B152 ibid., 257.
37. B158 ibid., 260.
38. §28 Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller, eds., *Anthropology, History and Education* ibid. (Cambridge: 2007), 278.
39. B157 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 259.
40. §31 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 119.
41. §31 ibid., 112.

Chapter 4

The Productive Imagination – A Determinate Power of Exhibition

Albeit opaque, obscure and imbued with a "profound darkness," the chapter titled "On the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding" does indeed form the central core of the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* simply for the fact that in the attempt to unveil the transcendental ground of the possibility of synthetic judgements a priori, Kant is forced to delve even further into the depths of the human soul.[1] In what can be described as a confrontation with the very limits of his own critical system, Kant portrays the possibility of synthetic judgements a priori as contingent on the action of schematism – a constitutive activity of the soul that confers a form of representational homogeneity between the heterogeneous realms of sensibility and understanding. Representative of an action that underlies the production of a cognition as a whole, schematism is, on Kant's view, principally fuelled by power of judgement and the a priori powers of the productive imagination – namely, the power of representing *and* the power of synthesis a priori.

By drawing on and unifying the powers of the transcendental imagination outlined within the A and the B Deductions of the *Critique*, the Schematism offers a developed and refined account of the imagination providing a new foundation upon which to envisage the productive imagination as figurative synthesis. Reading the Schematism in this way reveals that in the attempt to unveil the ground of how synthetic judgements a priori are possible, Kant presents the idea, albeit only in a tentative and undeveloped form, that the productive imagination is a power of exhibition [*Darstellung*] – a determinate power of the soul, which gives intuitable form and veracity to the pure concepts of the understanding conferring, in the process, the means through which a unified consciousness can have before their own "eyes" the identity of their own unified actions. Accordingly, within the brevity of this inherently

complex chapter of the *Critique*, Kant once again portrays the imagination as an indispensable function of the human soul continuing to develop an emergent and modern account of the imagination.

THE ACTION OF SCHEMATISM

The schematism of the understanding forms the principal concern of this chapter of the *Critique* for this constitutive action of the soul is, for Kant, indispensable to the determinative power of judgement. Establishing a form of representational homogeneity between the heterogenous realms of sensibility and understanding, the action of schematism renders the intuition and the concept amenable to unification through the determinative and subsumptive power of judgement.[2]

Given the action of schematism is indispensable to the formation of analytic and synthetic forms of judgement, it is bewildering to observe that the transcendental ground of this activity of the soul is unveiled in one of the briefest chapters of the *Critique*. As a result, and as acknowledged by many, the Schematism presents with inherent difficulties.[3] Perhaps these difficulties expose Kant's own uncertainty regarding the essential nature of the action of schematism because it is, as he describes, a "hidden art [*Kunst*] in the depths of the human soul, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty."[4] Or, perhaps these difficulties arise intentionally. Perhaps Kant knowingly concealed the disquieting role of the transcendental imagination in order to promulgate the relationship between reason and freedom.

Although inexplicable suppositions, revealing the hidden art of the schematism of the pure understanding pertains directly to the central question of the *Critique* – the question of how synthetic judgements a priori are possible? On Kant's view, this pervasive question can only be answered by resolving the issue of *how* a form of representational homogeneity can be established between the "entirely unhomogeneous" nature of the pure concepts of the understanding and the inner realm of sensibility. Of *how*, for example, the category of causality can be applied to appearances in general? Or, as Kant succinctly questions, "How is the *subsumption* of the [intuition] under the [pure concept], thus the *application* of the category to appearances possible?"[5]

Raising the central question of the Schematism introduces the necessity for the distinct yet interrelated activities of subsumption and of application. Remarkably, however, rather than clarifying the specific role these activities play in the action of schematism, Kant simply introduces the idea that the establishment of a form of representational homogeneity between the appearance and the category is conditional on the presence of a "third thing:"

> Now it is clear that there must be some third thing, which must stand in homogeneity with the category on the one hand and the appearance on the other, and makes possible the application of the former to the latter. This mediating representation must be pure (without anything empirical content) and yet *intellectual* on the one hand and *sensible* on the other. Such a representation is the *transcendental schema*.[6]

The transcendental schema plays a principle role in the subsumption of the intuition under the pure concept of the understanding for its presence ensures the application of the category to an appearance "becomes possible."[7] Kant's choice of terminology here is critical providing the key to resolving the unspecified distinction between the act of subsumption and the act of application.[8] The application of the category to an appearance is *made possible* through the presence of the transcendental schema, which subsumes the intuition under the concept through a "transcendental time-determination."[9] In other words, and developing the central albeit undeveloped tenets of the B Deduction, the realm of inner sense must be determined in accordance with its form and the manifold of representations must be determined in accordance with the synthetic unity of apperception. As time is contained in every empirical representation of the manifold and as time is homogeneous with the category for it constitutes its unity, then the application of the category to an appearance is *made possible* through the "procedure of the understanding." Drawing on the contemporaneous nature of the category, Kant claims that a transcendental time-determination involves the presence of the "schema of the concept of the understanding," which, by mediating between sensibility and understanding, makes possible the generation of time. Accordingly, the pure concept of the understanding can be made sensible through a transcendental time-determination, which mediates the subsumption of the appearance under the category *making possible* the act of application.

Although the act of subsumption *makes possible* the act of application, as Kant goes onto explain the "general condition" under which the category can be applied to an appearance requires an object [*Gegenstand*] be "given [*gegeben*]" in intuition.[10] In other words, and confirming the underlying essence of the B Deduction, the categories of the pure understanding can only obtain "significance" and provide cognitions with a priori objective reality when applied to an object given in intuition. As the transcendental imagination is the power of the soul that acts upon the determinable realm of sensibility then an object can only be given in intuition through the "general procedure of the imagination." The general procedure of the imagination ensures the category can be applied to an appearance by providing a concept with its image in the form of the schema *for* the concept.

Conceived in this way, the general action of schematism involves the procedure of the understanding *and* the general procedure of the imagination. The procedure of the understanding provides a transcendental time-determination *and* the general procedure of the imagination provides a concept of the understanding with its image. The action of schematism involves, therefore, the presence of two forms of transcendental schemata – namely, the "*schema* of sensible concepts" and the "schema of a pure concept of the understanding."[11] The schema of sensible concepts plays a specific role in the activity of application, which, through the general procedure of the imagination, provides a concept with its image. The schema of a triangle or the schema of a dog are but mere examples. And, the schema of the pure concepts of the understanding plays a specific role in the activity of subsumption, which, through the schematism of the understanding, renders possible a transcendental time-determination. The schema of reality and the schema of the cause are such examples. In the context of this distinction, the schematism chapter provides an elucidation, not simply of the pure schematism of the understanding but also of the general action of the schematism of the understanding.

THE ACTION OF THE PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

Despite the ambiguous introduction to the activities of subsumption and of application and the role they play in the general action of schematism, the schematism contributes to an emergent account of the powers of the transcendental imagination by defining the schema as "always only a product of the imagination."[12] The schema involved in the activity of subsumption and the schema involved in the activity of application are, on Kant's view, both products of the imagination.

Accordingly, the definition of the schema as a product of the imagination establishes an important distinction between the empirical and the a priori faculties of the productive imagination. The empirical power of the productive imagination is defined as a power that produces the form of an image [*Bild*] of something.[13] And, the a priori power of the productive imagination is defined as a power, which produces the form of a schema. Although the image and the schema are both products of the productive imagination, they are produced in accordance with the particular "aims" of each of these faculties of the productive imagination. In other words, and on Kant's view, the empirical and a priori faculties of the productive imagination play very specific roles in the formation of a cognition as a whole through the production of varying forms of representations.

The Image – A Product of the Empirical Faculty of the Productive Imagination

In order to highlight the particular role of the empirical faculty of the productive imagination, it is useful to begin with Kant's own reference to the example of five points in a row (…..), which presents as an "image [*Bild*]" of the number five.[14] Within the context of the definition of the empirical synthesis of apprehension given in the A and B Deduction, the image of the number five is given in intuition through the determinative power of the empirical faculty of the productive imagination. By spontaneously synthesizing the determinable and receptive realm of the empirical synopsis of sensibility, the synthesis of apprehension by the empirical faculty of the productive imagination produces in intuition the form of an object corresponding to the conceptual requirements of the number five.

Although playing a constitutive role in the possibility of experience, the action of the empirical faculty of the productive imagination is, in this context, necessarily constrained. As discussed, the power of synthesis by the productive imagination has as its "aim" the necessary unity in the synthesis of the manifold of sensibility. In this regard, the empirical faculty of the productive imagination simply synthesizes the empirical synopsis of sensibility into a *particular* form as an object of an empirical cognition. The image is given, therefore, through the productive imagination residing in a mediate form of relation between the empirical synopsis of sensibility and the conceptual requirements of the understanding.

The Schema – A Product of the A Priori Faculty of the Productive Imagination

In order to highlight the specific role of the a priori faculty of the productive imagination, it is useful to consider Kant's reference to the capacity to think of a number say, for example, of one thousand. Bringing to mind the thought of one thousand is, as he suggests, "the representation of a method for representing [*Vorzustellen*] a multitude in an image in accordance with a certain concept."[15] While this description confirms the imagination is, as described in the B Deduction, a representing power, Kant uses this example to highlight the fact that the capacity to think of one thousand does not require the mind empirically "survey" the image of 1,000 points in a row and connect the image with its concept mediately. On the contrary, the mind can *immediately* cognize the concept of 1,000 through the general procedure of the imagination, which provides a concept with its image. In this regard, the a priori faculty of the productive imagination does not have as its aim unity in the manifold of sensibility. Rather, and as Kant argues here, in this instance, the imagination has as its aim the form

of an "individual [*Einzelne*]" or a special intuition produced in accordance with conceptual requirements imposed by the concept.[16] Therefore, and in distinction to the *particular* form of the form of an image, the "mere form" of the schema is a special form of intuition embodying the *general* attributes imposed by the concept without the need for an empirical representation thereof.

The Schema of Sensible Concepts – A Product of the Representing Power

Although Kant uses the particular example of the capacity to think of 1,000 to highlight the role of the schema, as discussed, he does in fact introduce the necessity for two varying forms of transcendental schemata – the schema of sensible concepts, which provides a concept with its image as in the above example, and the schema of the pure concepts of the understanding, which renders possible a transcendental time-determination making representable the various determinations of time.

Of particular interest to Kant, however, is the schema of sensible concepts. As evident in the example of the capacity to think of a number, the schema of a sensible concept plays a central role in providing a concept with its image. By giving intuitable form to a sensible concept, the schema embodies the generality of the concept, rendering it applicable to all empirical or a priori forms thereof. And yet, on Kant's view, the capacity to produce an appearance in the "mere form" of the schema must remain as a "hidden art [*Kunst*]."[17] Unable to delve any further into the depths of the human soul, all Kant can say is the schema of a sensible concept is "a product and as it were a monogram of pure *a priori* imagination through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible."[18]

Albeit brief, this remarkable definition confirms the central tenets of the B Deduction depicting the productive imagination as the power to represent in intuition forms of its own determinative activity. However, and in this particular instance, Kant implicitly promotes the view that the monogram forms the original product of the pure a priori imagination. As the productive imagination has been defined in the B Deduction as a power to represent in intuition the form of an object even without its presence, the capacity to produce the form of the monogram must form the original product of the pure imagination. In other words, the monogram forms the original object represented in intuition.

Notwithstanding the significance of this claim, the indistinct and indeterminable form of the monogram is also described as a figure in space – as an undetermined figure given in outer sense in the form of an appearance. And yet, in spite of its indeterminable nature, the form of the monogram plays an indispensable role in the possibility of all forms of experience. As Kant

explains, the form of the monogram underlies and makes possible all forms of "image making," including all empirical and a priori forms. It does so, for the form of a monogram embodies, as he later suggests, a series of "individual traits" not "determined through any assignable rule."[19] Devoid of any rules, these traits simply introduce the notion of form. Yet, Kant is faced here, once again, with the very limits of his own critical system for he is unable to explain *how* these individual traits are produced or *how* they impart a tangible sense of *form*. All that he can concede is that in the form of a "wavering sketch" or an "incommunicable silhouette" in intuition, this figure in space imparts a sense of space, or a sense of internality.[20] It is not simply a figure that is given in intuition, rather a figure is given *in* space – the tangible form of which is incapable of providing any determinate rules and yet it is capable of giving *form* to all forms of empirical and a priori image making. The monogram is formed in intuition and for the mind this original intuition is forming.

Conceived in relation to the definition of the imagination given in the B Deduction and the definition given in the *Anthropology*, it would appear Kant is premising these definitions of the imagination on the power of the pure a priori imagination to produce the initial form of a monogram as a figure in space. To reiterate, the B Deduction described the imagination as "the faculty for representing [*Vorzustellen*] an object [*Gegenstand*] even *without its presence* in intuition."[21] And, the *Anthropology* described the imagination as "a faculty of the original presentation [*Darstellung*] of the object [*Gegenstand*] (*exhibitio originaria*), which thus precedes experience."[22] In the context of these definitions, it can be argued the Schematism introduces the claim that the form of the monogram forms the seed for all acts of figuration in the mind – it forms the seed of all acts of representing or all acts of exhibiting by the a priori power of the productive imagination and likewise, it forms the seed for all empirical acts of apprehension or of representation by the empirical power of the productive imagination. The monogram thus serves as an "unattainable model" for all possible a priori and empirical intuitions.[23]

It is important to acknowledge, however, that all schemata of sensible concepts are in fact given form through the action of schematism – the action of which involves a form of interplay between sensibility and understanding. Conceived in this particular way, the power of the imagination confers the form of the monogram with a series of particular traits in accordance with requirements of a concept. The schema is, therefore, a particular or special form of intuition because it embodies within its own figured and representable form the general attributes of the concept. *How* the imagination imparts these attributes through the production of form remains, for Kant, a hidden art of the soul. It is a hidden art for in distinction to the *particular* form of an image [*Bild*] of a triangle, the a priori schema of a triangle can specify the form of a triangle in *general* without being "restricted" to *any* particular

shape.[24] For example, the schema of a triangle contains the individual traits of a triangle rendering it applicable to all a priori and empirical forms and yet it is not reducible to these forms.

Similarly, the schema of a dog can, as Kant argues, "specify the shape of a four–footed animal in general." As something that can only exist as a figure within thought, the schema of a dog embodies a determinate yet indeterminable form that is both equal to and yet other than the empirical image of a dog. In this regard, the intuitable form of a sensible schema gives form to the possibility of thought itself and yet in doing so, it does not restrict thought to a determinate or particular form. In this regard, all schemata of sensible concepts are special or particular forms of intuitions for they embody and retain the essential, and what Kant portrays to be as the unknown indeterminacy of the a priori representing power of the pure imagination – the indeterminacy of which confers the possibility of form and yet it is not reducible to this form.

The Schema of a Pure Concept of the Understanding – A Product of the Power of Synthesis A Priori

The second form of transcendental schemata is defined as the schema of a pure concept of the understanding. Playing an indispensable role in the subsumption of the appearance under the category, the schema of the pure concept of understanding guides, directs, or mediates all forms of representations under the objective realm of the I think through a transcendental time-determination rendering possible the cognition of the content of empirical consciousness.

Unlike the schema of sensible concepts, the schema of the pure concept of understanding is described, however, as "something" that can "never be brought to an image at all."[25] Evoking the contemporaneous nature of the category previously defined in the B Deduction, the schema of the pure concept of the understanding is, for Kant, necessarily divorced from the intuitive realm of the soul – it functions simply to provide the "true and sole conditions" under which concepts obtain a form of relation to objects. Remaining separate to the intuitive realm, the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding allow the categories obtain "*significance*."[26] In other words, these schemata simply subject appearances to general rules of synthesis in accordance with the unity of apperception.

In order to grasp the essence of this proposal, it is useful to refer to Kant's description of the function of the schemata of the pure concepts of understanding.[27] The schema of magnitude contains and makes representable "the generation (synthesis) of time itself, in the successive apprehension of an object." The schema of quality contains and makes representable "the synthesis of sensation (perception) with the representation of time." The schema of relation contains and makes representable "the perceptions among themselves

to all time (i.e., in accordance with a of time–determination)." And, finally, the schema of modality contains and makes representable "time itself, as the correlate of the determination whether and how an object belongs to time." Accordingly, the schemata of the pure concepts of understanding impart to representation, not the notion of time but rather, time-determinations – they allow the a priori determinations of time in accordance with the a priori rules of the categories. In this regard, the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding play an indispensable role in the possibility of intuitive and discursive forms of thinking by allowing the subsumption of the appearance under a category through the power of judgement, making representable in the process the various determinations of time.

Although the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding allow the categories to obtain significance, as Kant goes onto explain, these forms of schemata can only impart time-determinations through the "transcendental synthesis of the imagination." The categories serve as functions for logical judgements by allowing the determination of the manifold of a given intuition in one empirical intuition through the transcendental synthesis of the imagination. Opening onto and developing the action of figurative synthesis previously defined, this important declaration proposes the transcendental synthesis of the imagination unifies the manifold of intuition in accordance with the unity of apperception and corresponding to inner sense.

Given the significance of the role of the action of synthesis a priori by the productive imagination, it is surprising to observe that rather than expanding on or developing this claim any further, Kant simply expresses his desire to avoid a "dry and boring analysis" of what is required for the procedure of the schematism of the understanding.[28] The fact that Kant refers to this analysis as potentially "dry and boring" is revealing. As the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding impart to representation time-determinations, these transcendental products of the imagination simply make representable the representation of time alongwith its varying determinations. And yet, they can only do so through the representing power of the productive imagination which confers the mind with a form of figuration a priori. Kant thus acknowledges the logical functions of the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding can only be realized as something actual and real through the remarkable representing power of the a priori faculty of the productive imagination.

FIGURATIVE SYNTHESIS – THE ACTION OF A TRANSCENDENTAL SCHEMATISM

Although Kant creates a particular distinction between the role of the schemata of sensible concepts and the schemata of the pure concepts of the

understanding, as discussed both of these schemata are involved in the action of schematism and both are involved in the formation of a cognition as a whole. The implications of this claim develop the B Deduction's introduction to the action of figurative synthesis for, and as rightly noted by Heidegger, the presence of these transcendental schemata implicitly suggests the determinate form of the I think must be grounded upon a transcendental schematism – a form of schematism that establishes the ontological form of the I think through the unification of the intuitive and intellectual realms of being.[29] Kant of course explored this necessity in part, in both the A and B Deductions through his discussion of the transcendental function of the imagination and the transcendental action of figurative synthesis as *synthesis speciosa*. And yet, within the brevity of the schematism, no explicit reference is made to the ontological requirement for a transcendental schematism. The schematism thus contains within itself another significant and palpable aporia.

One such attempt to resolve this aporia has been undertaken by Heidegger who willingly confronted the idea of a transcendental schematism. In Heidegger's view, the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding make "what is conceptually intended become[s] perceivable for the first time." The schemata of the pure concepts of understanding "procure" an image for the pure concepts of understanding and accordingly provide the condition for "the possibility that the being given within it can have this or that particular, revealed, indeed ontic horizon." In Heidegger's view, therefore, the transcendental schematism establishes transcendence through the "single and pure ontological horizon" given through the "pure image of time" – the image of which is acquired through the pure schemata of the understanding.

Notwithstanding the significance of Heidegger's claim, his emphasis on the role of the schemata of the pure concepts of understanding and his emphasis on the pure image of time overlooks the essential and underlying essence of the Kantian thesis. In particular, of the fact that the transcendental schematism must arise out of the interplay between the two transcendental schemata – the schema of sensible concepts *and* the schema of the pure concept of the understanding. Otherwise, the I think will not have "before its eyes" the identity of its unified actions – the identity of which must include the form of a phenomena.[30]

Conceived in relation to the central tenets of the B Deduction, a transcendental schematism must involve the action of figurative synthesis or *synthesis speciosa* – the action of which confers the a priori determination of time and of space. In this regard, a transcendental schematism involves the representing power of the pure a priori imagination, which gives to the I am a corresponding intuition in the form of the monogram, as a schema of a sensible concept. And, it involves the determining power of the pure a priori imagination, which

through the transcendental synthesis of the imagination determines the monogram in inner sense in accordance with the unity of apperception rendering possible a time-determination. Figurative synthesis thus gives form to the I think, as a unified consciousness composed of intuitive and intelligible realms capable of engaging and interacting with something other than itself.

Presented in this way, the transcendental schematism can be regarded as the procedure in which the I think and hence space *and* time are generated. It is the procedure in which the I, as an intelligent and thinking subject, can cognize itself as an object [*Objekt*] but only in the form of a phenomena. Accordingly, the action of *synthesis speciosa* is, as discussed, to be regarded as the moment of transcendence – a moment whereby the individual or special intuition is determined in a moment in time. Kant thus introduces the disquieting and implicit claim that although the I am yields the principle of unity, the I am can only be unified in the form of phenomena and noumena through the representing and determining power of the pure a priori imagination as *synthesis speciosa*.

THE DETERMINATE POWER OF EXHIBITION – AN ACTION OF THE PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

Envisaging the action of schematism as involving the unification of the schema of a sensible concept *and* the schema of a pure concept of the understanding is crucial to grasping the essence of an emergent idea that begins to take form both within and beyond the bounds of the Schematism chapter. A tentative idea that continues to promote the view that the productive power of the imagination plays a central role in enabling the I think to have "before its eyes" the identity of its own unified actions.[31] The metaphorical use of the term "eyes" evokes the necessity for the act of visualization for, and as discussed, the mind can only represent itself as a unified consciousness once it has visualized something determinate within its own mind – once it has before its own eyes the objects of its unified actions – once something "appears" within its own mind. And what is visualized or appears in the moment of transcendence is something that the mind has brought forth through its own spontaneous capacity to produce or create a certain form in intuition and to determine this form as something objective, tangible and real. Kant appears to be promoting the view here that the representing power of the imagination and the power of synthesis a priori can be conceived as a determinate power of exhibition [*Darstellung*]. Promoting the *Anthropology*'s definition of the imagination as faculty of the original presentation [*Darstellung*] of the object, Kant introduces the idea the phenomena is immediately given in intuition as something determinate and real through the determinate power of exhibition

[*Darstellung*], which, as a productive power of the imagination, confers the possibility of transcendence.

Although the seed for this compelling, albeit tentative or introductory line of enquiry can be found in both the B Deduction and the Schematism it begins to take definitive form within the following chapter of the *Critique* titled, "System of all Principles of Pure Understanding." Here, Kant confirms the earlier supposition that the pure concepts of the understanding are "mere forms of thought" in which no determinate object has yet been cognized.[32] In the form of a representation [*Vorstellung*], concepts remain "empty" – through them the mind merely plays with representations.[33]

The capacity to cognize something through the concepts requires an object be given [*Gegeben*] in some way. In distinction to the object given in intuition through a form of mediate experience as exemplified through reference to the image of five points in a row, the capacity to "give [*Geben*]" an object to the pure concepts of the understanding requires, as Kant now argues, that the object be "exhibited [*Darstellen*] immediately in intuition."[34] What Kant means by this description is that by giving an object in this way the representation [*Vorstellung*] of the concept immediately relates to actual or possible experience. Or, to be more specific, the object given in this way is the action, which renders the concept as something present or actual to the mind. As something that can be grasped and visualized within the mind as something real in a moment in time.

Although this introduction to the capacity to cognize the concept as something immediately present or actual to the mind is brief and perhaps incomplete, nonetheless it would appear that Kant is presenting the idea that in the form of an empty concept that lies a priori in the mind, the pure concepts of the understanding can only be rendered as sensibly present or actual to the mind through the process of being represented – the process of which involves the action of schematism with the product of this action arising out of the unification of the schema of a sensible concept *and* the schema of a pure concept of the understanding.[35] The use of the term *Darstellung* allows Kant to unite these particular actions of the imagination such that the form of the *Darstellung* in intuition renders the concept sensibly present *to* the mind. As Kant argues, "The schemata of sensibility first realize the categories."[36] They do so, for the schema of a sensible concept becomes a sensible presentation [*Darstellung*] or exhibition of a concept through a transcendental time-determination. An empty conceptual representation becomes something determinate for the I think and thereby relatable to possible or actual experience through the presentation [*Darstellung*] or the exhibition of schema, which, in the form of a phenomena, is simply the sensible concept of an object in agreement with the category. As the production of the schema in the form of a sensible presentation [*Darstellung*] or exhibition of a concept

involves the representing power and the power of synthesis a priori by the productive imagination, the productive imagination is now portrayed as a power of exhibition [*Darstellung*].

Remarkably, Kant does in fact confirm this introduction to the imagination as a determinate power of exhibition in the later chapter, titled "Discipline of Pure Reason," through an examination of mathematical forms of cognition.[37] These forms of cognition are of particular interest to Kant, for the realm of mathematics is, as he argues, a "resplendent example of pure reason happily expanding itself without assistance from experience." Associated with the transcendental category of freedom, mathematics is an example of a form of rational cognition but one that involves the intuitive use of reason. In particular, of the "construction of concepts" – the process of which involves the construction of a concept a priori.

Even though mathematics is portrayed as a form of rational cognition, the capacity to construct a concept requires, as Kant explains, the productive power of imagination produce a priori the form of an object in intuition. Confirming once again the productive imagination has the power to produce or create forms in intuition out of its own spontaneous and determinative activity, Kant defines the capacity to construct a concept as an action that exhibits [*Darstellen*] a priori an intuition corresponding to the concept. In other words, the capacity to construct a mathematical concept requires the productive power of imagination produce the form of a "*non-empirical* intuition," which corresponds to a concept, and through the exhibition or presentation of this intuition, the concept is rendered sensibly present to the mind. An example of this capacity is given through reference to the construction of a triangle:

> Thus, I construct a triangle by exhibiting an object corresponding to this concept, either through mere imagination, in pure intuition, or on paper, in empirical intuition, but in both cases completely *a priori*, without having had to borrow the pattern for it from any experience.[38]

Through the construction of the concept, either in the imagination or on paper, the object being exhibited in intuition becomes something *for* the I think, the *Darstellung* becomes cognizable as a determinate representation of a concept. And yet, the *Darstellung* embodies a special or particular nature for it expresses the concept without doing "damage" to its universality. In the form of an "*individual* object" – or in the form of an individual or special intuition – this non-empirical intuition gives form to and embodies the "universality" of the concept without limiting the concept to a *particular* form. The indeterminacy embodied within the figured form of the *Darstellung* ensures the concept retains its generality remaining applicable to many forms.

Remarkably, Kant does in fact acknowledge that the capacity to construct concepts – representative of the capacity to give form to something in space and in time – is associated with the act of creation. For, and as he briefly admits, "we create [*Schaffen*] the objects themselves in space and time" through the synthesis with the category of quantity.[39] In other words, through a form of figurative schematism between sensibility and understanding, the productive power of imagination creates the form of a presentation or exhibition and through this activity, the newly constructed concept can be visualized in the mind. Kant thus confirms the tentative albeit emergent theme within these two editions of the *Critique* that the productive power of the imagination embodies the capacity to produce and to create out of its own spontaneous and determinative activity certain forms and represent these forms as something actual in the mind. Forms of which are indispensable to the possibility of the unified form of self-consciousness and forms of which are indispensable to the possibility of experience itself.

Although the introduction to the productive imagination as a determinate power of exhibition remains in its essence brief and somewhat undeveloped, nonetheless it brings to the fore Kant's capacity to continually reflect on and explore the transcendental ground of the representational capacity of the human mind. In itself a representation of an ongoing movement of thought, these highly original reflections concerning the ground of the representational power of the human soul both implicitly and explicitly develop the disquieting role of the transcendental power of imagination across the two editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. While Kant's exemplary account of the power and function of the transcendental imagination leads to significant moments of tension and at times destabilizes a critique of pure reason, it does so by conferring the transcendental imagination with a series of constitutive and creative powers indispensable to all forms of experience, including experience of oneself. Accordingly, the unknown root of sensibility and understanding is not simply rooted in the production of original time, as Heidegger once suggested. Rather, and on Kant's view, the power of the transcendental imagination forms the root of sensibility and understanding because it has as its aim the form of an individual or special intuition. Representative of the non-empirical form of an object given in the form of a monogram, this individual intuition confers the possibility of a transcendental schematism – of transcendence –and it confers the possibility of all cognizable forms of *Vorstellungen* and *Darstellungen*. In this regard, the unknown seed of indeterminacy is, for Kant, not simply the power of a priori synthesis or the representing power of the pure or productive imagination. Rather, the Schematism chapter of the *Critique* lays the ground for the disquieting proposition that the unknown X is the determinate power of exhibition by the productive imagination – a claim that forms the foundation of Kant's second confrontation with the productive power of the imagination presented within the *Critique of Judgment*.

NOTES

1. These terms describing the nature of the schematism chapter draw on Eva Schaper's summary of the reception of this chapter of the *Critique*. See Footnote 4 in Eva Schaper, "Kant's Schematism Reconsidered," *The Review of Metaphysics* 18, no. 2 (1964).

Heidegger has also suggested the schematism forms the "central core" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. See: §18 Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, Fifth Edition, Enlarged ed. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 63.

2. As an example of the action of schematism, it is useful to refer to Kant reference to the capacity to judge whether a round object is in fact a plate. As the empirical representation of a plate is homogeneous with the pure geometrical concept of a circle then the power of judgment subsumes the empirical representation under the concept of a plate through the roundness, which is thought in the concept and intuited in the plate. See: A137/B176 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 271.

3. Allison acknowledges the ambiguity inherent within the schematism and provides a detailed consideration of commentary regarding the "difficultly and obscurity" of this section of the *Critique*. See: Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 202–04.

Schaper also provides a comprehensive reflection on the acknowledged difficultly of the schematism. See: Schaper, "Kant's Schematism Reconsidered."

4. B181 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 273.
5. A137/B176 ibid., 272.
6. A138/B177 ibid.
7. A139/B178 ibid.
8. There have been many interpretations of Kant's reference to the activities of subsumption and application. One such interpretation is offered by Allison who suggests Kant uses subsumption as a synonym for application. See: Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 210–13.

Another interpretation is provided by Longuenesse who associates the activity of subsumption with synthesis. See: Béatrice Longuenesse, "The Primacy of Quantitative Syntheses," in *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

See also, Pendlebury who offers another interpretation of the Schematism chapter, clarifying the role of subsumption and application. See: Michael Pendlebury, "Making Sense of Kant's Schematism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55, no. 4 (1995).

9. A139/B178 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 272.
10. A139–40/B178–80 ibid., 272–73.
11. A142/B181 ibid., 273–74.

As Makkreel rightly acknowledges, most discussions of the schematism chapter focus on the role of the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding. See:

Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 30.

12. A140/B179 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 273. It is important to acknowledge here that Kant uses the term "image [*Bild*]" in several different contexts.
13. A141/B181 ibid.
14. A140/B179 ibid.
15. A140/B179 ibid.
16. It is important to acknowledge here that the term *Einzelne* can also be translated as "special."
17. A141/B181 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 273.
18. A142/B181 ibid., 273–74.
19. A570/B598 ibid., 552–53.
20. Makkreel also explores the role of the schema of sensible concepts in establishing spatial dimension to inner sense. See: Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 29–42.
21. B151 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 256.
22. §28 Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller, eds., *Anthropology, History and Education* ibid. (Cambridge: 2007), 278.
23. A570/B598 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 553.
24. A141/B181 ibid., 273.
25. A142 ibid., 274.
26. A146 ibid., 276.
27. A145–46 ibid., 275–76.
28. A142 ibid., 274.
29. §22 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 72–77.
30. A108 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 233.
31. A108 ibid.
32. B150 ibid., 256.
33. B195 ibid., 282.

Kant also later acknowledges an object must be given in intuition in order to render the concept with objective validity. B298 ibid., 356.

34. A156/B195 ibid., 282.
35. This interpretation equates with Martha Helfer's interpretation of Kant's use of *darstellen* in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In principle, Helfer describes the *Darstellung* as "a rendering present or actual to the mind in such a manner that the object or entity being presented comes into its true being only in the process of being represented." B. Martha Helfer, *The Retreat of the Representation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 64–66.
36. B186 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 276.
37. A713/B741 ibid., 630.
38. A713/B741 ibid.
39. A723/B751 ibid., 635.

Chapter 5

The Productive Imagination – An Indeterminate Power of Exhibition

Within the context of the unknown seed of indeterminacy informing the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Judgment* stands as a watershed in Kant's own movement of thought through its exemplary, and what can be regarded to be as another sustained confrontation with the power of the transcendental imagination. Presented within a critique of aesthetic judgements of taste, this second confrontation with the imagination is, on many accounts, revelatory in nature principally for the fact that it is centred around an intimate critique of the realm of aesthetics, in particular of the judging of the objects of nature and the objects of aesthetic creation and of the purposiveness inherent within these aesthetic forms of judgement.

Given these concerns position the human subject within the world of nature and within a world of others, the *Critique of Judgment* opens onto a series of compelling epistemological and anthropological claims paving the way for a conception of the transcendental imagination as an embodied power of the soul that confers humankind with a unique aesthetic sensibility. An aesthetic sensibility that facilitates a form of connection with nature, that facilitates a form of sociability encouraging the capacity to think from the standpoint of others, that facilitates the development of a moral fortitude encouraging the capacity to think of what ought to be done, and finally, that facilitates the move toward universal enlightenment encouraging the capacity to think for oneself and to think of oneself as other than bounded by the laws of nature. Within the context of this extensive range of epistemological and anthropological claims, the *Critique of Judgment* provides an overwhelmingly insightful appraisal of the unique attributes of the human condition through a sustained and focused reflection on the indispensable power of the transcendental imagination. Notable for its breadth and originality, Kant's reflection on the realm of aesthetics accordingly restores the antinomical form

of relation between reason, imagination and the domain of freedom implicitly evoking, once again, the disquieting presence of the unknown X.[1]

THE POWER OF EXHIBITION

For the most part, these series of exceptional claims concerning the transcendental power of the imagination are centred around a critique of the activity of *darstellen* and the form of the *Darstellung*.[2] In distinction to the emergent and undeveloped narrative of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Judgment* overtly refers to the action of *darstellen* introducing the representational form of the *Darstellung* through reference to aesthetic, schematic and symbolic forms of representations.[3] The sudden and unsolicited interest in this representational capacity of the soul explicitly and remarkably confirms the series of tentative epistemological claims outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, associating the activity of *darstellen* with the formation of schematic exhibitions or presentations. As Kant concedes in the Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*, the capacity to exhibit [*Darstellen*] a concept is a procedure, whereby the determinative power of judgement places beside a concept an intuition corresponding to it, rendering the concept cognizable as something determinate within thought.[4] Later in the *Critique*, this action is described as a schematic "*hypotyposis*" or exhibition [*Darstellung*].[5] The rhetorical use of the term *hypotyposis* brings attention to the earlier claim outlined within the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the mind can only think of its own identity if it has "before its eyes" the identity of its own actions.[6] In the context of this description, schematic hypotyposis plays an indispensable role in the determinative acts of judgement rendering the concept as sensibly present or actual to the mind. Visualizing the concept as something determinate and tangible within thought is the procedure that establishes the objective validity of the concepts of the understanding.[7] Although the act of *darstellen* in this particular context is relegated to the power of judgement, as outlined within the emergent narrative of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, an object can only be immediately given in intuition through the productive and determinate power of exhibition. By creating out of its own spontaneous activity an object in intuition, the productive imagination is the power of the soul that gives a corresponding intuition to the concept.

Despite confirming the undeveloped narrative of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Judgment* continues to contribute to an emergent account of the transcendental imagination through an ongoing and sustained consideration of the productive imagination as an indeterminate power of exhibition. In particular, of the role this power of the soul plays

in the subjective interplay or schematism between the cognitive powers [*Vermögen*] of the soul. Distinct from the objective interplay or schematism that occurs in the formation of schematic forms of representations, Kant accords the subjective form of schematism a particular role in the formation of aesthetic and symbolic forms of representations. Associated with the form of the *Darstellung*, these forms of representations are, for Kant, intimately linked to an inherent purposiveness unique to humankind underlying the capacity of humankind to be of nature and yet to transcend the determinate bounds of nature. The role of the *Darstellung* thus forms a pervasive and central line of enquiry within the *Critique of Judgment* promulgating the view Kant's modern account of the imagination does not simply reside within the *Critique of Pure Reason* but unfolds across the course of his oeuvre.

EMERGENT ANTINOMIES: THE CONCEPTS OF NATURE AND THE CONCEPTS OF FREEDOM

In principle, Kant's second exemplary account of the power of the transcendental imagination is positioned within an attempt to bridge the "immense gulf" that resides between the theoretical domain of nature and the practical domain of freedom.[8] Having outlined in the first two *Critiques* the bounds of these particular domains, the *Critique of Judgment* endeavoured to unify these disparate domains by appealing to the mediating role of the faculty of judgement.

The First and Second Introductions to the *Critique of Judgment* open onto this endeavour by demarcating between the laws and the concepts of nature and the laws and the concepts of freedom.[9] As outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the laws of nature disclosed the fact that understanding legislates theoretically through the concepts of nature. Conditioned by the realm of the sensible, the concepts of nature contain a priori the basis for all theoretical cognition allowing the representation [*Vorstellung*] of its objects – not in the form of things in themselves, but only in the form of appearances in intuition. The concepts of nature thus give form to the laws of nature, not how they are in themselves but only as they appear.

In contrast, the laws of freedom outlined in the *Critique of Practical Reason* disclosed the fact that reason legislates practically through the concepts of freedom. Conditioned by the realm of the supersensible, the concepts of freedom contain a priori the basis of a series of practical rules allowing the representation of its objects – not in the form of an object in intuition, but only in the form of a thing in itself. The concepts of freedom

thus give form to the laws of freedom, not how they appear but only how they ought to be.

Given the particular legislative domains of understanding and of reason, Kant was faced with the fact that both the domain of nature and the domain of freedom were unable to cognize their own objects as things in themselves. The "unbounded" and "inaccessible" realm of the supersensible could never be "raised up" or "expanded" into a cognition rendering impossible the transition from a way of thinking that is based on the principles of nature to a way of thinking that is based on the principles of freedom.

The key to resolving the inherent divide between the domains of nature and of freedom lay, for Kant, with the power of judgement.[10] Mediating between understanding and reason, the power of judgement renders possible the expression of the realm of the supersensible facilitating the spontaneous transition between the higher powers of the soul. An example is provided through reference to the act of discovery.[11] The discovery that two heterogeneous empirical laws can be united under one a priori principle allows a transition in thinking because the production or the creation, for that matter, of an a priori law by the power of reflective judgement subsumes the particular under the form of a universal. Reflective judgement ascends from the particular to the universal through the capacity to devise its own law – a law that is not borrowed from experience, forming the higher condition under which the empirical principles of nature can be unified.

The fact that reflective judgement allows a transition in thinking discloses the necessity for a form of harmony or congruence between nature's heterogenous laws and the cognitive powers of the human soul – the necessity of which indicates that the order of nature is cognizable.[12] Nature contains a series of rules amenable to the understanding, revealing that there is a purposiveness of nature for our understanding. That our judging of nature endeavours to bring the heterogenous laws of nature under higher empirical laws, actively seeking in the process to discover something beyond the bounded laws of nature. Reflective judgement must assume, therefore, that there is a principle of purposiveness, which guides judgement in the act of discovery, specifically through the presence of a "transcendental concept of a purposiveness of nature." Neither a concept of nature nor a concept of freedom, the concept of a purposiveness of nature is, for Kant, a subjective principle of judgement that provides the necessary procedure through which one can reflect on the objects of nature. In this regard, the procedure of reflective judgement is indispensable to the possibility of all forms of "thoroughly coherent experience" but more importantly it is, as Kant highlights, indispensable to the transition from a way of thinking that is based on the principles of nature to a way of thinking that is based on the principles of freedom.

THE SUBJECTIVE ACTION OF SCHEMATISM

On a more intimate level, the fact that nature is cognizable presupposes the representation [*Vorstellung*] of an object [*Objekt*] in the mind contains within itself a series of subjective features or aesthetic characteristics, which render possible a form of interplay or harmony between the cognitive powers of the soul.[13] The first subjective feature of the representation refers to the "quality of the space" in which the object is intuited.[14] As an object is intuited through sensation, an appearance is given in intuition through the ability "to sense" the object of experience. The representation is, therefore, something present in intuition and yet it is not determinatively cognized as a representation of something in a single moment of time.

The second subjective feature of a representation is the "*pleasure* or *displeasure*" connected with that representation. As Kant explains, this pleasure or displeasure is simply an "effect" of some form of cognition leading to a modification of the state of being. Because of this, the pleasure or displeasure connected with a representation does not and "*cannot at all become an element of cognition*." Although unable to lead to the cognition of an object, this subjective feature of a representation is of particular importance for it unveils a "purposiveness that precedes the cognition of an object." It unveils the fact that even though we are not seeking to use the representation for the purposes of cognition, connection with the representation always occurs.

On Kant's view, however, the purposiveness associated with pleasure or displeasure presents in two varying forms. The first form of purposiveness relates to the pleasure or displeasure that is connected with the mere apprehension of an object of the senses.[15] As the mere apprehension of an object [*Gegenstand*] in intuition does not give rise to determinate cognition, the pleasure connected with this representation simply expresses the fact that the form of the object in intuition is "commensurate" with one's cognitive powers. That the form of the object given through the empirical power of the imagination is amenable to, or can subjectively schematize with, the powers of the understanding and of judgement. As this form of pleasure is associated with all forms of experience, then this feeling of pleasure "merely" expresses the "subjective formal purposiveness of the object [*Objekt*]."

The second form of purposiveness relates to the pleasure or displeasure that is connected with the act of reflection. Once an object has been apprehended in intuition in the form of an empirical representation, the act of reflection on the *form* of the object [*Gegenstand*] may "unintentionally" bring the imagination (as the power [*Vermögen*] of a priori intuition) into a form of harmony with the power of the understanding (as the power of concepts) leading to the evocation of a "feeling of pleasure." As a subjective effect of a representation, the feeling of pleasure or of displeasure is also briefly described as the

"feeling of life."[16] In a notable reference to Epicurus, Kant elaborates on the brevity of this claim by suggesting that Epicurus was correct in observing that "*gratification* and *pain* are ultimately always of the body."[17] All forms of sensual *and* intellectual representations of an object lead to a "modification of the subject" – they all lead to either gratification or pain because in the absence of these feelings, life is "merely consciousness of existence." And although the mind is "the very principle of life," any stimulation or inhibition of the vital forces must, in Epicurus' view, be located in the mind's connection with the body. The obstacles to one's life and the furtherance of one's life may come from without and yet ultimately, they come from within.

Epicurus's depiction of the subject as being embodied yet free is of particular importance to Kant for the basis of the feeling of pleasure forms the subjective universal condition of *all* reflective judgements. As he explains, the act of reflection on the mere form of the object in intuition is purposive for the pleasure evoked through reflection discloses a purposive harmony between the empirical representation of the object and the cognitive powers of the soul. A form of harmony that is rendered possible through a form of connection with nature and yet it is a harmony that is generated entirely within one's own mind. Accordingly, the feeling of pleasure is of utmost importance to Kant for the feeling that arises in reflective judgements of taste makes us "pay attention" to the purposiveness of nature for our understanding.[18] The feeling of pleasure makes us pay attention to the fact that we can connect with nature and yet we can move beyond the bounds of nature through the discovery, not simply of the particular, but of the universal. A discovery that allows the heterogenous laws of nature to be brought under higher empirical laws, rendering possible the move beyond the bounds of commonest experience. By discovering new forms of connection and new forms of meaning, the power of reflective judgement enables a transition from a way of thinking that is based on the principles of nature to a way of thinking that is based on the principles of freedom conferring in the process access to the realm of the supersensible.

THE INDETERMINATE POWER OF EXHIBITION – AN ACTION OF THE PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

Despite the centrality of the role Kant accords the power of reflective judgement and its relationship to an inherent form of purposiveness, the dominant narrative of the *Critique of Judgment* is interrupted and interceded by a series of exemplary reflections concerning the power of the transcendental imagination.[19] In principle, these original series of reflections are contextualized

around a specific and focused interest in aesthetic judgements of taste. These reflective forms of judgement are of particular interest to Kant due to the fact that aesthetic judgements of taste proclaim universal validity. The sudden and unsolicited exclamation that a rose is beautiful is a judgement of taste that is assumed to have "*everyone's* assent."[20] And yet, as Kant does in fact acknowledge, the basis of a judgement of taste is entirely subjective. The declaration that a rose is beautiful is not a logical nor a cognitive judgement for its determining basis cannot be attributed to a determinate concept of the understanding.[21] It is merely a subjective judgement for the ability to judge an object by means of a "liking" or a "disliking" is one that is "*devoid of all interest*." A judgement of taste is "disinterested" and "*free*" for its determining basis is merely a reflection on the feeling of pleasure or of displeasure – as a reflection on the feeling of life.

Given aesthetic judgements of taste are based purely on a liking or a disliking their universal communicability can only be attributed to the subjective condition of cognition.[22] In Kant's view, this subjective condition can be nothing other than the "mental state" or the harmony that arises between the cognitive powers of the soul during the act of representation. As outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, when an object is given [*Gegeben*] in intuition, the representational powers of imagination and understanding are brought into a form of harmony or a form of play through the objective activity of schematism. By directing this play to a determinate concept of the understanding, the power of determinative judgement gives rise to the form of a cognition as a whole.

In distinction to the objective condition underlying the power of determinative judgement, the subjective condition underlying a reflective judgement of taste is based purely on a subjective form of play between the representational powers of the soul. Reference to the term "play" in this particular context suggests the ensuing harmony between the representational powers of the soul is not directed to a determinate concept. The powers of the imagination and the understanding are brought into play in the presence of an empirical representation of a rose, and given this play is not directed to a concept, these powers of the soul are left to simply reside in a form of "free play." Although unable to produce the determinate form of a cognition as a whole, the free play between the representational powers of the imagination and understanding is of particular interest to Kant for it forms a state of representing that holds for everyone. Every reflective judgement of taste evokes a form of free play between the imagination and the understanding rendering the state of representing in a judgement of taste as having "subjective universal communicability." Much like the fact that all determinate forms of cognition are communicable, so too is the ability to communicate one's own subjective mental state through reflection on the feeling of pleasure. The proclamation

the rose is beautiful communicates the fact that the feeling of pleasure evoked through a reflective judgement of taste is a universal state experienced by all. On Kant's view, the universality of this state of representing is exemplified on an empirical and a psychological level by humankind's "natural propensity to sociability" for the communicability of pleasure ultimately leads to social rather than unsocial forms of engagement.

As the subjective condition of aesthetic judgements of taste is communicable through reference to pleasure, Kant is faced with the question of *how* does one become "conscious" of the harmony between the cognitive powers of the soul? In distinction to the intellectual consciousness of a determinate cognition given through an objective schematism, the consciousness of the free play between the cognitive powers of the soul can only be revealed through "sensation." Not to be envisaged as a form of perceptual sensation, the sensation associated with an aesthetic judgement of taste arises, as discussed, through the free play between the mental powers of the soul – envisaged as a "quickening," as a "facilitated play," or as a "reciprocal harmony" between the cognitive powers of the imagination and understanding. The metaphorical use of these terms promotes the idea that sensation is given through reflection on the powers [*Vermögen*] rather than the products of the imagination and understanding as they reside in a form of "attunement" or in a form of harmonious interplay. Reflection on the free play of the representational powers of the soul confers the mind with a particular, albeit indeterminable form of sensation simply given through feeling. A liking or a disliking is to be conceived, therefore, as the determination of the feeling of pleasure or of displeasure given through the act of reflection on the form of this free play.

It is in the context of this exploration of how one becomes conscious of the harmony between the cognitive powers of the soul that Kant begins to develop his reflections on the power of the transcendental imagination. In distinction to the determinate power of exhibition tentatively introduced in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant openly refers to this power of the imagination through a reflection on the act of liking. As he outlines in the following paragraph:

> Liking is connected with the mere exhibition [*Darstellung*] or power [*Vermögen*] of exhibition, i.e., the imagination, with the result that we regard this power, when an intuition is given us, as harmonizing with the *power of concepts* i.e., the understanding or reason, this harmony furthering [the aims of] these.[23]

The use of the term *Darstellung* highlights the fact that liking is connected with an immediate sensible awareness of these powers of the soul as they reside in a form of free play – the awareness of which sensibly illustrates to the mind the veracity of these powers of the soul, but in particular of the

indeterminacy of the power of the imagination. As the form of play between the powers of the imagination and understanding is not directed to the presence of a determinate concept and as the productive power of imagination is the "originator of chosen forms of possible intuition" then in this moment, the imagination remains free to schematize a multitude of possible forms.[24] The productive power of the imagination remains free to exhibit [*Darstellen*] in intuition its capacity to schematize *without* a concept, enabling the imagination to exhibit the essential indeterminacy of its own powers as it resides in a form of harmony with the understanding. Kant thus promotes the view that the act of reflection on the imagination "*in its freedom*" harmonizing with the power of the understanding "*in its lawfulness*" is the action, which enables a reflection upon the veracity of the indeterminacy of one's own feeling of life. The feeling of which can only be given through a reflective judgement of taste.

JUDGEMENTS OF THE BEAUTIFUL – THE LIMITLESSNESS OF THE POWER OF EXHIBITION

Despite the fact that the freedom of the imagination must reside in relation to the lawfulness of the understanding, Kant accords the freedom or indeterminacy of the imagination an indispensable role in judgements of the beautiful and judgements of the sublime. The distinction between these particular judgements of taste pertains directly to the form of the object apprehended in intuition. As Kant explains, a judgement of the beautiful is an aesthetic judgement of taste that is "tied" to or "bounded" by the determinate form of the object.[25] What Kant means by this description is that in the presence of a rose, for example, the empirical faculty of the productive imagination acts upon the determinable manifold of empirical sensibility producing an image of the rose in one's own intuition.[26] Reflection *on* the bounded form of the image [*Bild*] or perceptual representation of a rose is the activity, which brings the "*free lawfulness*" of the power of the productive imagination into a form of free play or harmony with the lawfulness of the power of the understanding.[27] As the power of imagination is brought into harmony with a higher cognitive power of the soul, the indeterminacy of the schematizing activity of the imagination becomes determinable – it becomes immediately intuitable as something actual or present to the mind, albeit in the form of a sensation.

As all reflective judgements embody an essential purposiveness, then in Kant's view, judgements of the beautiful are connected with the representation [*Vorstellung*] of "*quality*" – as the representation of the feeling of one's life being "furthered."[28] As the representation of one's life being furthered is given through reflection upon an apprehended and bounded form of an object

in intuition, a judgement of the beautiful is always connected with an object – a claim which would suggest that liking is connected with the purposiveness of nature. Yet, for Kant, the liking elicited in a judgement of the beautiful *embodies* a causality beyond the purposiveness of the object because the feeling of liking keeps the cognitive powers engaged without an aim.[29] One can "linger" in this contemplative state. One can linger in the reflection upon the harmony that arises between the free lawfulness of imagination and the lawfulness of the understanding – a state of harmony, which "reinforces and reproduces itself."

As the causality evoked by this contemplative state is not associated with the power of desire – as the power of reason – Kant attributes this causality to a "purposiveness without a purpose."[30] It is a purposiveness without a purpose because the capacity to reflect upon and embrace this contemplative mental state through the sensation of the evocation of the indeterminacy of the imagination provides the necessary condition for reflection upon the subjective universal communicability of human cognition. As Kant explains, the capacity to reflect on the feeling of life, which is in itself a purely subjective and private condition, encourages a movement beyond bodily sensations. Reflecting upon the fact that this subjective state of representing is a state that holds for everyone leads to a movement within thought – a movement that elevates oneself above the need for sensual forms of gratification enabling a reflection upon the needs or the desires of others.[31] Aesthetic judgements of taste are associated, therefore, with the feeling of one's life being furthered for the act of reflection on one's own subjective state encourages the act a reflection upon the state of others – a revelation that provides, for Kant, the key to the transition from a way of thinking that is based on the principles of nature to a way of thinking that is based on the principles of freedom.

Opening onto an endeavour to bridge the divide between the concepts of nature and the concepts of freedom, Kant associates this movement or transition within thought with the notion of the "*sensus communis*."[32] Representative of "the idea of a sense *shared* [by all of us]," the sensus communis is regarded as a sense that enables one to judge from a "*universal standpoint*." By abstracting from the subjective limitations imposed by one's own feeling of life or one's own feeling of indeterminacy and by reflecting on the formal features of one's own representational state, one can begin to judge by putting oneself in the position of others. A way of judging that takes into account everyone else's way of representing by comparing one's own subjective forms of judgement with "human reason in general" – with how things *ought* to be. The aesthetic power of judgement thus confers a movement within thought allowing a "*broadened*" way of thinking – a way of thinking that accommodates from a moral standpoint, the viewpoint of others.

It is in the context of the idea of the *sensus communis* that Kant completes on one level, his endeavour to bridge the immense gulf that resides between the concepts of nature and the concepts of reason, in principle, through a brief exploration of symbolic exhibitions or presentations [*Darstellungen*].[33] These forms of presentations are of particular interest to Kant for they allow the comparison of one's own subjective judgement with "human reason in general," principally by establishing the objective validity of a concept of reason through a symbolic "*hypotyposis*." Kant introduces the necessity for the presence of a symbolic *hypotyposis* for a concept of reason can only be made sensible – not through the presence of a direct intuition but only by means of an analogy – by means of how the "idea of an object ought to become for us."

However, and as Kant goes onto explain, the comparison of one's own subjective judgement with reason in general requires the indispensable function of the productive imagination. Symbolic *hypotyposis* – the act which allows the indirect representation of a concept of reason – involves the power of the productive imagination, which renders sensibly present or actual to the mind the concept of reason, of the idea of how an object ought to be. An example of this procedure is provided by Kant's reference to a monarchy ruled by absolute will. Associating the absolute will of this monarchy with the representation of a hand-mill symbolizes the autocratic nature of the monarchy through reference to the machine-like properties evoked through the imagery introduced through the representation of the mill. As this example shows, the representation of a hand-mill generates a symbolic *hypotyposis* in intuition. It does so, principally, through the power of reflective judgement, which transfers the act of reflection upon the representation of the hand-mill to an entirely different concept that cannot be directly represented in intuition. Symbolic *hypotyposis* thus makes visible or renders conscious to the mind a concept of reason, not through direct representation in intuition but rather via the indirect exhibition of the concept given through the power of the productive imagination and the power of reflective judgement.

Conceived in this way, the beautiful is, for Kant, a symbol of the "morally good." The beautiful is a symbolic *hypotyposis* for the claim that a rose is beautiful is not subjected to the "heteronomy" of empirical laws. In this moment, a judgement of the beautiful simply legislates to "itself," much like the power of desire, of reason. Kant thus reveals that all human subjects contain within themselves the very possibility of the notion of freedom *and* the possibility that nature can harmonize with this freedom. The claim of the beautiful is a state of representing in which the power of judgement mediates between something that is both within the subject and yet outside of the subject. The power of judgement mediates between something that is neither a concept of nature nor a concept of freedom and yet it is linked with the basis

of this freedom. In Kant's view, therefore, the judgement of the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good for the intuitive state evoked on reflection enables the transition from "sensible charm to a habitual moral interest." It enables the transition to a way of thinking that "assesses the values of other people," allowing the representation of what ought to be done.

Although a transition in thinking is given through the formation of a symbolic *hypotyposis*, on Kant's view, the capacity to move into a space that is shared with others is in fact centred around the aesthetic act of representation. The capacity to move from one's own internal and private space to a space of others – to a public space that is, as Arendt has highlighted, "open to all sides" – requires the capacity to be *in* the world and to be *in* a world amongst others, the capacity of which is conditional on the empirical power of the productive imagination, which, in this instance, is brought into play through the act of aesthetic representation.[34]

Accordingly, and in distinction to the primacy of the a priori faculty of the productive imagination outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the primacy of the action of the productive imagination is now attributed to its empirical faculty. The capacity to reflect on one's own subjective and embodied determinations requires the determinate and the indeterminate activity of the empirical faculty of the productive imagination. Aesthetic judgements of taste require the determinate power to produce the form of an object in intuition and it requires the indeterminate power to produce the feeling of pleasure – both activities are given through the empirical power of the productive imagination rendering possible all forms of aesthetic experience. As a result, the empirical power of the productive imagination confers the possibility for the cognition of the fact that one *is* in the world through reflection on the production of determinate forms of empirical representation, and it confers the cognition of the fact that one *is* in this world as one among others through reflection on the production of the feeling of pleasure. Accordingly, the development of a shared sense renders cognizable the fact that one is not a solipsistic being – a fact which confers the finitude of one's own embodied existence. And, the development of a shared sense renders cognizable the fact that one has the capacity to move beyond one's own subjective determinations – a fact which confers the infinitude of one's own embodied existence. In this regard, the empirical faculty of the productive imagination plays, for Kant, an indispensable role in the development of a way of thinking that is based on the principles of freedom.

Notwithstanding the significance of the role accorded to the empirical faculty of the productive imagination, Kant is forced to confront the "deeply hidden basis" of the underlying criteria on which a judgement of taste is made.[35] To confront the fact that there is no objective rule of taste in which to judge by. That a judgement of taste is purely aesthetic, being simply based on one's

own subjective feelings. Given each individual has the capacity to make an aesthetic judgement of taste, the universal communicability of taste must, as Kant argues, be premised on an "archetype of taste." The archetype of taste is an idea that everyone must generate within themselves and because of this, it must rest on a rational concept – on "reasons indeterminate idea of a maximum." And yet, in the form of an indeterminate idea, the archetype of taste cannot be represented through concepts it can only be represented through an ideal – through a representation that is adequate to an idea. Once again, Kant introduces the role of the productive imagination defining the "ideal of the beautiful" as an ideal of the imagination "precisely" for it can only be represented through an "individual [*Einzelner*] exhibition [*Darstellung*]" corresponding to an indeterminate concept of reason.

Kant thus accords the imagination a primary role in the formation of an ideal of the beautiful as exemplified by the fact that the ideal comprises two components – the "aesthetic *standard idea*" and the "*rational idea*." The aesthetic idea is defined as an individual intuition of the imagination, which presents as the "model image" – an image that forms the standard by which to judge by. In an exploration of *how* the model image is produced Kant is abruptly faced, however, with "natures secret." A secret that unveils the fact that Kant is unable to disclose the transcendental ground of the form of the model image. Much like the "hidden art [*Kunst*]" underlying the production of appearances as schemata, the transcendental ground of the production of the model image also remains for Kant, concealed within the depths of the human soul.

Faced once again with the very limits of his own critical system, Kant unabashedly resorts to a psychological deduction in order to disclose in some way natures secret. As he observes, the imagination can in a "manner wholly beyond our grasp" produce the form of a model image by recalling and projecting past images of a vast number of distinctive objects upon another. One may have seen a thousand adult men, for example, and if one wishes to make a judgement about their average size, the imagination projects these images onto each other arriving at a point of congruence – at an image that forms the "common standard" for an adult man. Taken from experience, the individual intuition hovers between all the singular and the multiple intuitions providing a standard *form*. Much like the form of a monogram, however, the standard *form* of an adult man is devoid of "specific characteristics."[36] And although devoid of any specific traits it provides a *form* by which to judge by.

Kant is thus faced with the fact that the model image is derived purely from aesthetic experience and yet, it is an image that cannot be determined by any determinate rules taken from experience. The antinomical form of relation between these two facts is resolved through Kant's proclamation that the model image is simply an archetype of "nature" – an image nature has used as its archetype for a particular species. The standard form of an adult man,

for example, constitutes the "indispensable condition" of all beauty given through nature.

Although conceding the model image is produced by the imagination in accordance with nature's own archetype, Kant also highlights the fact that much like the form of a monogram the standard idea does not and cannot contain a series of specific characteristics. The standard idea simply provides a standard form, as the model image given through the power of imagination. For Kant, therefore, the ideal of the beautiful can only be produced through a rational idea, which judges the form of the standard image in reference to the principles of the moral realm of the ideas. The standard image of an adult man must be judged, therefore, in reference to the rational idea of a "*human figure*." As Kant points out, however, the principles underlying a rational idea cannot be directly represented in sensibility as an intuition of imagination. On the contrary, the ideal of the beautiful can only be exhibited through a form of harmonizing between the "pure ideas of reason" and "a very strong imagination." In other words, the ideal of the beautiful only be represented or visualized in the mind through an "individual [*Einzelner*] exhibition [*Darstellung*]," which corresponds to an indeterminate concept of reason.[37]

Although disclosing the deeply hidden basis of the rules in which one can aesthetically judge by, Kant is confronted with the contradictory nature of his own claims. As the ideal of the beautiful is produced through a form of harmonizing between imagination and reason, judging by such an ideal can never be purely aesthetic. The ideal of the beautiful cannot be considered as a representation of "a mere judgment of taste" – a fact that discloses the equivocal nature of Kant's attempt to unify the domains of nature and the domains of reason through recourse to the ideal of the beautiful.

Despite Kant's second confrontation with the hidden art of the human soul and his inability to define on a transcendental ground how an archetype of taste is produced, his series of elucidations concerning the capacity to make judgements of the beautiful accord the empirical faculty of the productive imagination an indispensable role. As has been shown, a judgement of the beautiful is contingent on the capacity to reflect on the veracity of the sensation of the indeterminacy or the limitlessness of the productive power of the imagination as it resides in a form of free play with the power of the understanding. Reflecting on the sensation of the limitlessness of the feeling of life as it becomes sensibly present within the mind inevitably exposes Kant's disquieting claim that the reflection on the feeling of life – representative of the exhibition of the productive imagination residing in its own freedom – is the action of the soul that provides the subjective condition for the transition from the domain of nature to the domain of freedom. Accordingly, the capacity to move from a way of thinking that is based on the principles of nature

to a way of thinking that is based on the principles of freedom requires the power of reflective judgement *and* the indispensable function of the productive imagination.

JUDGEMENTS OF THE SUBLIME – THE LIMITS OF THE POWER OF EXHIBITION

Kant continues to extend his series of exemplary reflections on the power of the transcendental imagination through a consideration of judgements of the sublime. These aesthetic judgements of taste are of particular interest to Kant as they are not bounded by the form of the object [*Gegenstand*].[38] As the chaos of nature embodies an essential "*unboundedness*," the abyss inherent within nature both inhibits and activates the "vital sources" of the soul rendering the pleasure evoked by a judgement of the sublime as indirect – it is a "negative pleasure" because one is both repelled by and yet attracted to the unbounded object of nature. The act of reflection upon a "formless object" leads to the "momentary inhibition" of the vital forces and then a subsequent "outpouring" of these forces. Due to the sensation of these movements of the soul, the liking in a judgement of the sublime takes on the form of an "emotion." In distinction to the liking associated with a judgement of the beautiful, the liking in a judgement of the sublime arises, for Kant, out of the seriousness rather than the free play of imagination. The seriousness of the play of the imagination does not lead to "*restful* contemplation" but leads rather to the "*agitation*" of the mind, as the sensation of "vibration" – as a reflection on the "rapid alternation of repulsion from and attraction to, one and the same object."[39]

In Kant's view, therefore, judgements of the sublime are connected with the representation [*Vorstellung*] of "*quantity*."[40] The representation of quantity can take on the form of magnitude, or it can take on the form of might. These two representations of quantity are distinguishable through the capacity of the power of the imagination to refer its mental agitation to other powers of the soul. In this regard, the agitation evoked by the power of the imagination takes on a primary role in judgements of the sublime. If the agitation of the imagination is referred to the cognitive power, that is, to the understanding, it leads to a mathematical "attunement of the mind."[41] And, if the agitation is referred to the power of desire, that is, to reason, it leads to a dynamical "attunement of the mind." Associated with judgements of the "mathematically sublime" and the "dynamically sublime," these forms of mental attunement relate specifically to varying forms of purposiveness unique to judgements of the sublime.

The Mathematically Sublime

The mathematically sublime is defined as a judgement of taste that makes reference to magnitude – to "what is *absolutely* [*Schlechthin*] *large*" – specifically through the aesthetic estimation of magnitude.[42] An example is provided through Kant's reference to the chaos of nature, to the "shapeless mountain masses piled on one another in wild disarray, with their pyramids of ice, or the gloomy raging sea."[43] To describe these forms in nature as absolutely large means the object has magnitude but it is a magnitude that is beyond all measure, or "beyond all comparison."[44]

In Kant's view, however, the capacity to declare something as absolutely large or to declare it as beyond all measure assumes the magnitude of measure must be known. Unlike mathematical estimations of magnitude, which draw on numerical concepts, in an aesthetic judgement of taste, the capacity to declare something as absolutely large involves an aesthetic estimation of magnitude – the estimation of which draws on the action [*Handlung*] of the imagination – specifically, on the acts of "*apprehension*" and of "*comprehension* [*Zusammenfassung*]."[45]

Introducing the necessity for these two actions of the imagination accords the empirical faculty of the productive imagination a more prominent role in judgements of the sublime. In particular, for the interplay that arises between these two actions of the imagination is the activity, which leads to the mental agitation of the mind. Evoking the image of a demonstrative power of the soul, Kant introduces this important development in the role of the productive imagination through a consideration of the act of apprehension. Due to the essential unboundedness of an object of nature, the aesthetic estimation of magnitude begins with the *unbounded* action of apprehension, or more specifically with the unbounded action of an empirical synthesis of apprehension by the productive imagination. In the moment of apprehending the unbounded object of nature, the empirical synthesis of apprehension becomes an action of the mind that is not restricted in any way. The formlessness of the object of nature ensures the empirical synthesis of apprehension becomes an unhindered activity leading to the continual and infinite production of a series of partial representations in intuition.

By collecting and holding together all the apprehended partial representations, the action of comprehension by the imagination attempts to exhibit in intuition as a whole or as a magnitude, the collective series of apprehended forms. Much like the formation of a schematic *hypotyposis*, the imagination attempts to combine and to exhibit "in one instant" or in one intuition, a "multiplicity in a unity" allowing the aesthetic estimation of the magnitude.[46] However, and unlike the production of schematic exhibitions, the action of comprehension in a judgement of the sublime is inadequate for exhibiting the

idea of a whole. Due to the formlessness of the object, the incessant activity of apprehension begins to lose what it has gained for the series of partial representations produced in intuition become "extinguished" during the ongoing act of apprehension. As a result, the imagination is unable to exhibit the mathematical estimate of magnitude in the form of a whole intuition forcing the power of the imagination to sink back "into itself." Evoking once again images of a demonstrative power of the soul, Kant suggests the power of the imagination inflicts a "violence" on inner sense, the action of which cancels the condition of time rendering the progression of the imagination purely subjective.[47]

In Kant's view, therefore, a judgement of the sublime evokes an emotion. In the form of the feeling of a liking, this emotion arises through reflection on the exhibition in intuition of the *inadequacy* of the power of the imagination simply given, in this moment, through sensation. The mind becomes sensibly aware of the very limits of its own power, of the imaginations inability to reconcile the determinacy and the indeterminacy of its own powers. Of its inability to comprehend the interminable intuitions that have been apprehended. The mathematically sublime is to be conceived, therefore, as a feeling that is evoked through the exhibition of the power of the imagination wavering between two forms of measure or of magnitude – between finitude and infinitude.[48] Between determinacy and indeterminacy. The imagination progresses temporally through apprehension, yet it shrinks back and negates temporality through comprehension. In the mathematically sublime, the imagination resides in a state of tension between intuitive and aesthetic demands.

Although an entirely subjective condition, Kant regards this state of tension as embodying a form of purposiveness conducive to a transition in thinking. Opening once again onto an attempt to bridge the immense gulf that resides between the concepts of nature and the concepts of reason, Kant suggests the inadequacy of the power of the imagination encourages the "voice of reason." Reason demands comprehension in "*one* intuition."[49] The voice of reason demands the thought of the infinite as a whole – a demand that surpasses the intuitive and aesthetic demands of the imagination because the voice of reason has the capacity to think the *absolutely large* – to *think* the infinite. As acknowledged in the following paragraph, the capacity to think the idea of the infinite involves, for Kant, a supersensible power – the power of which confers the idea of the un-intuitable form of the noumenon, of the I am:

> If the human mind is nonetheless to *be able even to think* the given infinite without contradiction, it must have within itself a power that is supersensible, whose idea of a noumenon cannot be intuited but can yet be regarded as the substrate underlying what is mere appearance, namely, our intuition of the world.[50]

The supersensible power to *think* the infinite encourages the mind to abandon the contradictory nature of the realms of sensibility and imagination and to occupy itself with ideas pertaining to a higher purposiveness. The fruitless activity of imagination to exhibit that which cannot be exhibited leads to a form of mental attunement that encourages the subjective harmonizing between imagination and the indeterminate ideas of reason allowing the expression of the inexpressible. For Kant, therefore, sublimity can only occur within the mind as it contemplates the interplay between imagination and reason.[51] In contrast to the beautiful in nature, which leads one to seek independence from nature outside of oneself, the sublime in nature leads one to seek independence from nature within oneself. In this regard, the inadequacy of the imagination plays a purposive role because it "uncovers" the consciousness of an "unlimited ability." Or, as highlighted in the following paragraph, it uncovers

> a feeling that we have a pure and independent reason, or a power for estimating magnitude, whose superiority cannot be made intuitable by anything other than the inadequacy of that power which in exhibiting magnitudes (of sensible objects) is itself unbounded.[52]

Consciousness of the inadequacy of the unbounded power of the imagination provides the means in which one can become aware of a purposiveness within oneself that is entirely independent of nature. The capacity to think the infinite is actually "given [*Gegeben*]" through the indeterminate power of exhibition – a claim which reveals, unequivocally, that the productive power of the imagination is not simply confined to the determination of nature as mere form, nor is it confined to the power of synthesis. Rather, the productive power of the imagination can transcend the concerns of sensibility, the concerns of synthesis, and even the concerns of form by exhibiting in intuition the finitude of its own unbounded power – the action of which allows the expression of the infinitude embodied within the idea of the sublime. Kant thus introduces the disquieting claim that the transition from a way of thinking that is based on the principles of nature to a way of thinking that is based on the principles of freedom is in the sublime contingent on the exhibition of the determinacy or the limits of the empirical power of the productive imagination. The exhibition of which enables the cognition of the infinitude of one's own being.

The Dynamically Sublime

In contrast to the mathematically sublime, the dynamically sublime is defined as an aesthetic judgement of taste that acknowledges the fact that

the "might" or the superiority of nature has no "dominance over us."[53] The sight of "threatening rocks, thunderclouds piling up in the sky and moving about accompanied by lightning and thunderclaps" or the sight of "volcanoes with all their destructive power" are images that cannot dominant the mind because, and as Kant explains, one has the capacity to resist the superiority of nature. If one is in a "safe place" and if danger is not genuine, then the capacity to judge through the dynamically sublime allows the discovery of an ability to resist "natures seeming omnipotence." The dynamically sublime reveals one has the ability to judge themselves as independent of nature and to judge themselves as having "a superiority over nature." Accordingly, the sublime does not arouse fear but "calls forth our strength" rendering objects of concern such as property, health and life as not having "dominance" over us. As Kant explains, the dynamically sublime allows the discovery that one has an ability to judge oneself as independent of nature because nature "elevates [*Erhebt*]" the imagination making it "exhibit" those instances in which the mind feels its own sublimity. The imagination allows the mind to transcend one's own natural concerns leading to an awareness that one is other than nature.

The evocative use of language here portrays the significance of the dynamically sublime for, and as Kant argues, it is a capacity inherent to all humankind, forming part of our "nature." All forms of commonest experience are in fact premised upon the sublime for the capacity to make any form of reflective judgement is contingent on the ability to not succumb to the terrors or the dangers imposed by nature. To cognize the world of nature through the concepts of nature requires the capacity to deliberatively observe the perils of nature. If humankind could not transcend the dangers imposed by being in and by reflecting upon the natural world, all forms of cognition, communicability and sociability would be rendered impossible. It is for this very reason that Kant regards sublimity as not contained in any object of nature. Sublimity is only contained within the mind but, and as Kant has indubitably shown, the capacity to become conscious of our superiority over nature requires reflection upon the imagination exhibiting the very limits of its incessant and unceasing indeterminacy.

THE NEGATIVE *DARSTELLUNG* – THE INDETERMINACY OF THE POWER OF EXHIBITION

In his concluding remarks on judgements of the sublime in general, Kant confirms once again the imagination forms a constitutive and embodied power of the soul indispensable to the emergence of the self as a moral subject. Opening onto an endeavour to unify the concepts of nature and the

concepts of freedom, this admission relates to the fact that the sublime is, for Kant, the "predisposition to the feeling for (practical) ideas" – namely, the predisposition for "moral feeling."[54] Much like the *sensus communis*, moral feelings are of utmost important to Kant because these particular forms of feelings allow an individual to overcome those obstacles that arise out of the modification of their own state of sensibility. Moral feeling allows an individual to reflect on the fact that the sensible element of a representation of the sublime is amenable to a supersensible use. In other words, the sublime is an object of nature, which determines the mind to think of nature's inability to exhibit the realm of the ideas. The intuition of the formless object of nature expands, either mathematically or dynamically, the power of the imagination encouraging reason to "step in." As the capacity to "think an independent and absolute totality," reason arouses the mind to make the sensible representation of the object adequate to the idea of a totality. And as the imagination is unable to attain to reasons idea of a totality, the mind is simply "compelled" to subjectively "*think*" that nature is in its totality the "exhibition of something supersensible."

For Kant, therefore, the idea of the supersensible can only be *thought* of rather than objectively *cognized*, rendering a liking of the sublime in nature as merely "*negative*."[55] The supersensible can be thought of because the imagination becomes purposively determined according to a law other than the empirical laws involved in the actions of apprehension and of comprehension.[56] In the moment of the sublime, the imagination transcends the bounds imposed by the realm of sensibility, allowing it to "feel" unbounded and it is this very feeling that allows the exhibition of the unrepresentable realm of the supersensible:

> For though the imagination finds nothing beyond the sensible that could support it, this very removal of its barriers also makes it feel unbounded, so that its separation [from the sensible] is an exhibition [*Darstellung*] of the infinite; and though an exhibition of the infinite can as such never be more than merely negative, it still expands the soul.[57]

This extraordinary admission unequivocally defines the moment of sublimity as a moment in time whereby the imagination separates itself from the bounds of the sensible realm. No longer confined to representing the material of sensibility, the imagination remains free to feel the power of its own indeterminacy and in that moment the un-intuitable idea of the infinite becomes exhibited. In that moment, the mind has before its own "eyes" the un-intuitable realm of the supersensible, representative of the "unmistakeable and indelible idea of morality." A pure idea that necessarily remains negative because the idea of freedom is in itself "*inscrutable*" – it only can ever be

cognized in the form of a striving. Juxtaposed between the demands of reason and the striving of the imagination, the mind becomes aware of the fact that there are limits that can but ought not to be crossed – a claim that unequivocally restores once again the antinomical nature of the unknown X.

It is in the context of this final claim that Kant acknowledges that to "be sufficient to oneself" – to have no need for society without being "unsociable" – approaches the sublime because in this very moment, one is setting aside one's own need to be sociable. In this very moment, one is free from the "natural impulses" or desires that drive humankinds unsociability and the desires that drive their sociability.[58] Although Kant does not explicitly state so, the capacity to be self-sufficient is to be conceived as the capacity to whole-heartedly reflect upon and embrace the indeterminacy of the feeling of life. Life is not, as Epicurus observed, "merely consciousness of our existence."[59] Rather, and as Kant has brought to mind, life is consciousness of one's own indeterminacy evoked by an awareness that one is of nature and yet beyond nature, that one is embodied and yet free and that one is one amongst many others. Given consciousness of one's own indeterminacy is rendered possible through one's own aesthetic experience of the world, the *Critique of Judgement* unreservedly compliments the underlying premise of the *Critique of Pure Reason* by proposing the unknown X is the indeterminate power of exhibition by the productive imagination.

NOTES

1. Rundell provides a series of important reflections on the relationship between the domain of freedom and the power of the transcendental imagination as presented within the *Critique of Judgment*. See: John Rundell, "Creativity and Judgement: Kant on Reason and Imagination," in *Rethinking Imagination, Culture and Creativity*, ed. Gillian Robinson and John Rundell (London: Routledge, 1994).

Castoriadis also highlights the fact that the exemplary creation of the work of the genius described in the *Critique of Judgment* is an achievement of freedom. See: Cornelius Castoriadis, "Culture in a Democratic Society," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Harvard: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

2. Helfer promotes the view that Kant first introduced the term *Darstellung* into Western philosophical discourse with this term playing a central role in the *Critique of Judgment*. See: B. Martha Helfer, *The Retreat of the Representation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996).

Pluhar translates the term *darstellen* as "to exhibit," which he believes is closer to Kant's intended use of the term. See Footnote 51 in: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (London: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 80.

3. Pluhar regards the traditional translation of the term *Vorstellung* as "representation" as incorrect because Kant's theory of perception is not representational.

Accordingly, he translates *Vorstellung* as "presentation." See Footnote 17 in: *Critique of Judgment*, 14.

In order to maintain consistency across all movements within this text, *Vorstellung* will be translated as "representation" in all direct references taken from Pluhar's translation of the *Critique of Judgment*.

4. Ibid., 33.
5. §59 ibid., 226.
6. A108 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 233.
7. See also Gasché's discussion of the role of hypotyposis in the *Critique of Judgment*: Rodolphe Gasché, "Some Reflections on the Notion of Hypotyposis in Kant," *Argumentation* 4 (1990).
8. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 14.
9. Ibid., 12–17, 391–94.
10. Ibid., 37.
11. Ibid., 19, 27.
12. Ibid., 23–24.
13. The use of the term "aesthetic" relates specifically to the Greek term *aisthést-hai*, which means "to sense." See: Footnote 30 ibid., 28.
14. Ibid., 28–29.
15. Ibid., 29–31.
16. § 1 ibid., 44.

Guyer also confirms Kant's association of feelings of pleasure or displeasure with the feeling of life. See: Paul Guyer, "Free Play and True Well-Being: Herder's Critique of Kant's Aesthetics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65, no. 4 (2007): 364.

17. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 139.
18. Ibid., 27.
19. For another account of Kant's reflections on the imagination in the *Critique of Judgment*, see: Samantha Matherne, "Kant's Theory of the Imagination," in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination*, ed. Amy Kind, Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).
20. §32 ibid., 145.
21. §5 ibid., 52–53.
22. §9 ibid., 61–64.
23. §23 ibid., 97.
24. §35 ibid., 91, 151.
25. §23 ibid., 91, 98.
26. A78 ibid., 211.
27. Ibid., 91.
28. §23 ibid., 98.
29. §12 ibid., 68.
30. §10 ibid., 65.

31. §40 ibid., 161.
32. Kant outlines the idea of the "*sensus communis*" in the following sections. §39 & 40 ibid., 157–62.
33. §59 ibid., 225–30.
34. Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, 1982), 43.
35. §17 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 79–84.
36. Reference here to the "monogram" also draws on the schematism chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. See: A142/B181 *Critique of Pure Reason*, 273–74.
37. §17 *Critique of Judgment*, 80.
38. §23 ibid., 98.
39. §27 ibid., 115–16.
40. §23 ibid., 98.
41. §24 ibid., 101.
42. §25 ibid., 103.
43. §26 ibid., 113.
44. §25 ibid., 103.
45. §26 ibid., 108.

Makkreel also provides a comprehensive discussion on Kant's portrayal of apprehension and comprehension. See: Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 67–77.

Horstmann acknowledges the distinction between apprehension and comprehension appears to accord with the two-stage model of cognition outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. See: Rolf–Peter Horstmann, *Kant's Power of Imagination*, ed. Desmond Hogan, Howard Williams, and Allen Wood, Elements in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

46. §26 & 27 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 108–12, 16.

See also Kant's reference to the schematic *hypotyposis* in the *Critique of Pure Reason* where he describes the schema as "representing a multitude in an image in accordance with a certain concept." A140/B179 *Critique of Pure Reason*, 273.

47. As a means to highlight the interplay between apprehension and comprehension it is useful to draw on Kant's reference to a comment made by Savary on his experience in Egypt. See: §26 *Critique of Judgment*, 108–09.
48. Makkreel also acknowledges this interplay between the two immeasurable and the measurable. See: Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 70.
49. §26 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 111.
50. §26 ibid.
51. §23 ibid., 99–100.
52. §27 ibid., 116.
53. §28 ibid., 119–23.
54. § 29 ibid., 125–28.
55. See also Helfer's concise discussion the negative *Darstellung* in the *Critique of Judgment* in: Helfer, *The Retreat of the Representation*, 41–47.

56. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 129.

57. Ibid., 135.

58. Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," in *Kant Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 44–46.

59. *Critique of Judgment*, 139.

Chapter 6

The Productive Imagination – The Act of Creation

Although the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment* introduce the imagination as playing an indispensable role in giving form to the cognitive, aesthetic and moral dimensions of human life, Kant chose, for the most part, not to describe the imagination as a creative power of the soul. Rather and on his view, the imagination is a productive power of the soul producing the unified form of consciousness alongwith its sensible, aesthetic, schematic and symbolic forms of representations through an objective and subjective form of interplay with the other cognitive powers of the soul.

Notwithstanding the predilection here for the notion of production, Kant does at times acknowledge the productive power of imagination is creative. The careful and select use of terminology here promotes the view the imagination is not to be considered as a power of creation. Rather, the imagination is to be conceived as a productive power of the soul that can, in some instances, spontaneously create new forms. The distinction between these two particular conceptions of the imagination is exceedingly important, opening onto a series of core concerns that attempt, albeit unsuccessfully at times, to restrict the act of creation. On one level, the restriction of the act of creation pertains to Kant's astute awareness of the extraordinary powers of the imagination and of the fact that the imagination forms the least tamable power of the human soul.[1] Producing the images of wild fantastical dreams or the images conjured in those fanatical moments of insanity, Kant is well aware indeed of the injurious power of an involuntary or an unruled imagination.[2]

On another level, however, the restriction of the act of creation pertains to an illuminating series of transcendental, anthropological, practical and historical concerns. In particular, a series of core concerns that attempt to relegate the act of creation to nature and to a purposiveness unique to

humankind. By locating the act of creation within the context of these specific concerns, Kant provides a series of fleeting yet highly original moments of reflection whereby he tentatively acknowledges the creative capacity of the spontaneous and productive power of the transcendental imagination.

THE PRODUCTIVE POWER OF IMAGINATION AND THE CREATION OF FORM

One such moment can be found in the series of lectures on anthropology published in the text, the *Anthropology Mrongovius*.[3] Here, Kant begins with the acknowledgement that the power of imagination "cannot be called creative" simply because of the fact that the imagination cannot "create any materials" – with "materials" forming that which lies in the manifold of intuition.[4] As all materials are, for Kant, given through nature, the power of the imagination simply functions to modify and assemble this sensible material into a new form by adding or removing something from a sensible representation. It is in the context of this additional claim that Kant does in fact concede that although the productive power of imagination cannot be called creative, it can "create new forms."[5]

The later series of lectures published under the title *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* continues to promote this particular conception of the imagination through a clarification of the limits of its productive power:

> The power of imagination (in other words) either *inventive* (productive) or merely *recollective* (reproductive). But the productive power of imagination is nevertheless not exactly *creative*, for it is not capable of producing a sense representation that was *never* given to our faculty of sense; one can always furnish evidence of the material of its ideas.[6]

The declaration that the productive power of imagination is "not exactly *creative*" reinforces the view that the material or the source of the imagination's "ideas" are in fact given through nature. The production of the sensations of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, for example, are produced through the productive power of imagination, which synthesizes the given synopsis of the manifold of sensibility into a certain form.[7] In these instances, the power of imagination is not exactly creative for, and as Kant argues, the imagination "must get the *material* for its images from the senses." In this context, the imagination does not create the material for its images but merely functions to create form – to synthesize the synopsis of sensibility into a certain form amenable to the understanding.

Reference here to the notion of form opens onto the role of the monogram introduced in the Schematism chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The

capacity of the productive power of imagination to produce the originary form of the monogram as a figure in space underlies all cognitive, aesthetic and moral dimensions of human life. It does so, for the indeterminable and subjective form of the monogram – the mere form of which is given through the "hidden art [*Kunst*]" of the human soul – makes possible all forms of image making within the mind.[8] The notion of form encapsulates, herewith, the determinate form of an image [*Bild*] of something and it encapsulates the indeterminate form of the schema. As both forms underlie the possibility of all cognition, Kant accords the notion of form an indispensable role in the capacity to cognize something as tangible and communicable, as something that can be sensibly thought about. Although Kant describes the form of a monogram as a product of the pure imagination, as discussed, he does in fact concede that the capacity to give form to something in space and in time is associated with the act of creation, for and as he briefly admits, "we create [*Schaffen*] the objects themselves in space and time."[9]

On Kant's view, therefore, the notion of form underlies all cognitive, aesthetic and moral dimensions of human life. The possibility of all determinative acts of judgement and, as Kant has also highlighted in the *Critique of Judgment*, the possibility of all reflective acts of judgement are contingent on the capacity to produce or create the form of an object in intuition. Given these claims, Kant provides an important insight into the creative capacity of the productive power of imagination for, and as he describes, the productive imagination is the "originator of chosen forms of possible intuition."[10]

A sustained and compelling discussion of the imagination as a power to create new forms is presented within a consideration of the remarkable, albeit indeterminable power of the genius.[11] The genius is of particular interest to Kant, principally for that fact that the genius has the talent for inventing. A genius knows how to "*make* something" – not through the act of imitation but through the natural disposition to produce an original work, which serves as an "example (*exemplar*)" to be imitated. It does so, for the original work provides a model form – the form of which due to its innate originality becomes an exemplar to be copied and imitated. Although reference is made here to the notion of production, Kant does in fact concede that the "proper field" for the work of the genius is the power of imagination because the imagination is, essentially, "creative." In distinction to the other faculties of the soul, the power of the imagination is "less" constrained by rules rendering it "all the more capable of originality."

Although the power of imagination is less constrained by rules, Kant is keen to highlight the fact that it must not be freed from all constraint. As he argues, the original product given through the work of the genius contains the presence of "certain mechanical basic rules." Rules that specifically concern the appropriateness of the product to an "underlying idea" – rules that

concern the "truth in the [re]presentation of the object that one is thinking of." On Kant's view, therefore, the work of the genius can only be exemplary when the power of the imagination is encouraged to reside in a harmonious movement or interplay with the other mental powers of the soul.

Accordingly, these reflections on the work of the genius introduce the idea that the creation of original form plays a purposive role. Opening onto a series of anthropological, practical and historical concerns, Kant develops this theme through reference to "spirit [*Geist*]" – with spirit being defined as the "*animating* principle" of the mind. Or, as he suggests in the *Anthropology of Mrongovius*, spirit indicates that "something is enlivened" – that the power of imagination has been set in "motion."[12] As the imagination is the "most active mental power" of the soul once it resides in an "unfettered" form of interplay with the concepts of the understanding, it enlivens the soul. The "creation of genius" involves, therefore, a form of harmonious movement between the imagination and the understanding – a form of movement, which presents, as Kant suggests in the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, the imagination with a "great playroom" of concepts.[13] The creation of an original form requires the power of imagination play with the material provided by the concepts of the understanding. Otherwise, if left to its own devices remaining in an unfettered and isolated state, the power of imagination would "deliver original folly" – the imagination would create forms devoid of any rules and hence devoid of an exemplary form. Kant thus regards the production of original forms by the genius as a talent that is given through an intimate form of schematism between the unfettered power of imagination and the higher cognitive powers of the soul. And although indispensable to the creation of an exemplary form, the creative capacity of the power of imagination is not, as Kant argues, "a light that can be kindled at will and kept burning for as long as one pleases."[14] The "momentary phenomenon" that appear before the genius's eyes only do so in an "explosive flash" and can only be lured from the productive power of imagination through the use of a "happy spirit."

The *Critique of Judgment* expands on these introductory series of reflections through the particular association of genius with the realm of "*fine* art" [*Kunst*].[15] Fine art forms, for Kant, an "*aesthetic* art" principally for the fact that it is associated with the feeling of pleasure. Accordingly, the aesthetic nature of fine art reveals it is a way of representing that is purposive furthering humankind by encouraging a form of social communicability. Because of this, and much like the *Anthropology*, the *Critique* promulgates the view that fine art is the art of genius with genius being described herewith as the "innate mental predisposition" that "gives the rule to art."[16] And yet Kant is keen to promote the view that although the original work produced by the genius is premised upon a series of rules, the genius is unable to explain the rules involved in the act of creation. Unlike the rules given through the discoveries

of a scientist or of a mathematician, for example, the rules of art "cannot be couched in a formula and serve as a precept."[17] Nor can the rules of art be described or scientifically understood – rules lead to the production of art and yet, as Kant highlights, that which is produced cannot disclose the rules of its production. No genius can unveil how their ideas arise nor can they teach their art to someone else. The ideas of a genius can only be transmitted through "models" of fine art – either through the imitation of the model form by others or by arousing similar ideas in those gifted with a natural disposition through an engagement with the model form.

As the origin of the rules that give form to fine art remain indeterminable Kant promotes the idea that much like the form of the monogram, the work of the genius is also given form through the "hidden art [*Kunst*]" of the human soul.[18] Kant thus bestows the hidden art of the work of the genius to the realm of *natura naturans* for, and he argues, the skill of the genius is gifted at one's own birth.[19] The skill of the genius is "conferred directly by the hand of nature" – by the hand of a "guardian and guiding spirit" – a claim that confirms the idea that genius is "the innate mental predisposition (*ingenium*) *through which* nature [*Natur*] gives the rule to art."[20]

Although promoting the view that nature gives the rule to art, Kant endorses the idea that the imagination plays an indispensable role in the creation of fine art due to its capacity to create another nature out of the material given to it through nature. Opening onto an endeavour once again, to bridge the divide between the concepts of nature and the concepts of freedom, Kant develops this theme through a revised conception of spirit. Given spirit is the animating principle in the mind and given fine art forms, for Kant, an aesthetic art then someone can be regarded as having spirit if they have the "ability to exhibit [*Darstellung*] *aesthetic ideas*."[21] Distinct from the aesthetic standard idea explored through an elucidation of the ideal of the beautiful, an aesthetic idea is, for Kant, principally given through the talent of the imagination. As he explains, an aesthetic idea is a representation [*Vorstellung*] of the imagination that "prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it so completely and allow us to grasp it." Although remaining "*unexpoundable*" and unable to linked with a determinate concept, the aesthetic idea given through the spirit of genius stimulates the mind to think about something which has previously been unthinkable.[22] When freed from the empirical laws of association, the power of the imagination can encourage the mind to think beyond the bounds of experience because in this instance, the imagination "creates, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it."[23] Nature may "lends us material" and yet, as Kant argues, the genius can "process" this material into something different – into "something that surpasses nature [*Natur*]" through the enlivened use of their imagination.

In Kant's view, therefore, the imagination can create a new form and represent this new form as an "*idea*" – a representation that strives toward "something that lies beyond the bounds of experience." In this regard, representations given through the genius's power of imagination "try to approach an exhibition [*Darstellung*] of rational concepts (intellectual ideas)." As "inner intuitions to which no concept can be completely adequate," these representations of the imagination provide a rational concept with a measure of objective reality. The poet forms but one example. By trying to give sensible expression to the experience of love, death and envy, for example, the poet attempts to express that which cannot be found in nature. The poet attempts to express the attributes of the realm of the supersensible.

Kant also suggests the genius can use their power of imagination to "aesthetically expand" a concept in an unlimited way. If a representation of the imagination is given in association with a concept for example, this representation may prompt much thought encouraging the mind to think beyond that which is comprehended by the determinate concept. In this instance, the power of the imagination is "creative" for, and as Kant argues, it sets the power of reason in motion. By providing a concept with a representation, the productive power of the imagination encourages reason to "think more" – to think beyond that which is contained in the concept and to think beyond one's own desires. In this regard, the representation of the imagination "belongs to the exhibition [*Darstellung*] of the concept" rendering the idea intuitable, albeit indirectly. Reinforcing the historical concerns outlined within the essay titled "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," Kant confirms the fact that reason is set in motion when it draws on the "help of the imagination."[24] The capacity to desire something other than innate forms requires the power of imagination set reason in motion – a claim that accords the power of imagination an indispensable role in the transition from the domain of the sensible to the domain of the supersensible.

The genius may also draw on the help of the imagination through the production of a series of "supplementary" representations [*Vorstellungen*].[25] As the object of a rational idea cannot be exhibited adequately in intuition, the supplementary representations of the imagination "yield an aesthetic idea" by quickening the mind – by opening the geniuses mind up to the presence of "an immense realm of kindred [re]presentations." The presence of these supplementary representations aesthetically expands the concept by expressing "kinship" with other concepts. As exemplified through Kant's reference to a poem composed by Frederick the Great, the supplementary representations of the "last rays" of the sun spreading its "soft light" over the day animate the rational idea of a "cosmopolitan attitude." They do so, for the imagery evoked through reference to the unfolding serenity of the evening

dusk promotes cosmopolitanism as a peaceful enduring endeavour, which casts a tranquil spell over the entire collective.

In Kant's view, therefore, the aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination, which is "conjoined" with a concept and yet it is "connected" with a multiplicity of partial representations that cannot be associated with a determinate concept. Conceived in this way, the representation of the imagination adds to the concept the feeling of something "ineffable." The feeling of which "quickens" the cognitive powers of the soul connecting "language" rather than "mere letters" with spirit. In this context, the power of imagination has an aesthetic aim for it is not used for cognition. When freed from the empirical laws of association, the imagination remains free to "supply" in an "unstudied way" a "wealth of undeveloped material" – material which has been "disregarded" by the determinate conceptual bounds imposed by the understanding.

Kant thus accords genius with the natural predisposition for the discovery of ideas *and* for the expression of these ideas in a form that can be communicated with others. As discussed, the ideas of genius can only be transmitted through the exemplary form of the model of fine art, which can either be imitated or arouse similar ideas in others. The model of fine art thus transmits the ideas of the genius specifically, through the creation of form, the form of which is given through the genius's power of imagination to process the material given from nature into something that surpasses nature. The capacity to create a new form is what Kant refers to as the particular, albeit hidden talent of the genius for, and as outlined in the following paragraph, the creation of form is the activity that enables the expression of a new rule:

> For in order to express what is ineffable in the mental state accompanying a certain [re]presentation and to make it universally communicable – whether the expression consists in language or painting or plastic art – we need an ability [viz., spirit] to apprehend the imagination's rapidly passing play and to unite it in a concept that can be communicated without the constraint of rules (a concept that on that very account is original, while at the same time reveals a new rule that could not have been inferred from any earlier principles or examples).[26]

By apprehending the play of the imagination and by uniting it with an original concept, the genius processes the material given from nature into something that surpasses nature through the capacity to create a new form – to create a new poem, a new painting or a new plastic art, for example. In the process of doing so, the genius stumbles upon a way of communicating without the constraint of rules. A way of communicating that allows the transmission of a new rule unable to be inferred from any other example or principle. A new work, a new painting, or a new plastic art are given form

through the creative capacity of the productive power of imagination and in that very moment the new work, the new painting or the new plastic art are forming. They form a new rule for society by providing a model form that can be copied and imitated by others and by arousing similar ideas in others with a natural disposition for creation.

The significance of this claim cannot be overstated. Kant is suggesting here that genius creates a new form through the act of representation, and yet the form created remains purposive without a purpose.[27] Opening once again onto a series of anthropological concerns pertaining to culture, communicability and sociability, the creation of fine art plays, for Kant, a purposive role furthering the development of humankind. Much like judgements of the beautiful, fine art is a way of representing that is purposive facilitating a form of social communication. And yet it is purposive without a purpose because the ability to communicate with others is rendered possible – not through the determinate exposition of a series of rules – but only through the representation of an original concept given through the *form* of the artwork. The form of the work of a genius captures the play between the imagination and the understanding through the act of representation and communicates the ineffability of this movement to others. It communicates the ineffable form of an original concept allowing in the process the transmission of an idea. Although Kant does not explicitly state so, the communicability of the ineffability of an original concept can only occur by lingering on the form of an artwork. By observing a work of fine art, or by listening to a poem, for example, one can reflect on and observe the "rapidly passing play" of one's own imagination as it resides in a form of play with the understanding. Communicated directly through the aesthetic experience of the artwork, reflecting upon the play of the power of one's own imagination is the activity that gives form to the original concept residing within the work of fine art.

Parallels can be drawn here with the "hidden art [*Kunst*]" involved in the production of the monogram and in the aesthetic standard idea because something within the *form* of the artwork communicates – albeit aesthetically and indeterminately – with others. Much like the form of the model image provided by the monogram and the standard idea, the product of the work of the genius contains a series of individual traits rendering the form of the work communicable. The poem is composed of words; the painting has colour, shape and texture. And yet, something within the work remains indeterminate, unknowable and only communicable in this instance through reference to an ineffable feeling. The indeterminacy evoked within the imagination of the observer – perceived in the form of a feeling – is the activity that imparts, albeit indeterminatively, the idea that the genius wished to express. In this regard, the form of the artwork provides a shared space in which members of a collective can begin to interact and communicate through the sharing of the

experience of the attributes of the inexpressible, the unexpoundable and the indeterminable. Not confined nor determined by a series of determinate rules, the work of the genius creates a new form, which, through its very presence, imparts to others and to society an original concept, which can be shared with and experienced by others through their own act of creation.

Kant thus introduces the idea the work of the genius communicates the fact that humankind is embodied within nature as the form of the artwork is given through the rules of nature – a claim that proposes the idea residing within a work of art can only be communicated through one's own aesthetic experience of the work. And although the work of art is given through nature, Kant introduces the contrary idea that humankind is capable of processing the material given through nature into a form that surpasses nature. The genius can process natural material into something that surpasses nature through the creation of a new poem or a new artwork. And when listening to this poem or when observing this work of art, humankind can transcend the bounds of nature through the participation *in* the creation of a new form. Kant thus locates humankind as embodied within nature, and yet humankind is capable of moving beyond the bounds of nature through the creation of and the sharing of form, both of which require the remarkable and indispensable productive power of the imagination residing in an intimate form of interplay with the higher cognitive powers of the soul.

As the capacity to create a new form actively encourages forms of social communication, on Kant's view, the realm of fine art and hence genius furthers the purposiveness of humanity – a claim that develops the anthropological concerns outlined within the *Critique of Judgment* pertaining to the *sensus communis* and the capacity to think from the standpoint of others.[28] Engaging with the work of the genius involves the sharing of form, the action of which moves an individual into the space of others. And as highlighted within the series of historical concerns outlined in Kant's political lectures, the capacity to move into the space of others pertains to the highest purpose of nature, which seeks to move humankind from the "guardianship of nature" toward a "state of freedom."[29] The creation of form through the productive power of the imagination forms, therefore, an indispensable role in the move from the domain of the sensible to the domain of the supersensible, from a way of thinking that is based on the principles of nature to a way of thinking that is based on the principles of freedom.

A CRITIQUE OF THE PRODUCTIVE POWER OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL IMAGINATION

By situating a consideration of the creative capacity of the productive imagination within a series of anthropological, practical and historical concerns,

Kant certainly succeeded in unveiling the significance of the productive power of imagination. Of the fact that the productive power of imagination can create, in certain instances, an entirely new form – a form which actively and purposively contributes to the development of humankind encouraging the move toward communicability, sociability and freedom.

Although the natural development of humankind requires the active use of the freedom of the power of imagination, Kant is keen to highlight the fact humankind can only develop its natural capacities through aesthetic experience – through the experience of being *in* the natural world and being *in* a world of others – a claim that acknowledges the power of imagination plays a purposive role in communicability, sociability and freedom, conferring the possibility of a form of connection with nature and a form of connection with others. And, as Kant also highlights, the development of humankind necessitates the freedom of the imagination resides in a form of relation with the higher cognitive powers of the soul. Otherwise, if the imagination is left in "lawless freedom," it produces nothing but "nonsense."[30] Or, as playfully suggested in the *Anthropology Mrongovius*, "an unruled power of imagination" is "like riding a staggering horse."[31] As one of the least tamable powers of the human soul, the imagination can, through its involuntary power, create forms, which at times can be "very harmful" and which fail to give form to ideas.[32]

Notwithstanding the harmful potentiality of the power of the imagination, as Kant has shown, when the unfettered power of the imagination resides in a form of subjective or objective interplay with the other cognitive powers the imagination becomes an indispensable function of the human soul rendering possible all cognitive, aesthetic and moral dimensions of human life and of course, rendering possible the natural development of humankind. In this regard, Kant offers the antinomical view that the natural development of humankind – representative of the capacity to move beyond the determinate bounds of nature – requires the capacity to not simply *produce* forms of meaning but rather, to *create* new forms of meaning and to *create* new ways of thinking about something. Moreover, the capacity to *create* new forms of meaning and new ways of thinking about something requires the embodied experience of being in the world and being in a world among others.

The question of the imagination thus formed for Kant, a central, compelling albeit disquieting line of enquiry. Encompassing transcendental, epistemological, anthropological, practical, historical and political concerns, Kant's reflections on the varying powers and function of the transcendental imagination provided a modern, critical and emergent account of the imagination, exemplary in nature and expansive in form. By not retreating from the disquieting revelation that the imagination forms an indispensable

function of the human soul. Kant portrayed the imagination as a constitutive and embodied power of the soul capable of producing *and* of creating new forms. Forms of which play an indispensable role in the capacity to be of nature and forms of which play an indispensable role in the capacity to move beyond the bounds of nature. Promulgating an intimate form of interplay between imagination, reason and freedom, Kant introduced across the course of his writings the determinacy and the indeterminacy of the productive power of the imagination as playing an indispensable role in the production and in the creation of form.

While this conclusion accords with Castoriadis's discerning contention that Kant's "insight into the fact of creation" formed the "most precious germ" of the *Critique of Judgment*, as revealed within this detailed elucidation, the germ was laid for the fact of creation in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[33] As Kant has shown, the seed of indeterminacy underlying all human creation lies with power of the pure a priori imagination. Producing the indeterminable form of the monogram out of its own spontaneous and determinative activity, the pure a priori imagination is the power of the soul that confers the possibility for the creation of form. However, and as Kant has also shown across the breadth of his oeuvre, the mind can only visualize its own forms of figuration or visualize its own acts of creation through the determinate and the indeterminate power of exhibition by the productive imagination. By producing, or creating for that matter, the original form of the phenomena as a figure determined in space and in time, the determinate power of exhibition underlies the capacity to reflect on and acknowledge the creation of new forms. And, the indeterminate power of exhibition underlies the capacity to reflect on and acknowledge the indeterminacy of the feeling of life and the indeterminacy of the fact of creation – of the fact that humankind can transcend the determinate bounds imposed by nature[*Natur*] and create for themselves something new. It is in the context of this profound observation that the empirical and the a priori powers of the productive imagination forms, on Kant's view, the unknown seed of indeterminacy underlying all human creation. The seed of which inspired the development and maturation of Kant's own movement of thought paving the way for a remarkable, exemplary and modern account of the power and function of the human imagination.

NOTES

1. Robert B. Louden and Allen W. Wood, eds., *Lectures on Anthropology*, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 386.

2. Kant provides a lucid discussion of the involuntary and unruled power of the imagination in the series of lectures on anthropology in: ibid.

3. Kant was one of the first Enlightenment thinkers to ever lecture on anthropology at a university level and this stemmed from his desire to provide and disseminate a pragmatic account of human nature. See: Allen W. Wood, "General Introduction," in *Lectures on Anthropology*, ed. Robert B. Louden and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

4. Louden and Wood, *Lectures on Anthropology*, 397.

5. Ibid., 383.

6. § 28 Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller, eds., *Anthropology, History and Education* ibid. (Cambridge, 2007), 278.

7. § 28 ibid., 279.

8. B181 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Woodibid (New York, 1998), 273–74.

9. A723/B751 ibid., 635.

10. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (London: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 91.

11. § 57 Louden and Zöller, *Anthropology, History and Education*, 329–30.

12. Louden and Wood, *Lectures on Anthropology*, 423.

13. § 57 Louden and Zöller, *Anthropology, History and Education*, 329–30.

14. See Footnote * in: ibid., 413.

15. § 44 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 172.

16. § 46 ibid., 174.

17. § 47 ibid., 176–77.

18. See also Matherne's discussion of the alignment between the hidden art of schematism and the hidden art of genius in: Samantha Matherne, "Kant and the Art of Schematism," *Kantian Review* 19, no. 2 (2014).

19. See also Castoriadis's discussions on Kant's reference here to *natura naturans* in: Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Greek *Polis* and the Creation of Democracy," in *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 90.

20. § 46 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 174–75.

This narrative is also confirmed in the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* where Kant states that genius is assigned to "a gifted man at his birth." See: § 57 Louden and Zöller, *Anthropology, History and Education*, 330.

21. § 49 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 181–82.

22. § 57 ibid., 215.

23. § 49 ibid., 181–83.

24. Immanuel Kant, "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," in *Kant Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 221.

25. § 49 *Critique of Judgment*, 183–86.

26. § 49 ibid., 186.

27. § 44 ibid., 172.

28. Hannah Arendt offers an original consideration of this aspect of Kant's thesis. Specifically, in relation to political concerns. See: Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, 1982).
29. Kant, "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," 226.
30. § 50 *Critique of Judgment*, 188.
31. Louden and Wood, *Lectures on Anthropology*, 384.
32. Ibid., 386.
33. Castoriadis, "The Greek *Polis* and the Creation of Democracy," 100.

Second Movement

THE ABSOLUTELY INCOMPREHENSIBLE SEED OF INDETERMINACY IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE

Chapter 7

The Absolutely *Incomprehensible* Seed of Indeterminacy

> On a modest acquaintance with the philosophical literature since the appearance of the Kantian Critiques I soon came to the conclusion that the enterprise of this great man, the radical revision of our current conceptions of philosophy, and hence of all science, has been a complete failure; since not a single one of his numerous followers perceives what is really being said. Believing that I did, I decided to dedicate my life to a presentation [*Darstellung*], quite independent of Kant, of that great discovery, and will not relent in this determination. Whether I shall have greater success in making myself intelligible to my own generation, only time will tell. In any case, I know that nothing true or useful is lost again once it has entered the world of men; even if only a remote posterity may know how to use it.[1]

The *Science of Knowledge* [1794/1795] has been described as one of the most "paradoxical and opaque undertakings" in the history of Western thought, and in many respects, it is.[2] The form and the content of this exceedingly complex philosophical system – generally referred to as the *Wissenschaftslehre* – render the main contention or the object of this system of transcendental idealism as particularly difficult to comprehend and for that matter, to accurately portray.[3]

And yet when placed within the context of the Kantian *Critiques*, the *Science of Knowledge* simply formed a new "presentation [*Darstellung*]" of Kant's "great discovery." As Fichte acknowledges in this opening preface, the *Science of Knowledge* is a movement of thought that endeavours through its own form of presentation to provide a new way of thinking about the main philosophical contentions contained within the trilogy of the *Critiques*.

Although committed to the enduring nature of this undertaking, Fichte remained cautious as to the success or to the intelligibility of his new method of thought. As he concedes, the object of the *Wissenschaftslehre* may be lost to the world. And yet, as he sanguinely goes onto acknowledge, once a system has been created, there will always remain a "remote" possibility that at some time, whether that be now or in the future, someone will "know how to use it" – someone will know how to use the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

In its essence, this compelling opening reproach establishes several pervasive claims fundamental to the comprehension of this extraordinary philosophical text. The first claim is associated with Fichte's own declaration that the *Science of Knowledge* is intimately connected with the writings of Kant. As acknowledged in the Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*, the *Wissenschaftslehre* "is perfectly in accordance with the teachings of Kant, and is nothing other than Kantianism perfectly understood."[4] The central premise behind this acknowledgement concerns Fichte's direct reference to the "import of the Science of Knowledge."[5] An import that, and as he argues, pertains directly to the Kantian discovery that reason is "absolutely independent" – reason "exists only for itself" and for itself "it is all that exists." The fact that reason is absolutely independent demands that a system of transcendental idealism explain everything "solely from itself" and not from something outside of itself. To be otherwise would abrogate reasons absolute independence.

The absolute independence of reason opens onto, albeit implicitly, a second pervasive claim residing within the opening reproach to the *Science of Knowledge*. The First Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge* opens onto this claim through the proclamation that the *Wissenschaftslehre* is "nothing other than the *Kantian*; this means that it contains the same view of things, but is in method quite independent of the *Kantian* presentation [*Darstellung*]."[6] In contrast to the methodology of the Kantian presentation, which takes on the form of a transcendental critique, the methodology of the *Wissenschaftslehre* presents as a system of transcendental idealism. Or, more specifically, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is a *Darstellung* of the system of the human mind with the object of this system being the system of all human cognition.[7] The use of the term *Darstellung* evokes the Kantian depiction of the term by bringing attention to the fact that the object of the *Wissenschaftslehre* can only be represented in one's own mind through an active engagement with the *Wissenschaftslehre*. The opening reproach that one needs to know how to "use" the *Wissenschaftslehre* accordingly reveals the object of this transcendental system will not be given as such but must be produced or created for that matter through one's own engagement with the system.

Knowing how to "use" the *Wissenschaftslehre* does not involve, however, an engagement with what is comprehensible. Rather, and as Fichte has confirmed in a letter to Reinhold:

> One enters my philosophy by means of what is absolutely *incomprehensible*. This makes my philosophy difficult, because the heart of the matter can only be attacked with the imagination and not at all with the understanding; yet at the same time this is what guarantees its correctness. Everything that is *comprehensible* presupposes a higher sphere in which it is *comprehended* and is therefore not the highest thing, precisely *because* it is *comprehensible*.[8]

As the "heart" of the *Wissenschaftslehre* can only be "attacked" with the imagination, there resides within the *Science of Knowledge* a second Kantian import.[9] Drawing directly upon the disquieting and antinomical nature of the Kantian unknown, Fichte presented within the form and content of the *Science of Knowledge* a detailed and overwhelmingly original account of the power and function of the human imagination. Although remaining in many respects true to the Kantian conception of the powers of the transcendental imagination, Fichte radicalized this conception offering a completely revised account of the productive power of the imagination, introducing in the process the concept of the "*creative imagination*."[10] The concept of the creative imagination is of particular interest for it allowed Fichte to definitively portray the imagination as an ontological power of creation – as a constitutive, embodied and creative power of the soul indispensable to the entire system of the human mind. Given this disclosure, the creative imagination formed, for Fichte, the absolutely *incomprehensible* power of the human soul fundamental to both the conception and the experience of the *Wissenschaftslehre* for, and as he states:

> The Science of Knowledge is of a kind that cannot be communicated by the letter merely, but only through the spirit; for its basic ideas must be elicited, in anyone who studies it, by the creative imagination itself; as could not, indeed, be otherwise, in a Science that penetrates back to the ultimate grounds of human knowledge, in that the whole enterprise of the human spirit issues form the imagination, and the latter cannot be grasped save through the imagination itself.[11]

The inspiration behind the sudden introduction to the concept of the creative imagination can be attributed to Fichte's intimate engagement with Kant's emergent reflections on the activity of *darstellen* and the concept of the *Darstellung* – presented in an early and undeveloped form within the *Critique of Pure Reason* and later, in a developed form, within the *Critique of Judgment*. As has been detailed by Helfer's extensive consideration of Fichte's writings, Fichte was particularly drawn to Kant's early reflections on the capacity of the human mind to exhibit [*Darstellen*] a priori intuitions.[12] Associated with the capacity for mathematical construction, Kant's interest

in these a priori forms of intuition provided Fichte with the idea that self-consciousness was premised on an a priori intuition. However, and following an intimate engagement with the writings of Reinhold and Maimon, Fichte soon rejected this notion choosing instead to promote the view that human consciousness must be grounded in *Darstellung*, a view that promoted the idea that the representing activity of the mind can only come into consciousness through the process of being represented.

The idea of self-consciousness being grounded in *Darstellung* certainly provided an entirely new way of thinking about the system of the human mind. However, in the "Review of *Aenesidemus*" and in the various publications of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, Fichte abandoned the term *Darstellung* introducing in its place, the term "setzen [*posit*]".[13] Although Fichte failed to elaborate on the motive behind this terminological change, the use of the term *setzen* portrayed human activity as intentional and causal, the conception of which established a clear demarcation between the bounds of aesthetic and philosophical discourse. Liberating the creative power of the imagination from the exclusivity of the dominion of the realm of aesthetics, Fichte moved the creative potentiality of the imagination into the realm of philosophy itself, providing in the process a radically new presentation of the Kantian unknown.

WISSENSCHAFTSLEHRE AND DOMAIN OF FREEDOM

As a *Darstellung* of the system of the human mind, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is demonstrative of a system of human freedom – a system of which definitively and successfully unites the theoretical, practical and aesthetic domains of reason *and* the productive, the reproductive and the creative domains of the imagination outlined within the Kantian *Critiques*.[14] The reader is drawn into their own system of human freedom through the opening provocation to the First Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre* where Fichte audaciously challenges the reader to enter into the inner aspects of their mind:

> Attend to yourself: turn your attention away from everything that surrounds you and towards your inner life; this is the first demand that philosophy makes of its disciple. Our concern is not with anything that lies outside you, but only with yourself.[15]

The act of introspection is crucial to the comprehension of Fichte's entire thesis because the capacity to reflect on one's own inner life reveals that there is a "remarkable difference" in the types of representations [*Vorstellungen*] that form and modify consciousness itself.[16] The first predominate form of representations in the mind are modelled on or relate to a reality that is

independent to the self. Fichte describes these forms of representations as accompanied by the "feeling of necessity" because the content of these representations are modelled on and hence limited by the conditions of external reality. In contrast, the second predominate form of representations in the mind are completely dependent on the freedom of the self. These forms of representations are accompanied by the "feelings of freedom" because the content of these representations refer to a reality that is not "limited" or encumbered by anything external to the self.

The presence of these particular forms of representations in the mind and their accompanying feelings were, for Fichte, intimately associated with two varying forms of self-consciousness. As he argues, a self-consciousness that is intimately tied to and modelled on the representation of things represents a self-consciousness that is *primarily* associated with feelings of necessity. Connected with the philosophical domain of dogmatism, this form of self-consciousness emerges, for Fichte, through a system of experience whereby the image of the self is given or reflected back "as by a mirror" – that is, through the experience of "things."[17] As representations are produced in the mind purely out of the *necessary* form of relation to the external world, this type of individual presents as a contingent and dependent being such that thinking proceeds in a "mechanical" manner.[18]

On the other hand, a self-consciousness that is intimately tied to and modelled on representations arising purely from within the self itself represents, for Fichte, a self-consciousness *primarily* associated with feelings of freedom.[19] Connected with the philosophical domain of idealism, this form of self-consciousness does not arise through simple reflection as by a mirror. As representations are produced in the mind independent to the presence of things, this form of individual is able to embrace their own independence "with feeling" such that thinking becomes "elevated by freedom" to an entirely different level.[20]

By acknowledging the distinction between these two forms of self-consciousness, Fichte is able to reveal that existence has many "determinations." For, and as he states, "we do not necessarily think when we exist, but we necessarily exist when we think."[21] In other words, thinking is "merely a specific determination of existence." This is exemplified by the fact that objects can appear in the mind in the form of a necessary representation, corresponding to some determinate thing outside of the self. And, objects can appear in the mind in the form of a representation that corresponds to some "imaginary" determination given through the process of thinking.[22] Self-consciousness can actively engage with the empirical world and yet it also can move beyond the determinations of this world – the acknowledgement of which is, for Fichte, fundamental to the form and the content of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and to the experience of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. As he explains, the object

of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is the system of human cognition, which presents as a system of "necessary acts."[23] And yet, the *Wissenschaftslehre* does not contain the acts that contributed to the science itself. The form and content of the *Wissenschaftslehre* "originates" out of a new act of the mind given through "a specific determination of freedom," the determination of which is given through a "free act" of the mind. By means of a free act of reflection, the mind becomes conscious of the necessary actions of the intellect, allowing the "form" of these actions to be "torn" from their original sequence and "set forth" in a "pure, unmixed form."

Although a free act of the mind led to the creation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, Fichte is faced with the question of how can one engage in the act of reflection and what rules does one follow? A question that could only be answered through the proclamation that there is no rule to follow. The free act that gave rise to the form and content of the *Wissenschaftslehre* can only ever emerge through the act of experimentation and of discovery. Specifically, and as revealed in the following paragraph, when the act of experimentation or of discovery is guided through an intimate awareness of one's own feelings:

> By blind groping it succeeds in reaching the dawn, and only then does it emerge into the bright light. It is lead at first by obscure feelings* (the origin and reality of which the *Wissenschaftslehre* has to disclose). And if we had not begun with obscure feelings for things which we did not clearly recognize until later, we would still have no clear concepts to this day and would still be that lump of clay which first wrenched itself from the earth. This is also confirmed by the history of philosophy, and we have now provided the real reason which explains why it is only after much aimless wandering that a few people have been able to become conscious of something which, nevertheless, lies openly in every human mind and which anyone can easily grasp once it has been pointed out to him.[24]

Although the capacity to engage with these obscure feelings and to develop reflective forms of thinking "lies openly in every human mind," it is a capacity that is not developed by all. As Fichte points out, the "mere fact of our existence" does not require the use of reflective forms of thinking. In order to develop reflective forms of thinking, one must elevate oneself through freedom in order to reflect upon one's own necessary modes of acting. Although some individuals can become aware of and use their own freedom, in Fichte's view, the capacity to disseminate this form of thinking requires an education. Specifically, a form of education that involves an interaction "*with*" the other, rather than an acting "*upon*" the other.[25] Opening onto a series of compelling anthropological claims, this important line of enquiry proposes the interaction *with* the other directs the development of one's own "obscure feelings"

that lie within. Interaction with the other allows an individual to discover their own "internal powers," to discover their own capacity to wrench themself from the necessity of being in the world to the position of being able to reflect upon the world – the capacity of which requires the "*sense* of truth" as "a presentiment that something might be found in a particular place and that one should pursue this or that path in order to find out."[26] The sense of truth is, therefore, a feeling that must be raised to consciousness, illuminated, developed and determined by the power of one's own judgement.

Remarkably, and in distinction to the emergent and episodic nature of the Kantian unknown, Fichte remained committed to this enduring philosophical claim. Opening onto the central thesis of the *Science of Knowledge*, the discovery of the capacity to reflect on one's own sense of truth is intimately connected with the concept of the creative imagination. As Fichte has argued, the "heart" of the *Wissenschaftslehre* can only be "attacked" through the "use" of one's own creative imagination. As the *Wissenschaftslehre* is a *Darstellung* of the system of the human mind, the presence of this overriding philosophical claim reveals that the seed of indeterminacy underlying human creation is not unknown, as Kant led us all to believe. Rather, and on Fichte's view, the seed of indeterminacy underlying all human creation is absolutely *incomprehensible*.

NOTES

1. This paragraph forms the opening reproach of the preface to the *Science of Knowledge* [1794/95]. See: J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, ed. Peter Heath and John Lachs, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 3. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.

The *Science of Knowledge* is the English translation of the original Jena version of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, published under the title of *Foundations of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* (*Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*) *1794*. The First and Second Introductions to the *Wissenschaftslehre* included in the *Science of Knowledge* were originally titled, "Introductions to the *Wissenschaftslehre*" and were written in 1797. The inherent difficulties imposed by this presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and the impenetrability of the system when read on its own led Fichte to develop many presentations of the *Wissenschaftslehre* over the following decade. As a result, no fewer than sixteen different presentations of the first principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre* were written during Fichte's lifetime. See: "Editor's Introduction," in *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), viii–xi.

2. Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel. Lectures on German Idealism.*, ed. David S. Pacini (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 202.

3. As Breazeale has highlighted, the term *Wissenschaftslehre* does not refer to a particular stage or presentation of Fichte's transcendental idealism. Rather, it is

a general term used by Fichte to describe his philosophical system. In this regard, *Wissenschaftslehre* is, for Fichte, synonymous with philosophy itself. See: Fichte, "Editor's Introduction," ix–x.

For the purposes of this discussion, however, all future references to the term *Wissenschaftslehre* will refer to the original Jena presentation published in English as the *Science of Knowledge*.

4. I, 469 *The Science of Knowledge*, 43.

Fichte describes the "First Introduction" for "the unprejudiced reader . . . without preconceived opinions" and the "Second Introduction" for "readers who already have a philosophical system." See: I, 453 ibid., 29.

5. I, 474 ibid., 48.

Fichte also proposes Kant's "important discovery" was that "philosophy is a cognition of reason through reason." See: Fichte, "[Public Announcement of a New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre] (1800)," 193.

6. I, 420 *The Science of Knowledge*, 4.

7. "Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or, of So-Called 'Philosophy,' " in *Fichte Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 125–26.

In general, and as highlighted by Breazeale, Fichte does not establish a concrete distinction between the terms *Gegenstand* and *Object*. However, Fichte generally uses the term *Object* when referring to abstract contexts, as indicated in his aforementioned reference to the "object of philosophy." And he uses the term *Gegenstand* in relation to concrete contexts, as indicated in his reference to "objects of experience." See commentary offered in Footnote 5 in: "First Introduction," 12–13.

8. "Selected Correspondence," 399.

9. Some recent examples highlighting the connection between Kant and Fichte's theory of the imagination include: Alexander M. Schlutz, *Mind's World: Imagination and Subjectivity from Descartes to Romanticism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009). John Rundell, "Re-Reading Fichte's Science of Knowledge after Castoriadis: The Anthropological Imagination and the Radical Imaginary," *Thesis Eleven* 119, no. 1 (2013).

10. Fichte only refers to the concept of the "*creative imagination*" towards the end of the *Science of Knowledge*. See: I, 284 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 250.

Establishing a distinction here between Fichte's conception of the productive imagination and the creative imagination contrasts with the opinion of Engell who proposes Fichte uses these terms synonymously. See: James Engell, *The Creative Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 228.

Some scholastic considerations of the *Science of Knowledge* do not even refer to the concept of the creative imagination. See: Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel. Lectures on German Idealism.* Günter Zöller, *Fichte's Transcendental Philosophy* (New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

11. I, 284 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 250.

12. By returning to Fichte's own writings, Helfer traces his emergent interest in the concept of the *Darstellung*. See: B. Martha Helfer, *The Retreat of the Representation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 62–66.

13. Ibid., 66, 73.

For a rich and comprehensive consideration of Fichte's use of the term "*setzen*," see: Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel. Lectures on German Idealism*, 233–35.

14. In a draft letter to Baggensen, Fichte defines his own system of transcendental idealism as "the first system of freedom." See: J. G. Fichte, "Draft of a Letter to Baggensen, April or May 1795," in *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1795), 385.

15. I, 423 *The Science of Knowledge*, 6.

16. Although Lachs and Heath generally translate *Vorstellung* as "presentation" for the purposes of consistency *Vorstellung* will continue to be translated to as "representation."

17. I, 433 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 14–15.

18. I, 507 ibid., 76.

19. I, 433 ibid., 14–15.

20. I, 506 ibid., 76.

21. I, 100 ibid., 100–01.

22. I, 436 ibid., 17.

23. Fichte, "Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or, of So–Called 'Philosophy,' " 126–27.

24. As Fichte outlines in the footnote *, "obscure feelings" provide a "sense of truth" because they are feelings related to the feeling of what is right. See: ibid., 127–28.

25. I, 507 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 76.

26. "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy," in *Fichte Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell Universtiy Press, 1988), 210–11.

Chapter 8

The Absolutely Creative Imagination

Although Fichte's principle thesis concerning the power and function of the imagination resides within the text the *Science of Knowledge* [1794/1795], he also provided a series of introductory reflections on the power and function of the imagination in three public lectures or "letters" presented under the title, "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy."[1] Written during the year 1794, these illuminating series of lectures provide a lucid reflection on the realm of philosophy and its spirit of intent by establishing a particular distinction between the spirit [*Geist*], the letter and the body.

The distinction between these particular domains pertains directly to Fichte's desire to portray philosophy as the project of "a rational, free and suprasensuous being."[2] Philosophy is not, for Fichte, something that simply "floats in our memory or is printed in books for us to read."[3] On the contrary, philosophy is an activity that stirs and transforms one's spirit. It does so, by ushering one's spirit into a higher spiritual order enabling one to move beyond the determinations imposed by the mere letter and by the body. Given this particular conception of philosophy, these three letters endeavoured to establish a clear distinction between the spirit and the body, between the spirit and the letter and finally, between the spirit and the letter within philosophy.

An essential and critical component of these series of lucid reflections on the spirit, the letter, the body and their relation to philosophy is a sustained engagement with and reflection on the power and function of the imagination. Principally inspired by Kant's "great discovery" of the power of the transcendental imagination, the informal and poetic format of these lectures briefly define the productive, the reproductive and the "absolutely creative imagination" and explore the role they play in the formation of empirical consciousness, in the formation of cognition and in the formation of the realm

of philosophy. Given these central and pervasive themes are significantly developed within the rational, logical and technical nature of the *Science of Knowledge* [1794/1795], an important interplay resides between these two bodies of work. In fact, it can be argued these lectures provide a series of invaluable insights fundamental to the comprehension of the *Science of Knowledge* and to the comprehension of Fichte's intimate engagement with and development of the Kantian unknown.

THE PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

In the first lecture of this series titled, "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," spirit [*Geist*] is described as the "*productive imagination*."[4] The main premise behind this definition relates to the essential proclamation that any being that has the capacity to be "conscious of anything" must have spirit.[5] As Fichte argues, "All human beings possess spirit" – all beings have representations [*Vorstellungen*] because to be without spirit or to be without representations would suggest that one is "unconscious or dead."

Moving both with and against the Kantian thesis, Fichte elaborates on this initial proposal by suggesting the productive power of imagination is "completely creative." As he argues, the productive imagination "creates something from nothing" – it "creates the material for representation" and "it alone shapes everything that is found within empirical consciousness and is the creator of this consciousness itself." Although deviating from modern philosophical opinion of that time, Fichte suggests here in parenthesis that the underlying premise of this deduction is based on hints left behind within the writings of the "most brilliant thinker of all" – that is, of Kant.

What can be deduced from this disclosure is that Fichte captures and redevelops Kant's description of the creative capacity of the productive power of imagination, outlined in the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* and in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[6] As previously discussed, Kant's revised definition of the imagination in the B Deduction and in the *Anthropology* described the imagination as a spontaneous a priori power to represent or exhibit an object in intuition, even without its presence – a definition that proposed, in principle, that the productive imagination is a power of the soul that can produce, or create for that matter simply out of its own activity, objects in intuition. Fichte embraces this idea, suggesting the productive imagination is not simply a productive power of the soul that *gives* intuitable form to the material supplied by the other faculties of the soul. Rather, by creating something from nothing, the productive imagination *creates* the material of all representations enabling the creation of empirical consciousness itself.

Notwithstanding the epistemological and ontological implications of these claims, Fichte does in fact concede the imagination is not to be considered as a "thing in itself."[7] Rather and as he argues, the productive imagination is "a capacity or faculty of the only immediately given thing in itself – the I." Although the productive imagination is a creator of empirical consciousness, the productive imagination can "only be a shaper" of consciousness and "what it shapes must be found within the I."[8] What is found within the I is "found in feeling" – with feeling being, for Fichte, "the material of everything which is represented."

As everything that is represented in empirical consciousness is to be found in feeling, Fichte also describes the productive imagination or spirit as a "*capacity for raising feelings to consciousness*." In this regard, the productive imagination creates empirical consciousness by raising, shaping and giving form to feelings through the creation of the material for representation. A more generous spirit is associated with an "active" imagination, which converts feelings into representations more "rapidly" and more "quickly." And similarly, a less generous spirit is associated with a less active imagination, which comprehends and understands feelings much more slowly.

Although the productive imagination embodies varying capacities for raising feelings to consciousness, Fichte also proposes a "higher distinction" can be detected in the spirit of humankind. In particular, a distinction that relates to the various forms of feelings, which the productive imagination can raise to consciousness. The first feeling raised to consciousness by the productive imagination relates specifically to humankinds "animal nature." As these feelings are directly tied to the "sensuous world of appearances governed by laws of nature" these feelings "do not lie very deep." They are, for Fichte, feelings that are most "easily, surely and necessarily raised to consciousness." In contrast, the second form of feelings are not related to humankind's animal life but are related to their "rational and spiritual life." These feelings are found deeper within and accordingly form the foundation of the feelings that relate to humankind's animal nature.[9]

It is important to acknowledge here that the distinction between these two forms of feelings refer directly to the feelings of necessity and the feelings of freedom, outlined in the First Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre*.[10] The feelings that relate to humankind's animal nature are the feelings of necessity. By raising these feelings to consciousness, the productive imagination gives form to the rules of nature through the representation of the realm of concepts.

Underlying these feelings of necessity are feelings of freedom – feelings that relate to the rational and spiritual life of humankind.[11] As Fichte argues, these forms of feelings "lie in a deeper region of our spirit, in its most secret sanctuary" and do not merely relate to the ordering of appearances through

the realm of concepts. Rather, these forms of feelings subordinate the sensual world and being itself to the laws of "ethical order," to the laws governing "spiritual harmony" and to the "realm of truth and virtue." By raising these feelings to consciousness, the productive imagination converts ideas and ideals into representations.

In the second lecture of this series, titled "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter," Fichte defines the capacity to raise to consciousness feelings of freedom as a "*special* sense" of spirit.[12] By raising ideas to consciousness and by converting ideals and ideas into representations, the special sense of spirit renders possible the capacity to move beyond that of the given – to move beyond the sensible world, the letter and the body. The special sense of spirit reveals, for Fichte, that human beings do not necessarily need to "hang on to the empty, dead letters" because there exists something within the human spirit that is, in its essence, beyond the letter, beyond the body.[13]

Fichte also reveals that human beings may express a "great deal of spirit" without being able to "describe it scientifically," or to explain its "origin." They may, as outlined in the following paragraph, express spirit in purely a spontaneous way:

> From anywhere whatsoever – from somewhere invisible to you and to all mortal eyes – a spark reaches you. You are overwhelmed by it and led into your most secret depths, without knowing how you got there. Such was the situation of the great men of antiquity of whom I spoke in my last lecture: in a manner which neither they nor their contemporaries could explain, they hit upon those lofty ideas which they handed down to us and which, if we were capable of grasping them, would astound us.[14]

By being led to the "secret depths" of their souls, the great men of antiquity created – out of nothing – supra-sensuous representations. The varying manifestations of these spontaneous supra-sensuous representations take on a range of "universal forms," representing the ideas of primal beauty, the delightful, the primal sublime, eternal truth and divinity. The idea of primal beauty is a manifestation of the spirit, which "lifts itself beyond the necessary forms of spatial bodies." The idea of the delightful is a manifestation of the spirit, which "lifts itself beyond the temporal flux of sensations." The idea of the primal sublime is a manifestation of the spirit, which stares in "wonder" at its capacity to sweep "beyond time and space" and its capacity to lift above "the spatial and temporal limitations of sensation." The idea of eternal truth is a manifestation of the spirit, which lifts itself "beyond the change of convictions." And finally, the idea of divinity is a manifestation of the spirit, which moves beyond "every influence of sensibility."[15] Primal beauty, the

delightful, the primal sublime, eternal truth and divinity – as supra-sensible representations of ideals – are representations that move beyond the temporal and spatial limitations of the sensible world. They are representations of a "free spirit."

And yet, for Fichte, a free spirit is necessarily and always "clothed in a body." The body is a necessary condition of the free spirit because one spirited being can only communicate with other spirited beings through the physical world. Spirits are "free and cannot *be* determined" *but* they have to "determine *themselves*" by producing an appearance in the "material world." Opening once again onto a series of anthropological concerns, Fichte proposes the possibility of a "reciprocal relationship" with the other necessitates that a person of spirit produce outside of themselves an appearance, which "expresses" their "spiritual idea (to the extent that the body can be an expression of the spirit)." This appearance – as the "embodiment of spirit" – presents as a "bodily presentation [*Darstellung*]" only for those who possess their own spirit. In this regard, one spirit cannot directly affect another spirit, all they can do is simply provide another spirit "with an occasion" for developing through their own efforts spiritual ideas, which dwell within their inner depths. Opening onto Fichte's claims concerning the necessity for a form of education that involves the interaction *with* the other, the capacity to develop one's own spiritual ideas is captured through a distinction Fichte creates between the spirit and the letter:

> I set before you a product, into which I believe I have breathed a few ideas. But I do not give you the ideas themselves, nor can I do so. I give you the mere body. The words which you hear constitute this body. Taken in themselves, my words are no more than an empty noise, a movement in the air which surrounds us. I do not give them whatever meaning they have *for you* (assuming they make rational sense to you). You place a meaning in these words *for yourself*, just as I place meaning in them *for myself*. The more closely the meaning you place in them approximates to the meaning I wished to place in them, the better you understand me; the further your meaning is from mine, the less you understand me. The closer the ideas that you develop within yourself on this occasion resemble those ideas that I develop in myself while engaged in this activity, the better your frame of mind will harmonize with mine.[16]

Although the special sense of spirit comes from within, as this poetic paragraph reveals, meaning is not something that is simply given through the letter. Rather, meaning must be created through a form of "struggle" between one spirit and another and yet it is a struggle that can only occur through the body. The physical presence of a spirited being thus encourages another spirited being to create meaning through the evocation of words, however, and

as Fichte argues, "you place a meaning in these words *for yourself*." Meaning must be created using one's own spirit and yet the words can only ever be given through the body. It is in the context of these claims that the productive imagination is portrayed as the power of the soul that enables the complex interplay between spirit and body and between one spirit and another spirit by raising to consciousness feelings of necessity *and* feelings of freedom.

THE REPRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION

The first letter of these remarkable series of lectures also introduces the concept of the "*reproductive* imagination."[17] Drawing upon the Kantian notion thereof, the characteristic feature of the reproductive imagination is described as the capacity to repeat "something which was already present within empirical consciousness." In other words, the reproductive imagination does not create representations but simply reproduces representations created by the productive imagination. As Fichte argues, the reproductive imagination may reproduce representations in a different context to the context in which the original representations were created. Or, the reproductive imagination may "assemble a new whole" through the reproduction and the combination of a whole series of representations.

The second letter of this series also introduces the concept of the "unregulated reproductive imagination."[18] Representative of an "unbridled" form of imagination, the unregulated reproductive imagination simply produces "wild, misshapen monstrosities" within the realm of fine art or even within the realm of philosophy. These products represent a "monstrous offspring of the wild force" or "ravages of nature" slapped together to form "eccentric shapes." As Fichte argues, the products of the unregulated reproductive imagination do not come from within spirited beings for they do not raise to consciousness feelings of necessity or of freedom. They are simply products of the unbridled forms of nature that arise from the "external manifold" of nature – from the "surface of external things" in the form of a storm or a "fiery rage." On Fichte's view, therefore, the unregulated reproductive imagination simply reproduces the unbridled forms of nature within one's own consciousness rendering this reproductive power of the soul as the spiritless use of the imagination.

THE ABSOLUTELY CREATIVE IMAGINATION

Although these introductory reflections on the productive and reproductive imagination remain in principle true to the Kantian thesis, Fichte extends

Kant's seminal series of reflections on the imagination into a new domain through an introduction to the concept of the "absolutely creative imagination." In the second letter of this series, the concept of the absolutely creative imagination begins to take form within an exploration of the material of philosophy. As Fichte explains, the material of philosophy is "itself the human mind or spirit . . . in all of its affairs, activities and modes of acting." Given that we are not conscious of acting on something because we can never be conscious of acting as such, the material of philosophy can only be given once action becomes the object of an action – once action becomes an object of reflection. In this regard, philosophy obtains its own material by observing and comprehending the way in which the mind acts. Philosophy achieves this aim through the act of philosophical reflection, which, as discussed, draws on a higher special sense of spirit – a sense of spirit that brings attention to the fact that the human mind "is activity and nothing but activity" because "the soul … is an active force." Fichte elaborates on this important proposal in the following paragraph:

> When I entertain a representation of the physical world, all that I am conscious of is the physical world. The only way that I can become conscious of *my own activity* qua representing is by entertaining a representation of *my activity of representing* the physical world. In doing so, I stand upon a higher level; I reflect upon my own activity, which is present within my representation.[19]

The capacity to reflect on one's own activity within the mind is fundamental to the realm of philosophy because it allows one to reflect on one's own "activity of representing" introducing the philosopher to the material of philosophy.[20] The act of reflection requires, however, that one is able to abstract from action, as action is "mediated by representation." In other words, one must abstract from "our immediate representations of the physical world" – an act of abstraction, which allows reflection "upon whatever remains." And, what remains is, for Fichte, "the series constituted by the action of the human mind" rather than the "series constituted by the objects of these actions."

As a means to comprehend the essence behind this introduction to "the series constituted by the action of the human mind," Fichte acquaints the reader with the activity of the human mind. As he explains: "Just as the representation of a physical world is present in my consciousness, so is an image of this physical world present in my imagination."[21] The distinction between representation and image is crucial for, and as Fichte argues, when thinking about a representation of the physical world, the mind is simply conscious of and reflecting on the physical world. In contrast, however, when thinking about an image of the physical world, the mind becomes conscious of its own activity – it becomes conscious of the *activity of representing* the physical

world. Reflecting on the activity of representing allows the philosopher to gain access to the *image* of the physical world, the image of which is simply given through the undetermined activity of the "absolutely creative imagination." In this regard, the activity of representing can only be represented through images. A fact that reveals the series constituted by the actions of the human mind itself are in fact produced by the "absolute spontaneity of the imagination." For Fichte, this revelation is "Kantianism *properly understood*" for these images are simply schemata and the way the imagination "operates" with these images involves the activity of "schematism." And yet, Fichte develops the Kantian conception thereof by proposing these schemata are in fact based on feelings, which lie in a "deeper region of the human mind," feelings of which are raised to consciousness through one's spirit. By giving form to these feelings, the absolutely creative imagination provides the act of abstraction with the material of reflection.

Based on this description, Fichte introduces the fundamental philosophical claim that all material given through the activity of the human mind arises from the absolutely creative imagination. All images are in fact creations of the freely forming and creative power of the imagination. However, and as Fichte goes onto explain, although the absolutely creative imagination spontaneously creates images, consciousness in the early years of life is not possible. Consciousness requires the *production* of determinate representations – representations that are based on the acquisition of the power to construe "feelings as images from the material world." The productive imagination must establish the form of empirical consciousness by determining the physical world through feelings of necessity. Conceived in this way, representations are a product of consciousness – representations are a product of a necessary way of acting or interacting with something beyond the self, rendering the ability to produce representations of the material world an activity that is acquired "by practice." In the early years of life, consciousness is not possible because the productive imagination has not yet developed the capacity to construe feelings as images of the material world.

It is important to acknowledge here that by creating a distinction between the absolutely creative imagination and the productive imagination, Fichte not only develops the Kantian notion concerning the imagination as a creative capacity of the soul but also provides the means in which to re-envisage the form of the unknown X. In Fichte's view, the absolutely creative imagination is indispensable to the formation of the human subject as a free yet determined being for the formation of all representations in the mind requires the spontaneous creation of images. Accordingly, these remarkable series of poetic letters offer the disquieting proposition that the absolutely *incomprehensible* seed of indeterminacy underlying all human creation is the absolutely creative imagination.

NOTES

1. These three lectures exploring the realm of philosophy and its spirit of intent form the final part of a series of public lectures given by Fichte during his time at Jena University. Breazeale provides a general historical introduction to these three lectures in: J. G. Fichte, "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter. Editors Preface," in *Fichte Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell Universtiy Press, 1988), 185–91.

2. "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," 192.

3. "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy," 207.

4. "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," 193–94.

See also Hoffman's reflections on Fichte's depiction of the imagination in these series of lectures in: Susan-Judith Hoffmann, "Breathing Life into Primal Beauty," *Fichte–Studien* 48 (2020).

5. It is important to note here that Breazeale translates *Vorstellung* as "representation." Breazeale uses the term representation because it acknowledges the important relationship of the *Wissenschaftslehre* to the Kantian system. See: German-English Glossary in: J. G. Fichte, *Fichte Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), xvii–xx.

6. B151 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 256. §28 "Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View," in *Anthropology, History and Education*, ed. Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 278.

7. Fichte, "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," 193.

8. Ibid., 194.

9. Ibid., 195.

10. I, 423 J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, ed. Peter Heath and John Lachs, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 6.

11. "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," 195.

12. "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter," 199.

13. "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," 195.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., 195–96.

16. Ibid., 196–97.

17. Ibid., 193.

18. Fichte, "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter," 200.

19. Ibid., 201.

20. Some interesting discussions on Fichte's reflections on the act of philosophic reflection have been provided by: Hoffmann, "Breathing Life into Primal Beauty." Daniel Breazeale, *Thinking through the Wissenschaftslehre: Themes from Fichte's Early Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

21. Fichte, "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter," 201–03.

Chapter 9

The Creative Imagination

Fichte's series of introductory reflections on the powers of the reproductive, productive and absolutely creative imagination provide an important contextual foundation to his developed account of the power and function of the imagination as it is given through the *Science of Knowledge* [1794/1795].[1] Albeit at times obtuse and difficult in its presentation, the significance of this developed account cannot be overstated. Not simply for its intimate engagement with and re-evaluation of the Kantian account of the productive power of imagination but also for its thought-provoking introduction to the concept of the creative imagination. Importing the fundamental essence of the Kantian unknown = X, Fichte propelled the creative capacity of the imagination into new and unexplored domains by introducing the necessity for the unknown = Y.

The introduction to the unknown Y allowed Fichte to journey even further into the depths of the human soul confronting that which Kant himself had been unable to do.[2] By tracing the pure forms of intuition back to one first principle, Fichte was able to provide an innovative consideration of the ground of the hidden art [*Kunst*] of the capacity for representation.[3] An art that, on Fichte's view, necessitated an intimate connection between the human subject and the world. Conceiving the art of representation as being founded on an embodied form of interplay between the subject and the world laid the foundation for an entirely new presentation [*Darstellung*] of the fundamental imports of the Kantian *Critiques* – a presentation that is inherently obtuse, complex and difficult as Fichte is attempting to unveil the absolutely *incomprehensible* ground of the entire system of the human mind.

In order to discover that which is absolutely *incomprehensible*, the reader of the *Science of Knowledge* is taken on a compelling journey into the form and content of the foundations of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. From the outset, this

journey is based on the primary philosophical contention that although "the self may exist only for itself, there necessarily arises for it at once an existence external to it."[4] Self-consciousness and consciousness of something that is not ourselves are necessarily and always connected. As the ground of both does in fact lie in the self itself, Fichte conceives the human subject as one that is divided – as a subject that is both free and yet constrained, embodied, and yet able to move beyond the body, beyond the letter, beyond the world. In the context of this primary philosophical contention, the *Wissenschaftslehre* shows, and from the very start, how the self is for itself and thenceforth how the existence of the self for itself would be impossible without the presence of an existence outside the self.

The *Science of Knowledge* achieves this aim through the inclusion of three principles sections. The first section, titled the "Fundamental Principles of the Entire Science of Knowledge," introduces three fundamental principles upon which the entire *Wissenschaftslehre* is based. These foundational principles essentially propose human consciousness arises out of a primordial "*Act*" through which the absolute self is posited as both agent and action.

The second section, titled the "Foundation of Theoretical Knowledge," undertakes a theoretical consideration of the absolute self, which proposes the absolute attributes of the self are necessarily intelligible.[5] These intelligible attributes involve the theoretical realm of reason and endow the absolute self with the capacity for knowing through the establishment of the series of the "*real*" – a series of representations given through something outside the self.

The third and final section, titled the "Foundation of the Knowledge of the Practical," undertakes a practical consideration of the absolute self, which proposes the absolute attributes of the self are necessarily practical. These practical attributes involve the practical realm of reason and endow the absolute self with the capacity for what is known and, more importantly, for what *ought* to be known through the establishment of the series of the "*ideal*" – a series of representations given through the "self alone."

The inclusion of these three principle sections draw upon the theoretical, the practical and the aesthetic realms of reason outlined within the Kantian *Critiques*. However, and in remarkable distinction to the Kantian presentation, Fichte unites these realms of reason through his system of transcendental idealism opening onto a series of theoretical, practical, transcendental, ontological and anthropological concerns. A series of concerns that attempts to conceive the divided human subject as a unified whole – the conception of which provides an illuminating perspective of how the subject can cognize and interact with the world and of how the subject can interact morally and thoughtfully in the world amongst others. Given this astonishing achievement, these three sections of the *Science of Knowledge* are not to be conceived as separate textual entities in themselves but must be envisaged as residing in an

intimate and incessant form of interplay. Accordingly, the readers own experience of the interplay between these realms of the text becomes crucial to the comprehension of this broadened and embodied conception of the human subject – one that is, in its essence, premised upon an emergent account of the creative imagination as an embodied power of ontological creation.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE ENTIRE *SCIENCE OF KNOWLEDGE*

Fichte's introduction to the concept of the creative imagination is, in its essence, centred around three fundamental principles upon which the entire *Science of Knowledge* is based. The first fundamental principle introduces the central claim that an original and unknowable "*Act*" [*Thathandlung*] lies at the basis of all human consciousness.[6] The use of the neologism *Thathandlung* signifies the fact that the primordial Act is to be considered as "a pure activity" that alludes to action and not simply to existence. The distinction between action and existence highlights the fact that in the form of an "intellectual intuition," the Act presupposes no object [*Objekt*] and yet it produces an object through its own pure activity.[7] Action [*Handlung*] immediately becomes the deed [*That*] rendering the Act as a self-constitutive activity that can never "be *proved* nor *defined*." Unknown and unknowable to empirical consciousness, the act is by necessity a theoretical proposition and accordingly forms the "primordial, absolutely unconditioned first principle" of all human cognition.[8]

The Unknown X

Given the primordial Act alludes to action, the first, absolutely unconditioned principle of all human cognition conceives activity as a form of positing [*Setzen*].[9] In this regard, the primordial Act represents a pure activity whereby the self simply posits itself. In this moment, the self is "at once the agent and the product of action; the active, and what the activity brings about; action [*Handlung*] and deed [*That*] are one and the same."[10] As action and deed are necessarily connected, Fichte refers to this connection by drawing on the "preliminary designation X."[11] Evoking the enigmatic nature of the Kantian unknown, the designation X highlights the fact that a form of connection between action and deed is possible because the X is absolutely posited in both. Based on this supposition, the X is defined as an expression – not of the Act – but of the fact that "I am, because I have posited myself."[12] A fact that establishes the category of reality for "the simple act of positing something … is the reality, or the essence, of that thing."[13]Accordingly, the X = I am expresses the fact that the self is "a

necessary identity of subject and object [*Objekt*]: a subject-object" – a fact pointed out by Kant in his deduction of the categories and yet, as Fichte highlights, this fact was *never* defined as the absolutely basic principle of all cognition.

The Unknown Y

Given Kant failed to define the absolutely basic principle of all cognition, Fichte introduces the necessity for the presence of another unknown realm of the human soul through a consideration of the second and third fundamental principles of the entire *Science of Knowledge*. In its essence, the second fundamental principle is based on the observation that in order for the self to posit anything other than itself, it must posit something absolutely opposed to itself. The opposing act of positing is conditioned, therefore, in regard to its content because what is absolutely opposed to the self or what is represented as an object must take on the form of the "*not-self*."[14] In Fichte's view, and one that embraces the implicit supposition of the B Deduction of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, this acknowledgement reveals the "striking" observation that the self must contain within itself *and* from the very start, the capacity to posit an "object."[15] To represent an object, *as* an object is a capacity that must lie within the self itself *prior* to any form of experience – a revelation that introduced the idea that the self must contain within itself and from the very start, the category of negation. In this regard, the self as a necessary identity of subject/self and object/not-self presents, and from the very start, as a divided self that contains with itself the category of reality and negation.

Given this acknowledgement, the third fundamental principle of the entire *Science of Knowledge* is based on the observation that a form of interplay and connection must occur between the concurrent positing of the self and the not-self. Albeit divided, the self as a necessary identity of subject-object must reside in a unified form for, and as Fichte argues, the concurrent positing of the self and the not-self "must be taken up into the identity of the one consciousness" for otherwise, the identity of consciousness is itself eliminated.[16]

The necessity for the identity of one consciousness raises, however, the question of how these opposing forms of activity can reside within the unified form of consciousness – "How can … being and nonbeing, reality and negation, be thought together without mutual elimination and destruction?" The resolution to this enquiry is introduced through the idea that the self and the not-self must "mutually *limit* one another." The act of limitation does not abolish reality, it merely limits reality in part through the act of negation. This suggests, however, that the self and the not-self are necessarily divisible and can be posited simultaneously as a *quantity* in general. The capacity for divisibility and for the positing of *quantity* allows the opposing forms of reality

and negation and the opposing forms of the self and the not-self to reside within the unified form of consciousness.

The conception of a divided albeit unified self introduces the necessity for another realm of activity within the self. As the unknown X is posited in both the self and the not-self Fichte introduces the claim the "X itself must be a product" of an original act of the self. As he argues, "what is *absolutely posited*, and *founded on itself*, is the ground of one particular activity."[17] Accordingly, and in distinction to the Kantian presentation that simply referred to the unknown X, Fichte introduces the necessity for the unknown Y – an original act of the human mind that produces the unknown X.[18]

Given the introduction to the necessity for the presence of the unknown X and Y, the essence of the third fundamental principle reveals the primordial act of combining opposites in a third thing necessitates the act of counterpositing *and* it necessitates the act of combination. Consciousness is conditioned, therefore, in regard to its *form* and its *content* because consciousness necessarily arises out of the *conjoining* of things *in opposition*. Consciousness involves a synthesis of absolute opposites – an observation that reveals, for Fichte, the activity of synthesis necessarily and always involves the activity of antithesis:

> Things in opposition are to be united: but they would not be opposed if they had not been so by an act of the self, which is ignored in the synthesis, so that reflection may bring to consciousness only the ground of connection between them.[19]

This powerful reconceptualization of the Kantian account of the activity of synthesis offers the foundational claim that underlying and making possible the activity of synthesis is the activity of opposition and yet the act of opposition is impossible without the act of combination. Synthesis requires the positing of opposing forms and the positing of these opposing forms requires the act of synthesis. On one level, this foundational claim astutely captures the disquieting theme residing within the Kantian *Critiques* because, and as discussed, Kant does in fact propose the transcendental synthesis of imagination serves to unify the disparate representations of sensibility and understanding. On another level, however, Fichte definitively extends this Kantian claim by highlighting the fact that synthesis and antithesis are in practice "inseparably united." A revelation that introduces the transcendental claim that the possibility of the unified form of consciousness is in fact premised upon a division within the self. The identity of self is a necessary identity of subject-object – a claim that unquestionably provided, for Fichte, an answer to Kant's "celebrated question" of "How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?"

THE INDETERMINACY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

The revelation that all acts of synthesis are in fact "rooted" in a primordial act of opposition certainly provided a new way of thinking about Kant's celebrated question, but more importantly, it unveiled the methodology pertaining to the Theoretical section of the text. As Fichte explains, the entire procedure of the Theoretical section of the *Science of Knowledge* is synthetic.[20] Every proposition will contain a synthesis and every synthesis will contain an antithesis. Likewise, there can be neither a synthesis nor an antithesis without a thesis. A claim that reveals the Theoretical and Practical sections of the *Science of Knowledge* will eventually lead to the disclosure of the thesis underlying the entire system of the human mind, of the fact that the self arises out of its own act of absolute positing given through the primordial Act.[21]

Given the synthetic nature of this revolutionary form of methodology is based on the attributes of the primordial Act the *Science of Knowledge* takes the reader on a journey into the system of their own mind. And although, from the outset, no reference is made to the role and function of the imagination, the representations of the unknown X and the unknown Y are left to linger as schemata within the theatre of the readers own mind.

The ground is laid for a radicalized and highly innovative account of the imagination through the prefatory acknowledgement that the form of interplay between the posited forms of the self and the not-self does in fact encompass the possibility of several forms of relation. The self can posit itself as being the *determinant* or the self can posit itself as being the *determinate*. The supposition that the self is the *determinant* is encapsulated in the idea that "*the self posits the not-self as limited by the self*" – an idea that proposes the self posits itself as determining the not-self.[22] As a *determinant* entity in itself, the self is capable of determining for itself something other than itself. However, and in accordance with the fundamental principles of the text, the not-self is as yet "nothing" for the self. The not-self is not a determinate nor tangible entity because in relation to the primordial Act the not-self has no reality for the self. Given this acknowledgement, the proposition *the self posits the not-self as limited by the self* only becomes valid once the reality of the not-self has been established. Consequently, a consideration of this form of relation forms the foundation of the practical consideration of the absolute self, outlined in the Practical section of the *Science of Knowledge*.

In contrast, the supposition that the self is the *determinate* is encapsulated in the idea that "*the self posits itself as limited by the not-self*" – an idea that proposes that the self posits itself as determined and hence limited by the not-self. The self is, therefore, representative of a *determinate* entity capable of being determined by something other than itself. As this second form of

relation has already been established and outlined within the fundamental principles, then this second form of relation forms the foundation of the theoretical consideration of the absolute self, outlined in the Theoretical section of the *Science of Knowledge*.

Although these two opposing determinations of the self are possible, both forms of determination are contained within the unity of consciousness. The determination of the self as that which determines and the determination of the self as that which is determined must be thought of as "*one and the same*".[23] Moving both with and against the Kantian system, Fichte clarifies the fact that the possibility of thinking of one's own selfhood involves the thinking of something external to the self. Fichte implicitly requests, therefore, that these two opposing determinations of the self need to be retained within the readers own mind in order to elevate into consciousness the object of the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

Following these series of illuminating introductory reflections, the theoretical consideration of the absolute self begins with the proposition that the primordial Act – representative of a determinative act of self-positing – is an activity that simultaneously determines and establishes the quantity and the reality or the negation of both the self and the not-self.[24] As the self posits itself in relation to the not-self, the act of positing is to be conceived as an act of determination that establishes "mere quantity." However, as the quantity of the self is posited in terms of its opposition to the quantity of the not-self, this determinate act of positing is also to be conceived as an act of "interdetermination." In other words, the determinate positing of the self and the not-self simultaneously allows for the determination of the reality of these posited opposing forms.

While this concept of interdetermination reveals how the self embodies the capacity for both determinability and determination, it also proposes the act of interdetermination necessitates a "*causal process*."[25] As Fichte explains, that which is held to be active is the cause and that which is active is the self as substance for "there is initially only one substance, the self."[26] In distinction, that which is held to be passive are the products or the "accidents" that reside within the self. The self as substance must be envisaged, therefore, as containing within itself all possible posited realities, representative of the products of its own activity.

The Independent Activity of Imagination

It is within the context of this description of the self as substance that Fichte introduces his preliminary reflections on the activity or the action [*Handlung*] of the imagination. The description of the self as substance consisting of a series of accidents introduces the idea that the self contains within itself a form of "*independent* activity."[27] This form of independent activity must be

considered as "*activity in general*" for it embodies the essential property of all activity, which is "*to posit and be posited absolutely, without any ground*."[28] Independent activity is, therefore, "*absolute* in character" and to be absolute and ungrounded is to act "without limitation." There must be no ground or condition to restrict this absolute activity – it is an action that occurs with "absolute spontaneity" and it is an action that allows for interaction and for passion.

In Fichte's view, this independent form of activity posited within the self is the absolute and spontaneous activity of "*imagination*."[29] However, and in relation to the concept of interdetermination, the activity of imagination must be demarcated from "*absolute activity in general*." This is because the activity of imagination must be limited – but not in regard to its action. There must be nothing that restricts the absolute and spontaneous action of the imagination. However, once an action takes place the independent activity of imagination must be limited by directing its action towards something, specifically towards an object. It is from this perspective that Fichte describes the independent action of the imagination as an "*absolute activity that determines a reciprocity*." The spontaneous activity of imagination determines reciprocity through the *positing* of exchangeable "components" or "*matter*" within the self as substance. Furthermore, as the independent activity of the imagination enters into the interplay occurring within the self as substance then its action is also determined by "pure reflection." The self as substance reflects on the posited components, and through this act of reflection, the posited components are determined *as* something, as an object.

Although no further reference is made here to the activity of pure reflection, Fichte is keen to highlight the fact that something within the self must ground the *form* of the interplay within the self as substance.[30] The transition of the interplay between one posited form and another – between the self and the not-self – unveils the presence of another independent activity. Forming the "formal ground of reciprocity," this independent activity brings about the form of the interplay within the self as substance because it represents a "*positing by means of a nonpositing*, (a conferring in consequence of a deprivation), or a *transference*."[31] As all activity arises from the self itself, then the formal ground of reciprocity is, for Fichte, attributed to the self itself.

To surmise, this complex, obscure and at times overwhelming analysis reveals that the *form* and *matter* of the interplay of the self as substance is grounded upon two independent activities – the absolute activity of the imagination and the absolute activity of the self. As both forms of independent activity represent absolute activity in general then both forms of activity must be limited or determined. In Fichte's view, the activity that determines and limits the independent activity of the imagination is "consciousness itself."[32] As consciousness aspires to something beyond the posited forms of the self

and the not-self, consciousness brings its components into reciprocity. As Fichte explains, consciousness aspires to the "third thing" – to the unknown X that is contained in both the self and the not-self.

In contrast, what determines and limits the independent activity of the self is the unknown X itself. Contained in the posited components of both the self and the not-self, the X guides consciousness to a unified form because it compels the positing of opposing forms. The X indicates the insufficiency of one component compelling the positing of another component, both of which mutually intrude upon each other.[33] In this regard, both components are posited "mediately"; they are posited as being dependent on each other.[34] Otherwise, and as Fichte argues, the posited form of the self and the not-self would mutually annihilate each other.

At this point in the text, the posited forms of the self and the not-self are redefined as the categories of the subject and the object – a redefinition that is contingent on the association of each with each other; on their interrelatedness. In this regard, the essential nature of the self is that it must in general posit and all that it can posit is "either the subject or the object, and both only mediately."[35] If the self posits the object, then there arises within the self a representation of the reality of the not-self, independent to the self. And, if the self posits the subject, then there arises within the self a representation of the reality of the self, independent to the not-self.

These two opposing forms of activity – of the subjective or ideal activity and of the objective or real activity – must reside in a unified form in order for consciousness itself to be possible. Fichte acknowledges, however, that the determination of consciousness or the determination of something within consciousness requires the interplay between the components of the ideal and real activity "must proceed *from one of the components*."[36] The possibility of any form of determination requires the interplay be "fixed" – to proceed in a certain manner. And yet, Fichte is confronted with the fact that once created, consciousness is "not fixed *absolutely*." Consciousness does not proceed in a determined fashion. Although the X compels and guides consciousness to a unified, synthetic and reciprocal form, consciousness forever retains within itself a form of determinability.

The Power of Imagination

It is within this powerful portrayal of consciousness as a determined yet determinable form that Fichte develops and extends his account of the independent activity of imagination, specifically through reference to the "most wondrous" power of the positing self. Representative of a power of the soul that allows an interminable form of interplay between posited forms, this wondrous power of the positing self gives determinate form to consciousness

and at the same time it ensures the determinate form of consciousness never remains fixed:

> The positing self, through the most wondrous of its powers … holds fast the perishing accident long enough to compare it with that which supplants it. This power it is – almost always misunderstood – which from inveterate opposites knits together a unity; which intervenes between the elements that would mutually abolish each other, and thereby preserves them both; it is that which alone makes possible life and consciousness, and consciousness, especially, as a progressive sequence in time; and all this it does simply by carrying forward, in and by itself, accidents which have no *common* bearer, and *could* have none, since they would mutually destroy each other.[37]

This innovative and somewhat poignant portrayal of consciousness introduces the wondrous power of the positing self as the power of imagination. Described as a power of the soul that has been "misunderstood," the power of the imagination is, for Fichte, fundamental to the determinate and unified form of consciousness for the capacity to *hold*, to *preserve* and to *carry forward* the accidents posited within the self makes consciousness possible and establishes consciousness in time. And yet, as each accident does not have a "*common* bearer" – as each accident is premised upon a form of indetermination – the wondrous power of the positing self cannot *hold*, *preserve*, or *carry forward* the accidents in any determinate sequence or order. The wondrous power of imagination confers the possibility for the determination of consciousness, but more importantly it also confers the possibility for the determinability of consciousness.

Fichte thus provides an entirely new way of thinking about consciousness through a powerful reconceptualization of the notion of time. Moving both with and beyond the Kantian portrayal of the a priori representation of time as a pure intuition, this revised conception of the power of imagination envisages the holding, the preserving and the carrying forward of accidents is the activity that leads to a "progressive sequence in time." On Fichte's view, therefore, the power of imagination is the activity that confers or creates for that matter, the possibility for a moment of time and for consciousness in time. Furthermore, by holding, preserving and carrying forward of accidents without a common bearer, the power of imagination also confers the possibility for a moment in time to be recreated, reimagined, or reproduced. Accordingly, the possibility of time is, for Fichte, grounded in the form and content of consciousness itself.

While in itself, a highly original and astute portrayal of consciousness as a whole, this conception of the wondrous power of imagination reveals the possibility for the determination of consciousness in time is contingent on a

"point of union" between the posited forms of the subject and object. Fichte refers to this point of union as a *clash* – as an *incursion* of each posited form upon the other – the act of which synthetically unites the posited forms into the form of a "component."[38] Evoking the feeling of a decisive and irrevocable event, the clash arises through the determinative activity of the self itself simply because of the fact that the self is active – the self "bounds."[39] When the self is "left to its own devices" – when the self intentionally acts – it "reaches out into the unbounded, the indeterminate and the indeterminable, that is, into the infinite."[40] Representative of a form of unbounded self-assertion, the capacity for infinitude of self is described as an "absolute productive power" of the self. Representative of the absolute productive power of imagination, this power is, in its, essence unlimited and illimitable and can be traced back to traced back to a "higher source," revealed in the Practical section of the text.

And yet, within the context of the fundamental principles of the *Science of Knowledge*, the interminable and unceasing bounding of the absolute productive power of the self must itself be limited. Fichte introduces here the idea of a "check [*Anstoß*]."[41] In itself highly innovative, this remarkable concept introduces the idea that the subjective activity of the self must be limited. The infinitude of the self's own activity – representative of the infinitude of the power of imagination – must be limitable and yet it can only be limited through the presence of something arising from outside the self's own activity. This check from without acts as a form of "resistance" or as an "obstacle" to the absolute productive power of the unbounded self, such that the "outward-striving activity" of the bounding self is "thrown back" or reflected back upon itself.

In its essence, the concept of the check expands on the idea that consciousness contains within itself a form of a determinability. However, Fichte is keen to highlight the fact that this form of determinability arises as a determination of the self itself, accomplished through the spontaneity of the active self and given through "feeling." In the presence of the check from without, the self *feels* something outside of itself and in response to this feeling, the self limits its own bounding activity by opposing something to itself. Importantly and as Fichte points out, this determination in the form of feeling does not relate to the self as intelligence; it is a determination arising out of the practical capacity of the self and as such will be revealed in the Practical section of the text.

Suffice to say, this introduction to the notion of feeling not only embraces the central tenets of the *Critique of Judgment* but also confirms the self is not a solipsistic being but is, through its own activity, open to the presence of something other. The experience of the check or the *Anstoß* arising from without simply leads the self to limit its own activity and the self achieves this task by

opposing something objective to the subjective and then uniting them both. The presence of the *Anstoβ* leads, therefore, to the creation of a twofold direction of activity within the self – that of the infinite and of the finite. As outlined in the following paragraph, envisaging the self as composed of an incessant form of interplay between the infinite and the finite confirms the power to hold, preserve and carry forward accidents within the self *is* the power of imagination:

> The interplay of the self, in and with itself, whereby it posits itself at once finite and infinite – an interplay that consists, as it were, in self–conflict, and is self–reproducing, in that the self–endeavours to unite the irreconcilable, now attempting to receive the infinite in the form of the finite, now baffled, positing it again outside the latter, and in that very moment seeking once more to entertain it under the form of infinitude – this is the power of *imagination* [*Vermögen der Einbildungskraft*].[42]

In one brief and evocative paragraph, the imagination is defined as an indispensable power of the soul holding, preserving and carrying forward irreconcilable forms. The power of imagination thus confers the possibility of consciousness itself for it is a power that embodies "conflict" within itself – it "wavers [*Schwebt*] in the middle between determination and no determination, between finite and infinite." The use of the term "wavers" highlights the fact that the power of imagination is unable to posit any "fixed boundary; for it has no fixed standpoint of its own."[43] It simply wavers between irreconcilable forms embodying the "unattainable idea of determination, but not determination itself." Evoking the feeling of an incessant and unceasingly form of interplay that contains within itself the ontological necessity for division, the wavering of the imagination is the activity that confers the possibility of consciousness itself. As Fichte explains, the clash between opposing and irreconcilable forms is the activity that produces something for the apprehending self in and for the purposes of apprehension.[44] The bounding activity of the self produces the form of the not-self but in this "moment," the self and the not-self become opposed. The self and the not-self reside in an incessant and unceasing form of interplay, but they are again united through the action of synthesis, which in this moment is reproductive. Fichte thus presents a conception of the self as comprising an incessant and interminable form of wavering between itself and its apprehended products, a form of wavering between "moments" – a form of wavering which eventually extends the condition of the self to a "moment of *time*."

The Productive Imagination

Fichte's provocative portrayal of the power of imagination reveals how the self can only posit itself as a subject once it has "brought forth" an object in

the form of the not-self.[45] As the object is a product of the self itself, then the self can only represent itself as a subject through the act of representation – the act of which necessitates the wavering of the imagination be determined or stabilized through the act of reflection. Representative of an action of reason, reflection stabilizes the interplay between the subject and object in a moment of time enabling the representing self to be represented.[46]

The disclosure of how the representing self is represented returns the reader to the methodology of the *Wissenschaftslehre* for the resolution of the task of this Theoretical section of the text has, as Fichte highlights, been given through the readers own act of reflection. Through a reflection on a series of synthetic acts, the reader was able to discover for themselves how the representing self is represented. The reference here to the term discovery is crucial for the act of reflection simply reveals what was already there – what has already been created through a necessary series of acts within the readers own mind. As the object of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is the entire system of the human mind, participating in the *Wissenschaftslehre* introduces the reader into the system of their own mind and all of the necessary acts, which give form to consciousness itself.

Yet in achieving this task, the reader simply *discovers* the fact of consciousness – of the fact that their own representing self is represented through the act of representation. However, and as Fichte is at pains to point out, this fact must be based on "something originally present" in the mind.[47] It must be based on something that is independent to the reflection that corresponds to this fact and because of this, the original fact must be "elevated *into consciousness*" through the act of "philosophic reflection."[48] As discussed, philosophic reflection requires, for Fichte, a special sense of spirit – a sense of spirit that allows reflection on one's own "activity of representing" through reflection on the "series constituted by the action of the human mind."[49] A special sense of spirit that can, in this particular context, reflect on the objects of reflection that were given through the previous series of synthetic acts.

Although the methodology of this theoretical section may appear obtuse, nonetheless Fichte is simply introducing the reader into the system of their own mind. The system of which can either be given through a series of necessary acts or given through freedom. Having discovered the ground of the system of the human mind given through a series of necessary acts, the final part of the Theoretical section of the *Science of Knowledge* endeavours to elevate into consciousness the original fact of consciousness through an act of freedom. An act that begins with a reflection on the fact that the activity of synthesis through which the representing self is represented involves something much more than the unification of opposing or heterogenous forms. As Fichte argues, the act of synthesis requires the positing of opposing forms and through the process of synthesis something is imparted to these opposing

forms – a revelation that demands as Fichte points out a reconsideration of the *process* of synthesis and of the fact of representation.

The reader is encouraged, therefore, to reflect upon the objects of their own activity of representing. They must reflect on the fact that *before* the act of synthesis, the opposites given within this theoretical consideration of the self were "mere opposites and nothing more."[50] The concepts of the self and the not-self were, by necessity, "merely creatures" of one's own thought. They were a representation of a "mere thought without any reality" and the "thought of a mere relation." Moreover, the thought of one opposite led to the destruction of the other. And yet, one opposite could only ever appear under the predicate of the other. As both opposites could not be simultaneously present within one's own mind, then consciousness was in this moment "not occupied and contains absolutely nothing whatever."

After the act of synthesis, these opposites became something determinate and "real." They could be "grasped" and "retained" in consciousness and they could be thought of as "one." As this example highlights, the progression through the act of synthesis imparted to these opposites something they did not have before. The activity of synthesis converted mere forms of thought into an intuitable and tangible form. It did so, because the "power of thought" demanded the opposites be thought of as one. As the power of thought could not think of them as one on its own, the wavering between the requirement to be thought of as one and the incapacity to think of both as one conferred a state of *intuition*. As outlined in the following paragraph, this state of intuition is, for Fichte, given through the power of imagination – the power of which underlies the capacity to think of something as determinate and real:

> The mind lingers in this conflict and wavers between the two – wavers between the requirement and the impossibility of carrying it out. And in this condition, but only therein, it lays hold on both at once, or, what comes to the same thing, makes them such that they can simultaneously be grasped and held firm; in touching them, and being repulsed, and touching them again, it gives them, in the *relation to itself*, a certain content and a certain extension (… as a manifold in time and space). This condition is called *intuition*. The power active therein has already been denominated earlier the productive imagination.[51]

Evoking the disquieting nature of the Kantian unknown, this remarkable statement introduces the wondrous power of the imagination as the productive imagination – a power of the soul that plays a primary role in the formation of consciousness. As this paragraph proposes, the clashing between the requirement of the opposites to be thought of as one and the incapacity to think of both as one leads to a state of *intuition* rendering these mere opposites as intuitable – as something that can be grasped and retained in consciousness in

the form of a one. Moreover, this state of intuition confers the possibility of space and of time. By simultaneously holding together irreconcilable forms, the productive imagination produces a certain content and a certain extension leading to the creation out of "nothing" moments in space and in time.

In Fichte's view, therefore, the production of an intuitable form by the productive imagination is what underlies the possibility of reality itself. The productive power of synthesis by the imagination gives an intuitable content to the mere opposites rendering possible the thought of something real – the thought of something in space and in time. Developing the Kantian depiction of the imagination as a power to exhibit schemata in intuition, Fichte offers the radical proposal that all reality is "brought forth solely by the imagination" because all reality is "derived through intuition."[52] A claim that reveals the clashing of the unceasing and interminable wavering of the power of the productive imagination produces the material of all representation, enabling in the process the representation of space and of time. It is for this very reason the productive imagination is defined by Fichte as forming the "basis for the possibility of our consciousness, our life, our existence for ourselves, that is our existence as selves" – a revelation that should not be conceived as a "*deception*," as Maimon would have us believe.[53] Rather, and as Fichte argues, the productive imagination is the power of the soul, which "gives us truth, and the only possible truth." [54]

The Absolutely Productive Imagination

Although the productive imagination is defined as a constitutive power of the soul fundamental to the formation of consciousness and to the possibility of truth, on Fichte's view, the "entire mechanism of the human mind" is in fact premised upon the fact of absolute opposition.[55] Upon the fact that the power of the productive imagination would be "utterly impossible" if absolute opposites in the form of "irreconcilables … did not enter the scene." Representative of a radical reconceptualization of the main contentions of the Kantian *Critiques*, this important declaration leads into the concluding part of Theoretical section of the *Science of Knowledge.* Referred to as the "Deduction of Representation [*Deduktion der Vorstellung*]," this highly obtuse and incredibly demanding section of the text attempts to unveil the ground of the activity of representation introducing in the process, the concept of the "absolutely productive imagination."[56]

The Deduction of Representation begins with a revision of the previously established fact that the power of imagination confers a state of intuition.[57] Representative of a completely indeterminate "state of the self," the state of intuition resides in this context simply as an accident of the self, composed of opposing directions of activity that are unable to be distinguished from

each other. The possibility for a determinate state of the self in which the self can posit itself *as* intuiting in a moment of time necessitates the self be determined as the "intuitant" and thereby distinguishable from "what is intuited."[58] In Fichte's view, however, something can only be determined as an intuition if the wavering of the power of imagination is stabilized. The wavering of the imagination must be stabilized or fixated so that within intuition, there remains a "product of this state." That there remains within intuition a "trace" of the opposed directions of the activity of the self, "consisting of neither but containing something of both."

The introduction to the necessity for the act of stabilization allows Fichte to provide a detailed exposition of the act of "representation [*Vorstellung*]" – the act of which involves the interplay of three specific factors. The first factor involves the absolute and spontaneous act of "stabilizing or fixating." This activity occurs through the "spontaneity" of reflection, which is attributed to the self's capacity for absolute positing. Fichte associates this absolute form of positing to the presence of a second check or *Anstoß*, which, in this instance, arises from within. In distinction to the first check that arises from something outside of the self, this second check is an absolute and spontaneous act of the self itself, which is an act of reason. The absolute and spontaneous check of reason ensures that the intuitive activity of the self becomes "bounded" by the absolute activity of reflection and through this absolute act something is posited.

The second factor involved in the stabilization of an intuition relates to the power of imagination, which, in its wavering determinable form, needs to be determined.[59] This process of determination is, essentially, the setting of a limit, which stabilizes the wavering of imagination such that an "outcome of the determination" is produced. However, as neither determinant reason nor the productive imagination has the capacity to set a limit, the third factor involved in the stabilization of an intuition is the power of the intermediate faculty [*Vermögen*] of understanding. Residing between imagination and reason, the understanding is a stabilizing power, which arrests, settles and brings to a stand "a transiency." The understanding is to be envisaged, therefore, as "imagination stabilized by reason, or as reason furnished with objects by the imagination." In stark contrast to the Kantian depiction, the faculty of understanding is, for Fichte, not an active power of the soul but is the "mere receptacle of what imagination brings forth, and what reason determines or has yet to determine."

Given this deduction, the faculty of understanding forms the "faculty of the *actual*" where the ideal becomes real.[60] Imagination produces reality through the material of representation "but there *is* no reality therein." It is only through apprehension and conception in the understanding that the product of imagination becomes something real. However, and as revealed within

this analysis, the activity of absolute positing or of reflection (of reason) is an activity that "merely" spontaneously reflects. In this regard, something must be "*given* [*Gegeben*] to reflection" in the understanding. This *given* is, on Fichte's view, the "material of representation [*Vorstellung*]" and forms the content of the reflection, as the content of the representation. The act of reflection, however, remains oblivious to the fact that the material of representation "arrived" through the power of the productive imagination. The fact that reason exists only for itself leads to the conviction of the reality of things when really, all reality is brought forth through the activity of the productive imagination.

While this general deduction of the act of representation provides a radically new way of thinking about the relationship between imagination and reason, on one level, it simply draws upon the intimations residing within the Kantian *Critiques*.[61] And yet on another level, Fichte develops these intimations in a highly original form by tracing the interplay that reside between imagination and reason back to one first principle.

Fichte achieves this aim through a detailed consideration of the stabilization of an intuition, the act of which plays a central role in the formation and the determination of the self as an intuitant. However, and as Fichte highlights, in order for the self to distinguish itself "*as* a self," or as an intuitant, the self must be distinguished from the not-self – a requirement that demands the form of the not-self be intuitable and thenceforth distinguishable from the self.[62] In order for the not-self to become intuitable, the power of imagination must be stabilized allowing the production of an original intuition.

Opening onto a complex series of synthetic propositions, the stabilization of an intuition is associated, as discussed, with the check from without. Through its own bounding activity, the self *feels* something outside of itself and in response to this feeling, the self limits its infinite bounding activity by opposing something to itself. In other words, the self reflects its own infinite activity positing in the process something finite and opposed to itself. Representative of the first posited and intuitable form within the self itself, this form is the not-self and forms, for Fichte, the "first indeterminate product" of the "absolutely productive imagination."[63]

Although the absolutely productive imagination produces out of necessity and out of nothing the intuition of the not-self, Fichte brings attention to the fact that this intuition necessarily remains indeterminate to human consciousness. This original product of the imagination does not and cannot come to consciousness because the absolute intuition of the not-self is not reflected or attributed to the self itself. The posited, finite and intuitable form of the not-self simply serves to limit the activity engendered within the self itself in response to the check or the *Anstoß* from without. By positing the indeterminate and intuitable form of the not-self, the absolute productive

power of the self reflects its own activity allowing it to retain its own infinitude. Accordingly, the production of the intuited form of the not-self is to be conceived as an accident within the self residing in the form of a "production" or an "outward-directed activity." As an "*ex*tuiting" of an "indeterminate something" – this of an accident within the self is projected into the unconscious realm forever remaining in the form of a "dark" and "unreflected intuition."

Although unbeknown to consciousness, the counterpositing of the not-self by the absolutely productive imagination is the activity through which the self is first determined *as* a self because in this moment, the self intuits. The self intuits the indeterminate form of the not-self and the activity of the intuiting self becomes fixated within the understanding. Yet the self is unable to reflect upon this intuition – upon the intuition of itself as intuiting. The possibility of reflection necessitates the self has the capacity to distinguish between the activity of itself as subject and the activity within itself as object.[64] In other words, the self must be able to reflect on its own objective activity. As there remains intuitable "traces" in the understanding of the absolute productive activity of the self, these traces must be determined as an intuited item opposed to the subjective activity of the intuitant. According to Fichte, this act of determination involves an unintuited not-self, which is an absolute product of the self's activity. In the form of "the thing in and for itself, as noumenon," this unintuited not-self determines the traces of the productive activity of the self lying within the understanding producing an intuition of the not-self as something that is "real."

Albeit in the form of a highly complex and at times obtuse series of synthetic propositions, the essence of this deduction establishes the "natural distinction" between representation [*Vorstellung*] and the thing that is represented [*Vorgestellten*] therein. The intuition of the self's own pure activity is contingent on the free act, which is represented therein – as an absolute product of the self's activity, as the noumenon. And, the intuition of the self's objective activity is contingent on the necessary act of representation – as the determination of the intuited not-self as something real.

In order for the self to distinguish between its own pure activity (that which is represented therein) and its own objective activity (that which is representation) a ground of distinction must be posited between the self as intuitant and what is intuited. As Fichte argues, something must posit a boundary between the two forming the "*condition* we may reflect on, or from which we can abstract."[65]

Fichte reintroduces the role of the imagination here, as the boundary between pure activity and objective activity is intuited by imagination and fixated in understanding. In this respect, "intuition is objective activity under a certain *condition*." However, the intuitant and the intuited undergo different

determining conditions. The condition required for the intuition of the intuitant is a self-determining act – an act which involves the "act of *thought*," whereby the "intuitant determines itself to the *thinking* of an object."[66]

Although the act of thought determines the object of thought, what is thought in this moment is in fact determined by something that is "*not* thought."[67] It is determined by a "mere thinkable" rendering the thought of an object as being determined by an activity that "has no object at all."[68] As the self determines itself through an "intrinsically non-objective activity," Fichte regards this activity as an "absolute power of abstraction," a power that can abstract from *all objects in general*.

As all intuitions are apprehended through the power of the productive imagination, then in this moment, the imagination wavers "between object and non-object." If the imagination is "pinned down" to having no object, this implies the "total destruction" of the wavering of imagination, which becomes intuited. As this intuition never attains to consciousness, then, for Fichte, this unreflected intuition takes on the form of an "obscure" representation [*Vorstellung*], a nonreflected intuition that pertains to "pure thought." Although the product of this unreflected intuition must itself be fixated in understanding it cannot be fixated because the obscure representation is "nothing" and has "no object at all." The product of this unreflected intuition is, therefore, simply an "obscure" representation of "the thought of a mere relationship, without any terms."[69] It is simply the thought of reciprocity. In Fichte's view, therefore, these obscure representations point to the fact of "an unrealizable determination" – to the fact that the possibility of thinking is contingent on the absolute power of abstraction representative of the capacity to abstract from all objects in general. The absolute power of abstraction is, therefore, the power of the soul that determines the "non-objective activity" of the self and accordingly forms the "manifest source of all self-consciousness." In other words, the self "*determines itself* and is *determined* by *itself*" through an absolute power of abstraction. For Fichte, this absolute power of abstraction is "*reason*" – or "*pure* reason" in the theoretical sense without the imagination – the object of Kant's investigation in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The Creative Imagination

Although pure reason forms the source of all self-consciousness, the Theoretical section of the text concludes with the disquieting and revelatory proposition that the activity of abstraction, or of reason, is in itself premised on an "absolutely nondeterminant activity." As Fichte argues, this nondeterminant activity forms the condition from which "nothing further can be determined" because there is "there is nothing to abstract from." The use of the term "nothing" here is critical for, and on Fichte's view, the absolute condition of

nothingness is simply the unbounded and pure activity of the imagination, whereby nothing has yet been intuited or produced. The pure imagination is in this moment simply an unlimited and an illimitable power. It is in the context of this claim that the imagination is defined as the "faculty [*Vermögen*] of absolute indeterminacy" – the faculty of which forms the "condition of everything determinate."[70] Capturing the fundamental essence of the Kantian portrayal of the transcendental power of the imagination, this astonishing claim confirms the imagination forms the ground for the possibility of consciousness itself for it is the power of the soul, which can create "something from nothing."[71] It is for this very reason that the indeterminacy of this wondrous power of the soul can never be brought to consciousness for, and as Fichte argues, if reflected upon and raised to consciousness through the understanding, the infinite and indeterminate activity of imagination would be erased. On Fichte's view, therefore, the absolute indeterminacy of the power of the imagination necessarily remains absolutely *incomprehensible*.

It is in the context of this profound revelation that the final paragraph of the Theoretical section of the text reveals the ground of representation lies within the contradiction residing within the intelligible realm of the self.[72] As all determinate activity of the absolute self is premised on the indeterminacy of the imagination, then the self must be determined by an "absolute indeterminate" otherwise the self would remain in a solipsistic and undetermined state with infinite powers. This unveils, however, an inherent contradiction. If the self reflects upon itself and determines itself, the not-self remains infinite and if the self reflects on the "not-self in general (upon the universe)" and determines it, the self remains infinite.[73] The self engages in representation, therefore, because *in* representation, the infinitude *embodied* within the illimitable and unlimited powers of the imagination is preserved. As Fichte argues, in representation, "the self and not-self are reciprocally related; if the one is finite, the other is infinite, and vice versa; but one of the two is always infinite." Unveiling the ground of the Kantian antinomies, this powerful and revelatory deduction proposes the representation of the thing-in-itself is a necessary activity of the self because in representation, the self retains its own infinitude. In representation, the self retains the infinitude of the illimitable and unlimited power of the creative imagination.

THE INDETERMINACY OF THE FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRACTICAL

The concepts of the productive imagination, the absolutely productive imagination and the creative imagination are further developed in the final section of the *Science of Knowledge* titled, the "Foundation of Knowledge of the

Practical." Exploring the second possible form of relation occurring between the self and the not-self, this Practical section of the text is based on the idea that "*the self posits the not-self as limited by the self*."[74] That is, as a *determinant* entity in itself, the self is capable of determining for itself something other than itself.

In principle, the idea that the self is a *determinant* entity in itself is based on the acknowledgement that the self is an "*intelligence*" because, and as revealed in the Theoretical section of the text, the absolute self is that which "represents [*Vorstellend*]."[75] Although the "*mode* and *manner*" of representation [*Vorstellung*] is determined by the self itself, the fact that the self engages in the act of representing is, as discussed, determined by something outside of the self. In this regard, the self as *intelligence* is determinable – it is dependent on an undetermined and at this stage, indeterminable not-self, which sets the "necessary laws" of representation in motion. The self as *intelligence* contradicts, therefore, the proposal that the self must be "wholly independent" of any possible not-self.

In order to remove this inherent contradiction, Fichte introduces the necessity for two practical considerations. The first consideration is that "*hitherto unknown not-self*" responsible for the check or the *Anstoß*, whereby the self becomes an intelligence should be "*immediately*" determined by the absolute self. And secondly, the representing self should be determined "*mediately*" by this very determination.[76] In this regard, the absolute self would be the "*cause*" of the not-self and by means of this determination the power of the representing self becomes determined.

Based on this consideration, the Practical section of the text is premised on the proposal that the absolute self must *embody* within itself the possibility for the positing of something other than itself – for a non-self-positing.[77] Moreover, this non-self-positing is contingent on the possibility of being affected by something other, of being affected by an "alien influence." As revealed in the following paragraph, these two a priori conditions must be grounded in the form of the absolute self:

> *The condition for the positing of such an alien influence must* be grounded beforehand, prior to any actual effect from without, *in the self as such, in the absolute self*; the self must originally and absolutely posit in itself the possibility of something operating upon it; without detriment to its absolute positing of itself, it must leave itself open, as it were, to some other positing. Hence, if ever a difference was to enter the self, there must already have been a difference originally in the self as such; and this difference, indeed, would have had to be grounded in the absolute self as such.[78]

This remarkable declaration reveals the ontological form of consciousness contains within itself the capacity to be open to and to posit something other

and yet, this something other must already lie or be posited within. As the positing of something other is an activity that must arise from within the self itself then the positing of an "alien influence" is only alien in the sense that this positing introduces within the self, varying directions of activity. In other words, the self's own activity incorporates varying forms – it incorporates centripetal activity (towards the centre) and centrifugal activity (away from the centre). As the self must have the "principle of life and consciousness solely within itself," the self must contain within itself and from the very beginning "the principle of reflecting upon itself."[79] In this regard, the self is reflective in the sense that its activity is centripetal. And, the self is that upon which reflection takes place in the sense that activity is centrifugal.

The introduction to self-consciousness as consisting of varying forms of activity reveals how the self can be influenced by a not-self. That is, in the course of its own activity, the self provides the conditions for the possibility of a not-self because it opens itself up to "external influences," to something other:

> The self posits itself absolutely and is thereby complete in itself and closed to any impression from without. But if it is to be a self, it must also posit itself as self–posited; and by this new positing, relative to an original positing, it opens itself, if I may so put it, to external influences; simply by this reiteration of positing, it concedes the possibility that there might also be something within it that is not actually posited by itself. Both types of positing are conditions for an operation of the not-self; without the first, there would be no activity of the self to undergo limitation; without the second, this activity would not be limited for the self, and the latter would be unable to posit itself as limited. Thus, the self, as such, is initially in a state of reciprocity with itself, and only so does an external influence upon it become possible.[80]

The proposal of the closed yet open self reveals that actual consciousness is "invariably based mediately and immediately upon something outside the self." Actual consciousness is never an absolute state of being but is a state, which is necessarily and always premised on the presence of a not-self. As Fichte is keen to highlight, the not-self arises from something from within and importantly, it arises from something from without.

Accordingly, this Practical section of the text explores the idea that the self must reflect about itself. The self bases this reflection on the idea that consciousness is a state of being that is based mediately and immediately upon something outside the self and the self carries this idea to infinity by going "forth from itself."[81] However, in this practical state, the self must be "wholly oblivious" to the possibility of a limitation for the acknowledgement of the presence of a check would limit the infinite activity of going forth. As there

is no real reflection present or even possible within the practical self, then the activity of the practical self leads to the creation of the "series of those things that *ought* to be" – a series that opens onto the freedom and moral responsibilities of the human subject. Forming the "series of the *ideal*," this series is, as Fichte argues, "given [*Gegeben*]" through the self alone.

This is set in distinction to the "series of the *real*," the series that emerges when reflection addresses itself to the check. As revealed in the Theoretical section, the self is *intelligence* for the self regards its own activity as restricted. Due to the limitations imposed by the presence of the other, the self reflects on this restriction; it reflects on the possibility of something other than the mere self. Thus, following the original positing of the self, the self opens itself and posits within itself something other. In this respect, the "series of the *real*" is determined by something other than the self itself.

The introduction to the series of the *ideal* and the *real* reveals both forms of activity reside within the self. And, while the self comprises the active series of the *ideal* and the *real*, within empirical consciousness, these activities are "one and the same." Accordingly, this complex thesis proposes that although the self is contingent on the presence of something outside itself, the self itself comprises its own activity. In this respect, the interaction between the self and the not-self is at the same time an interaction of the self with itself.[82]

In what can be described as another challenging and complex section of the text, the deduction of the second sense of the fundamental principles is premised upon the notion of "striving [*Streben*]" – an internal, infinite and illimitable force within the self, which aspires to causality.[83] As striving is an infinite and enduring force that has a tendency to reflect upon itself, it cannot be posited *as* something unless it is limited – unless it is limited by a counter-striving force of a wholly independent not-self. The self feels the force of an independent not-self and due to the limitation arising from this counterstriving force, the self-productive striving becomes posited as "fixed, determinate and definite in character" in the form of a "*drive* [*Trieb*]."

As this deduction reveals, the capacity for reflection is conditional on the presence of an object, which limits the self's own striving.[84] In this regard, the striving of the self is "*conditioned*" – it represents a "drive *towards the object*." Yet this drive towards the object is both *ideal* and *real* because striving is directed to both the self itself and, at the same time, it is directed to something outside the self.[85] In relation to ideal activity, this form of activity is defined as representing "[*Vorstellende*] activity." And the relation of the drive towards this representing activity is designated as the "representational drive." As the "first and highest manifestation of the drive," the manifestation of this drive is what enables the self to become an intelligence.

For Fichte, therefore, the entire system of representation is dependent on the self's own drive and its own will. All theoretical laws are based on

practical laws because this inner driving force drives the self out of itself – it drives the self out into the world. Forming the principle of all life, this inner driving force is, for Fichte, simply *felt* as an "*impelling drive*" for the self feels itself driven "*out abroad from itself*."[86] The self feels impelled to posit an object of the drive, which can only be achieved through ideal activity that is directed outward. Although ideal activity produces something, what is produced and the agent therein cannot, as yet be realized. The self is not conscious as such because the self cannot immediately become conscious of its own action. In this state, the self simply feels itself *driven towards something unknown*. As the feeling of force is not yet manifested, then ideal activity simply leads to the feeling of limitation. The feeling of the counterstriving force of the other – representative of the check from without – leads to the feeling of limitation such that the self feels "limited *for itself*."[87]

The fact that theoretical laws are based on practical laws also reveals the self contains within itself an absolute freedom of reflection and of abstraction – to be conceived as a representation of the possibility of "directing one's own attention to something and withdrawing it from something else *as a matter of duty*."[88] Indissociable from Fichte's concept of the self as a moral agent – as a self amongst others – the fact that the self can reflect and abstract reveals the self is not *compelled* to the act in accordance with the necessary act of representation. On the contrary, in the presence of a feeling of limitation, the self feels spontaneously compelled to restore its own ideal activity.[89] Due to its own infinite striving, the self restores its own activity and it can only do so by positing itself as "free and unlimited" through the spontaneous, determinative and *absolute* act of reflection. In other words, by means of a "*leap*" – by means of the "absolute freedom" of reason – the self restores its own activity through the act of reflection. Accordingly, this *leap* represents the second check or *Anstoß* from within and through this act the self determines itself.

In principle, this deduction proposes the capacity for self-determination through the absolute spontaneity of reason is premised on the striving activity of the self itself. However, due to the inherent nature of reason, reason is compelled to consider itself as all that exists. Because of this necessity, the capacity for self-determination excludes all outward directed ideal activity – the self necessarily excludes a form of its own productive activity. And as this *leap* occurs solely through the self and as the self does not contain an object therein then the *leap* necessarily refers to feeling. In this regard, the absolutely spontaneous act of reason enables the self to feel *itself* and to feel "*its own power within itself*."[90]

In order to posit itself *as* a self, however, the self must be able to distinguish between what it feels and what is felt. As the activity of reflection is directed towards an object, which cannot be realized as a "thing," then the act of reflection is simply an activity that "*has no object whatever*."[91] It is an

activity that is "merely *felt*." In Fichte's view, the determination of this new feeling within the self is called a "*longing*" – it is a drive towards something totally unknown that only reveals itself through "a *need*, a *discomfort*, a *void*." The self feels a longing in itself. The self feels itself in "want" and through this longing, the "free striving" of the self "sets out to create" through ideal activity. Longing is, therefore, the "*original, wholly independent manifestation*" of the striving of the self.

As the feeling of longing has no object, it is not directed to the feeling of limitation. While the object of the feeling of limitation is something real, the object of longing has no reality.[92] In this regard, longing cannot aspire to the production of matter but can only ever aspire to the modification of matter. It can only ever copy what is already there; to intuit the "thing" or to bring forth in the self a determination as it exists in the not-self.[93] In this respect, copying takes on the form of an "ideal determination" because what limits the self's own activity must be given [*Gegeben*] to the self and lie therein.[94]

The Productive Imagination

It is within this exploration of the feeling of *longing* that the role of the productive imagination is again introduced. Specifically, through a consideration of how the feeling of *longing* produces something and what is produced? In order to answer this question, Fichte draws on the example of a "thing," which maybe "*sweet, sour, red, yellow* or like."[95] The thing is absolutely incapable of being described because it can only be *felt*. In this regard, such a determination within the self is "purely *subjective*" and can only be communicated through reference to the fact that at this moment in time "*the sensation of bitter, sweet, etc., is in me*."

Directly engaging with the opening commentary of the *Critique of Judgment*, Fichte confirms the fact that the senses "furnish" the self with "subjective datum."[96] The senses provide the sensation of a resistance, of an inability, which is entirely subjective and takes on the form of an accident. In this respect, the subjective relationship to all feelings forms the source of all cognition. Representations of external things are contingent, therefore, on feelings – on the sense of a resistance or of an inability. However, and confirming the commentary of the *Critiques*, the sense of resistance can only become an objective determination once it has been "framed or thought" through the productive imagination. In other words, the sensation of sweet becomes synthesized with the concept of sugar through a representation of a determinate taste. On Fichte's view, therefore, all sensory experience of the world, which we "*believe in*," arises mediately through the act of representation.[97] Due to the inherent nature of reason, however, the self is unable to reflect on this productive act of determination such that the feeling of a

sensation becomes attributed to or is carried over to a thing that is external to the self.[98] The feeling of sensation is converted into a determination of the thing as a matter *extended in space* and as something external to the self.

Applied to the consideration of how the self determines itself as a self, the determination of a representation (which is now referred to as the unknown X) involves two activities. As the determinative activity of the self can only be directed to one object at a time, then following the check from without, the "free activity" of the self must interrupt the act of determination of the X because the self must reflect upon itself.[99] In this respect, the self is restricted in the act of determining the not-self and a feeling of restriction arises. As the self is unaware of the freedom of the act of breaking off from the act of determination, the feeling of limitation is ascribed and associated with the determinacy of the thing.

The second activity relates to the determination of the X because what is posited as a product of the self is an intuition of the X, or an "image thereof," but not the X itself. While the image arises out of the complete freedom of the self, this product of the self can only be posited as "*contingent*" because the act of reflection ensures the image is posited as "something that did not necessarily have to be as it is but might also have been otherwise." Accordingly, the image arises out of the free activity of the self but as the self does not reflect on the freedom of this act; it simply posits the image as contingent in relation to another not-self.

The Absolutely Productive Imagination

It is at this point in the practical section of the text that the role of the absolutely productive imagination is implicitly reintroduced. This reintroduction occurs through a consideration of the determination of the X. As discussed, the act of determining the X in the form of an intuition or an image of something outside the self is interrupted by the "absolute power of production."[100] Although Fichte does not define this power any further, the absolute power of production posits a Y "out beyond the X." This Y, in the form of a "something," is a product of the absolutely productive imagination because it is posited as counter to the *internal* form of the X, yet this positing does not have any determinate boundary. Therefore, the X and the Y are both "something," as they are both "at once determined and determinant," yet they are each "something different." The Y is other than the X and through the positing of the opposed form of the Y, the X or the not-self becomes limited entirely by itself.

As a result of this action, the X and the Y become united by feeling. This is because the drive to interdetermination is representative of a "*drive towards change in general*" becoming expressed through longing. Longing

is, therefore, directed to "*some other thing, opposed* to what is present." It is directed *to something else*, and through longing, the self is driven to reality. Through longing, the external world may come about and the self can posit itself as altered.

Yet, longing can only be satisfied by the "feeling of an *opposite*." This opposite can only be intuited through ideal activity; it cannot be felt as an altered state.[101] Therefore, through ideal activity, an object Y must be posited in opposition to the object X. Yet, the Y can only be posited on the "instigation of a feeling," a feeling that is other to the feeling of the X. Associated with a "drive to *alteration*," this new feeling in the form of the determinate Y influences the ideal activity of the self such that it determines the object X by opposing it to the determinate object Y.[102]

This complex deduction reveals, therefore, that through ideal activity, two distinct feelings are posited – they are united and yet they are opposed. As previously discussed, the self "feels *itself*," and the self feels "*its own power within itself*."[103] Through reflection on this feeling, the self becomes the determined and the determinant and in the process of this act, the object X is posited. However, this feeling leads to ideal activity and through this activity, the self feels or senses "*something*" – it senses matter as something outside of itself. It senses "*a matter that must be extended in space, and occupy the latter*."[104] This sensing of something external to the self is critical because although nothing is brought into the self, through reflection on this feeling the object X becomes "*sensation*."[105] It is in this context that the productive imagination is defined as a *capacity for raising feelings to consciousness*.[106]

The feeling of the self as sensation is necessarily conjoined with the second feeling of a longing, or a "drive to *alteration*."[107] However, if this longing is to be determined then, and according to Fichte, "the other, that is *longed for*" must in itself be indicated. As the Y is the other that is "*longed for*," it must be indicated as the determinate object of longing. Although Fichte does not acknowledge what this object is, the *determinate* object of *longing* must be the "*imaginary* object" of infinite striving.[108] This imaginary object is a product of the absolutely productive imagination and through this product, drive and action become united such that the self is at once the determinant and the determinate accompanied by the feeling of "inclination."[109]

This important deduction reveals the X is accompanied by disinclination and the Y is accompanied by inclination. In order for these feelings to be felt, a drive must also be indicated.[110] On Fichte's view, this drive is a drive towards harmony – as a drive to interdetermination, a drive to "absolute *unity* and completeness of the self within itself." Moreover, this drive must be an "indetermination of the self by itself" for the unity of the self is an activity engendered by the self itself. In this regard, the drive to absolute unity is to be conceived, therefore, as an absolute drive that "gave birth to itself" – an

absolute law or a "categorical imperative," which takes on the form of "*thou shalt absolutely*."[111]

Although representative of a drive towards absolute unity and harmony, the absolute drive embodies an essential indeterminacy – it drives the self "out into the indeterminate, without an aim" for the categorical imperative does not and cannot have an object. Representative of an action of the self itself, the drive towards unity is performed with "absolute self-determination and freedom." It is an action of the self as both *determinate* and *determinant* and yet this action cannot produce an object because action is premised on a drive towards an indeterminate aim.

In order to overcome this indeterminacy, Fichte concludes the Practical section of the text with the supposition that representation is a necessary activity of the self. The absolute drive to interdetermination determines all action and in the process, the drive to absolute unity immediately determines the imaginary object Y as an ideal representation of the not-self – the action of which leads to the "feeling of *contentment*, of repletion or utter completeness."[112] If action is not determined by the drive and the object is contrary, thereto, a feeling of disinclination arises and the subject is divided against itself, unable to determine its own infinite object. Accordingly, this powerful deduction proposes that representation is a necessary activity of the self because in representation the self retains its own infinitude. In representation, the self retains and accordingly *feels* the infinitude of its own drive and its own will *and* the infinitude of its own actions.

The Creative Imagination

Having laid the ground for the entire system of human consciousness, Fichte's thought-provoking and explicit introduction to the concept of the creative imagination begins to take form through a consideration of the fact that the Theoretical and the Practical sections of the *Science of Knowledge* provide a deduction of the possibility of "*knowing*" and of the possibility of "the *known.*"[113] Or, to be more specific, a deduction of "*how* is a thing posited?" and of "*what* is posited?" Acknowledging these two domains of creation forms a critical element of Fichte's thesis for it is only through the reciprocal form of relation between how a thing is posited and what is posited that the creative power of imagination can be raised to consciousness. Although the productive imagination provides the intuitive framework fundamental to the establishment of an objective form of relation between the self and the external world, on Fichte's view, the emergence of the self as a self-constitutive entity in itself requires something other.

This something other is the creative imagination – the most important figure that resides within the *Science of Knowledge*. However, and as Fichte himself has acknowledged, the concept of the creative imagination is not something that can be communicated through "the letter," through mere words.[114] The absolutely *incomprehensible* nature of the *Science of Knowledge* pertains to the fact that the central thesis of this text can only be communicated through the use of one's own "spirit" [*Geist*]:

> The Science of Knowledge is of a kind that cannot be communicated by the letter merely, but only through the spirit; for its basic ideas must be elicited, in anyone who studies it, by the creative imagination [*Schaffende Einbildungskraft*] itself; as could not, indeed, be otherwise, in a Science that penetrates back to the ultimate grounds of human knowledge, in that the whole enterprise of the human spirit issues from the imagination, and the latter cannot be grasped save through the imagination itself.[115]

Fichte thus introduces the foundational claim that the "basic ideas" of the *Wissenschaftslehre* can only be grasped by engaging with one's own spirit. Specifically, through the act of philosophical reflection that raises to consciousness feelings of freedom as a "*special* sense" of spirit.[116] By raising to consciousness these feelings and by converting ideas and ideals into representations, the special sense of spirit renders possible the capacity to move beyond that of the given – to move beyond the sensible world, the letter and the body – the capacity of which allows the reader to raise to consciousness the central idea residing within the *Science of Knowledge*.[117]

In order to grasp the essence of this primary claim, it is useful to begin with definition of the "creative imagination" [*Schaffenden Einbildungskraft*] given in the *Science of Knowledge*. In its essence and embracing the "spirit" of Kant's entire philosophy, the creative imagination is defined as a fundamental faculty of the human soul for without this faculty human beings "would have no representations [*Vorstellungen*] at all."[118] While this definition may appear in passing as an associative reference to the productive imagination, the specific location of this definition suggests otherwise. Presented within a transitory section discussing the underlying premise of both the Theoretical and the Practical sections of the text, the introduction to the concept of the creative imagination is positioned precisely within its operative realm.[119] Oscillating between the intelligible and practical realms of being, the creative imagination is, for Fichte, a power of the soul that underlies the capacity for representation by enabling the interminable wavering and clashing between the idea of knowing and the idea of the known.

In principle, the essence of this proposal relates to Fichte's proposition that "the finite spirit must necessarily posit something absolute outside itself (a thing-in-itself), and yet must recognize from the other side, that the latter exists only *for it* (as a necessary noumenon)."[120] The key to grasping the essence of this proposal relates to the interplay that occurs between the intelligible and practical realms of the self. In particular of the fact that actual consciousness is "invariably based mediately and immediately upon something outside the self."[121] This something is the thing-in-itself. As Fichte acknowledges, the "relation of the thing-in-itself to the self forms the basis of the entire mechanism of the human and all other finite minds."[122] It does so, for the thing-in-itself is in the self because through its representation, the representing self can be represented. And the thing-in-itself is a necessary noumenon because through its representation, the self can become *for itself* a finite, empirical consciousness capable of engaging with a world beyond itself. Fichte concludes, therefore, that the "thing-in-itself is something for the self and consequently in the self, though it ought *not* to be *in the self*." The thing-in-itself ought *not* to be in the self because its presence limits the infinitude of the self itself. The presence of the thing-in-itself limits the unceasing indeterminacy of the power of imagination and it limits the indeterminacy of the absolute law, which drives the self out of itself without an aim.

Because of the tenuous nature of the relationship between the thing-in-itself and the self, Fichte concedes the idea of this relationship is an idea that may come from within the self itself. Or, as he also suggests, the object of this idea may be an independent not-self. Fichte declares resolutely, however, that neither determination of this idea is correct. Rather, and in an introduction to the activity of the creative imagination, Fichte proclaims that the reader must reflect on both determinations of this idea and allow these opposing determinations to oscillate inwardly within the activity of their own creative imagination. The power of the creative imagination wavers between these opposing determinations – it allows the coexistence or the reciprocity between these opposing ideas. Ideas of which can only be raised or elevated to consciousness through the readers' own act of philosophic reflection. By reflecting on the ideas given through the Theoretical and the Practical sections of the text – which are in themselves a representation of the mind's own free acts – the reader can raise or elevate to consciousness the idea embodied within the *Science of Knowledge*.

Given recourse to the use of one's own creative imagination, Fichte unveils the fact that this creative act of indeterminacy forms the ground of all representations. By allowing these irreconcilable ideas to reside within the self itself, the creative imagination is the power of the soul that gives intuitable form to the human subject as a divided self, not simply from within but also from without. On Fichte's view, the self is divided for it resides in an

unceasing and interminable form of interplay with the spirited other rendering the human subject as being eternally embodied and yet free. Conceived in this way, the creative imagination is the active faculty of the soul that allows the coexistence of the opposing ideas of the self and the not-self, of the intelligible and of the practical, and more importantly, of the self and of the world. The creative imagination holds, preserves and carries forward these opposing ideas and it is only because of this fundamental power of the soul that the self can begin to create for itself its own world, a world that resides as one amongst others. Fichte is thus presenting here a poignant account of the human subject as an embodied being amongst many other embodied beings. In this regard, the creative imagination is defined as a power of the soul that wavers between irreconcilable ideas that are, in their essence, created out of an embodied and yet free form of relation with the other – with the world.

This remarkable description of the creative imagination reveals that the possibility of representation necessitates the essential conjoining of these opposing forms of the self – of the intelligible and practical realms of being and their corresponding ideas pertaining to the Kantian antinomies and the categorical imperative. The power of the creative imagination holds these opposing forms – it holds something from within *and* something from without – it enables the self to begin to move out of itself and into the world beyond, and yet at the same time, it confers the possibility for the acknowledgement of the finitude and infinitude of being. Of the fact that the human subject embodies an essential indeterminacy and yet the human subject is, in its ontology, necessarily constrained. Therefore, and as Fichte proclaims, the "ultimate ground of all reality for the self is an original interaction between the self and some thing outside it."[123] In this respect, the self is dependent. The existence of the self is dependent on "some thing" – on an "external prime mover" or opposing force, which sets the self in motion. Empirical consciousness is contingent on an opposing force, which the self merely feels and does not apprehend. And yet, the self is absolutely independent because the self itself is responsible for all determinations of its own existence. As Fichte has shown, both determinations are only possible through the action of the creative imagination, which confers consciousness with its determinate, albeit indeterminable form.

The discovery that the self freely creates its own world *for itself* but always in an intimate form of interplay with the other is crucial to Fichte's entire thesis for the unveiling of what is known leads to the possibility of knowing something other. The possibility of knowing something other requires, as Fichte argues, the "purposeful" use of one's own creative imagination.[124] Opening onto and developing the concept of the absolutely creative imagination, Fichte suggests here that by drawing on the special sense of spirit and by reflecting upon the activity of one's own creative imagination, a "required

image" may appear in the mind like a "flash of lightening."[125] Arising out of the freedom of the creative imagination, this image can be used to create in a "purposeful manner" for in this moment, it can be seized, examined and registered "inerasably" for any use. In this moment of reflecting on the activity of representing, the image appearing within the mind is an image that the self knowingly creates for itself. The capacity to acknowledge and use these images appearing within the creative theatre of the mind represents the capacity of an enlightened and determinable form of being – a form of being that is capable of reflecting upon the fact that the self as it *knows* itself is only possible through *knowing* the other. Accordingly, this powerful exposition reveals that the ability to create in a purposeful manner necessitates a deep awareness of the inter-relationality between the self and a world of others. While the self is *for itself*, it is also necessarily *with* others. The capacity to *feel* this state, to *feel* what arises out of the *Anstoß* evoked by the presence of the world or by the presence of another spirited being is that which allows the self to create in a purposeful manner. Fichte thus presents the creative imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation that gives determinate form to empirical consciousness and yet, it forever retains the possibility for giving form to something other.

While the creative imagination plays a pivotal role within Fichte's thesis, as discussed, this theme is left to the reader to capture through the use of their own Geist. Moreover, the activity of one's own creative imagination can only ever be *felt* – it can only ever be *felt* by raising to consciousness those "obscure feelings" that reside within the self.[126] Raising to consciousness these obscure feelings is the activity which enables images to appear in the mind like a flash of lightening. Images that are associated with a "sense of truth" – with a sense that something might be found and that one should pursue a path in order to find it.[127] By opening oneself up to this sense of truth, one can actively embrace the creative indeterminacy of the imagination, and in this very moment the self can begin to create for itself and out of nothing something new.

Notwithstanding the absolutely *incomprehensible* nature of Fichte's portrayal of the creative imagination, this remarkable figure of the thinkable accounts for the inherent complexity of the *Science of Knowledge*, forming a constitutive element of Fichte's new presentation [*Darstellung*] of the Kantian thesis. Presented in the form of a revolutionary movement of thought, the *Wissenschaftslehre* has, as Fichte himself acknowledged, "been understood by almost no one and has been made use of by hardly anyone at all."[128] Although the object of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is the entire system of human cognition, in Fichte's view, the entire system of human cognition is essentially based on a non-object.[129] As all human cognition and experience is based on the absolute indeterminacy of the

imagination and the indeterminacy of an absolute drive and will, the reader of the *Science of Knowledge* must create for themselves the object of this system of transcendental idealism. Or, to be more precise, as the *Science of Knowledge* is a *Darstellung* of the entire system of the human mind, the active participation in this system allows the reader to elevate before their own eyes the object of this remarkable philosophical system. This necessity requires the reader reflect upon the determinations arising out of the Theoretical and Practical realms of the text. To reflect on the fact that the representing self is represented through the finite and real representation of the not-self as a thing-in-itself. And that the representing self is represented through the infinite and ideal representation of the not-self accompanied by the feeling of "contentment, of repletion, of utter completeness."[130] By reflecting upon these two representations given through the Theoretical and Practical sections of the text, the reader has before their own eyes and is able to *feel* the object of the system of their own mind. In an astounding interpretation of the Kantian *Critiques*, this act is, for Fichte, the *Darstellung* of consciousness – the tangible, embodied essence of one's own "spirit."

Ultimately, this essential and pivotal feature of the *Science of Knowledge* was overlooked, or not *felt* for that matter by Kant himself, as the inherent formlessness of Fichte's presentation formed the foundation of his utter rejection of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. As Kant boldly declared, the "*Wissenschaftslehre* is *pure logic*, and for that reason it is a waste of effort to try to cull a real object from it."[131] And yet, as Fichte has shown, the object of the *Wissenschaftslehre* can only be given through the absolutely *incomprehensible* seed of indeterminacy underlying all acts of human creation which is, in this instance the form of Geist, as the creative imagination.

NOTES

1. J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, ed. Peter Heath and John Lachs, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
2. In a concluding remark, Fichte acknowledges that the *Critique of Pure Reason* begins with the supposition that time, space, and the manifold of intuition are already given, whereas the theoretical section of the *Wissenschaftslehre* provides an a priori deduction of how this manifold is present in the I. See: "Outline of the Distinctive Character of the *Wissenschaftslehre* with Respect to the Theoretical Faculty," in *Fichte Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 306.
3. "Review of Aenesidemus," 73.
4. I, 458 *The Science of Knowledge*, 33.
5. I, 277 ibid., 244.

6. I, 91 ibid., 93.

The term *Thathandlung* was first used by Fichte in the essay, "Review of *Aenesidemus*" and combines the word for "fact [*Thatsache*]" and "action [*Handlung*]." See: Fichte, "Review of Aenesidemus," 64.

7. I, 468 *The Science of Knowledge*, 42.

Fichte introduces the *Act* as an "intellectual intuition" in the Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*. See: I, 515 ibid., 83.

It is important to acknowledge Fichte uses the term "intellectual intuition" in four distinct ways throughout his Jena writings. Breazeale provides an important summary of these four senses. See: Daniel Breazeale, "Intellectual Intuition," in *Thinking through the Wissenschaftslehre: Themes from Fichte's Early Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

8. I, 91 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 93.
9. Fichte's preference for the term "posit" has been discussed in chapter 7.
10. I, 96 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 97.
11. I, 93 ibid., 95.
12. I, 98 ibid., 99.
13. See Footnote 4 in I, 98–100 ibid., 99–100.
14. I, 104 ibid., 104.
15. I, 105 ibid., 105.
16. I, 107–08 ibid., 107–08.
17. I, 96 ibid., 97.
18. I, 107–109 ibid., 107–09.
19. I, 113–14 ibid., 112–13.
20. I, 123–125 ibid., 121–22.
21. I, 115 ibid., 113.
22. I, 125–127 ibid., 122–23.
23. I, 129 ibid., 125.
24. I, 130–131 ibid., 126–27.
25. I, 136 ibid., 131.
26. I, 142–143 ibid., 136.
27. I, 149 ibid., 141.
28. I, 159 ibid., 149.
29. I, 160 ibid., 150.
30. I, 161 ibid., 151.
31. I, 162 ibid., 152.
32. I, 167–68 ibid., 155–56.
33. I, 172 ibid., 160.
34. I, 182–183 ibid., 167–68.
35. I, 189 ibid., 173.
36. I, 204 ibid., 185.
37. I, 204–05 ibid.
38. I, 207 ibid., 187.
39. I, 213–14 ibid., 191–92.
40. I, 218 ibid., 195.

41. I, 210–12 ibid., 189–91.

For a comprehensive consideration of Fichte's use of the term *Anstoβ*, see: Breazeale, "Anstoβ, Abstract Realism, and the Finitude of the I."

42. I, 215 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 193.
43. I, 216–17 ibid., 194.
44. I, 215 ibid., 193.
45. I, 218 ibid., 195.
46. I, 217 ibid.
47. I, 220 ibid., 197.
48. I, 221 ibid., 198.
49. J. G. Fichte, "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter," in *Fichte Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell Universtiy Press, 1988), 201.
50. I, 224–27 *The Science of Knowledge*, 200–02.
51. I, 225 ibid., 201.
52. I, 227 ibid., 202.
53. Fichte acknowledges Maimon's reference to the procedure of the imagination as a "deception" in: Fichte, "Outline of the Distinctive Character of the *Wissenschaftslehre* with Respect to the Theoretical Faculty," 288.
54. In order to grasp the essence of this proposal, it is useful to consider Fichte's own example of lightness and darkness—an example that shows the reader how they can use their own productive imagination. See: I, 208 *The Science of Knowledge*, 187–88.
55. I, 226 ibid., 201–02.
56. I, 228 ibid., 203.
57. I, 229 ibid., 204.
58. I, 232–34 ibid., 206–08.
59. I, 233 ibid., 207.
60. I, 234 ibid., 207–08.
61. Some brief examples here include Kant's proclamation that reason requires the "help" of the imagination and that the genius uses the creative capacity of the imagination to create aesthetic ideas. See: Immanuel Kant, "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," in *Kant Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 221. § 49 *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (London: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 181–83.
62. I, 232 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 206.
63. I, 235 ibid., 208–09.
64. I, 236–237 ibid., 210.
65. I, 238 ibid., 211.
66. I, 240 ibid., 213.
67. I, 242 ibid., 215.
68. I, 243 ibid.
69. I, 244 ibid., 216.
70. Rundell also promotes this relationship between reason and imagination in: John Rundell, "Re-Reading Fichte's Science of Knowledge after Castoriadis: The

Anthropological Imagination and the Radical Imaginary," *Thesis Eleven* 119, no. 1 (2013): 13.

71. Fichte, "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," 193–94.
72. I, 246 *The Science of Knowledge*, 217.
73. Undoubtedly, this extension of the not-self into the universe opens onto Fichte's concept of God, but it also opens onto the idea of the world and of the cosmos. See Fichte's discussion of this relationship between the *Wissenschaftslehre* and God in his letter to Jacobi, August 30th, 1795, in "Selected Correspondence," 411–12.
74. I, 125–26 *The Science of Knowledge*, 122.
75. I, 247–49 ibid., 218–20.
76. I, 249–50 ibid., 221.
77. I, 252 ibid., 223.
78. I, 271–272 ibid., 239–40.
79. I, 274 ibid., 241.
80. I, 276 ibid., 243–44.
81. I, 277 ibid., 244.
82. I, 281 ibid., 247.
83. I, 287–89 ibid., 252–55.
84. I, 291 ibid., 256.
85. I, 294, 295 ibid., 258–59.
86. I, 296–97 ibid., 260–61.
87. I, 298 ibid., 262.
88. I, 295 ibid., 259.
89. I, 298 ibid., 262.
90. I, 299 ibid., 263.
91. I, 302–04 ibid., 265–67.
92. I, 306–07 ibid., 268–69.
93. I, 310 ibid., 271.
94. I, 312 ibid., 273.
95. I, 313 ibid., 274.
96. I, 314–15 ibid., 275–76.

In a letter to Reinhold, dated July 4th, 1797, Fichte responds to the question of the origin of sensation by declaring that "I am bold enough to believe that I have detected an answer to this question, especially in the introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*." Fichte, "Selected Correspondence," 420.

97. I, 328 *The Science of Knowledge*, 286.
98. I, 314–15 ibid., 275–76.

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99. I, 316–17 *The Science of Knowledge*, 276–77.
100. I, 319 ibid., 279.
101. I, 321 ibid., 280.
102. I, 323 ibid., 282.

103. I, 299 ibid., 263.
104. I, 314 ibid., 275.
105. I, 323 ibid., 282.
106. Fichte, "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," 194.
107. I, 323–24 *The Science of Knowledge*, 283.

The use of the term "indicated" has been used by Breazeale in his recent translation of the *Science of Knowledge*, whereas Heath and Lachs refer to the term "exhibited." See: Daniel Breazeale, ed. *J. G. Fichte: Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings, 1794–95* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

108. I, 268 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 236.
109. I, 325 ibid., 283.
110. I, 326 ibid., 284.
111. I, 327 ibid., 285.
112. I, 328 ibid., 286.

Fichte explores the necessity for this imaginary, infinite not-self in: I, 25859 ibid., 228–29.

113. I, 286 ibid., 251.
114. Schlutz captures this central thesis of the Science of Knowledge. See: Alexander M. Schlutz, "The Hightest Point of Philosophy. Fichte's Reimaging of the Kantian System," in *Mind's World: Imagination and Subjectivity from Descartes to Romanticism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).
115. I, 284 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 250.
116. "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter," 199.
117. "Concerning the Spirit and the Body as Such," 195–97.
118. I, 284 *The Science of Knowledge*, 250.
119. As acknowledged by Heinrich, Fichte highly recommended this section of the text (§5) as it provided a better "entrance" into the text. See: Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel. Lectures on German Idealism.*, ed. David S. Pacini (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 208.
120. I, 281 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 247.
121. I, 277 ibid., 244.
122. I, 283 ibid., 249.
123. I, 279 ibid., 246.
124. Engell also refers to Fichte's discussions concerning the purposeful use of the creative imagination, especially in relation to philosophy. See: James Engell, "The New Philosopher's Stone," in *The Creative Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 228.
125. Schultz defines the "flash of lightening" as an intellectual intuition that fleetingly reveals the desired image. See: Schlutz, "The Hightest Point of Philosophy. Fichte's Reimaging of the Kantian System."
126. In the footnote *, Fichte clarifies the obscure feelings arise from a "sense of truth." See: Fichte, "Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or, of So–Called 'Philosophy,' " 127–28.
127. "Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy," 210–11.

128. "[Public Announcement of a New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre] (1800)," in *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), 187.

129. "Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or, of So–Called "Philosophy"," 126.

130. I, 328 *The Science of Knowledge*, 286.

131. Immanuel Kant, "Public Declaration," in *Allgemeine Literatur–Zeitung* August 7, 1799 cited in: "[Public Announcement of a New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre] (1800)," 193.

Third Movement

THE RADICAL SEED OF INDETERMINACY IN THE WRITINGS OF CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS

Chapter 10

The Radical Seed of Indeterminacy

> The creation of thought renders thinkable what was not previously thinkable, or not in that way. It brings into being: brings into being as thinkable *that which* … What? That which, without it, would not be thinkable? Or that which, without it, would not be? Each of these two paths leads back into the other.[1]

It is in the spirit of creation that Cornelius Castoriadis offered his own movement of thought – one that successfully restored the ontological significance of the creative imagination back into the trajectory of Western philosophical discourse and it did so, by presenting this concept in an entirely new form. Castoriadis rendered thinkable what had not yet been thinkable and in the process offered a new way of thinking about the being of human and of the being of the social-historical, and of the creative potentiality inherent therein.[2] The creative imagination thus became, in Castoriadis's hands, an ontological power of formation and of creation capable of giving thinkable form and meaning to the imaginary dominion of the being of human and of the being of the social-historical.

In a reflection upon the remarkable development of his own movement of thought, Castoriadis openly acknowledged that he was drawn to the idea of the imaginary as a means to resolve a "fundamental lacuna" that lay within Marxian thought.[3] Of the fact that Marx was unable to account for the variability inherent within individual, societal and political forms. By failing to bridge the divide between theory and practice, between knowledge and action, Marx overlooked the fact that history *is*, as Castoriadis argues, the "domain of *creation*."[4] History *is* the positing of new forms of behaviour, the institution of new social rules and the invention of new political forms.

A central and pervasive feature of Castoriadis's attempt to resolve the Marxian lacuna accordingly involved an intimate engagement with the question of the fact of creation, the question of which demanded an elucidation of Western conceptions of the imagination. The breadth of this engagement is vast – it includes the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Fichte, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Freud, Sartre and Lacan. These range of interlocutors provided the theoretical, practical and historical foundation upon which Castoriadis could begin to give definitive form to his emergent idea that the positing of new forms of behaviour, the institution of new social rules and the invention of new political forms was premised upon an imaginary realm of ontological creation.

Although the significance of these interlocutors cannot be overstated, the influence of the writings of Kant and Fichte upon the trajectory of Castoriadis's own movement of thought are palpable. As has been argued, both Kant and Fichte openly confronted the question of the imagination revealing that in order to perceive, to be and to live in a world amongst others being must embody the power to create from something, to give form to something, to give form to the X by creating from nothing, out of nothing, for nothing. Castoriadis unreservedly takes up this emergent line of enquiry exposing both explicitly and implicitly deep lines of connection, of divergence and of development between his own conception of the creative power of the imagination and that espoused by Kant and Fichte.

Castoriadis's introduction to the notion of the imagination and the imaginary forms, therefore, a movement of thought that reinstated the ontological significance of the creative and constitutive power of the imagination. The proposition that the realm of the imaginary underlies the ontology of the being of human and the ontology of the being of the social-historical openly dismantled inherited conceptions of being as "being-determined" and it most certainly challenged, as discussed, the conception of philosophy as an "elaboration of Reason."[5] In Castoriadis's view, the emergence of new forms, the emergence of new ways of being or the emergence of new ways of thinking about something involves the rupture of previously given determinations through the *creation* of new determinations, of new ways of being, of new ways of thinking. As the act of creation involves the positing of new determinations that are in themselves *determining*, creation is, for Castoriadis, *ex nihilo* for what is created is not producible nor deducible from what lay before.[6] There is no logical connection between one form of determination or another, between one way of being or another. Creation thus implies indetermination for the totality of what is can never be completely determined such that it excludes the "surging forth" of new determinations or of new forms of being.[7] Conceived in this way, the being of human is not, for Castoriadis, "being determined." Rather, "being is creation."[8]

It is in the context of creation that Castoriadis also positions his own work of reflection. As he argues, a work of reflection is "a work in the making."[9]

A work in the making cannot not present in the form of a "systematic and polished totality" because it contains within itself the labyrinth of corridors traversed, reflecting the journey that was taken. These paths, however tenuous they may be, provide the reader with an essential part of the work. They provide the reader with an experience of the act of thinking – an experience that exposes the fact that a work in the making is an activity that involves the unceasing movement of thought. A work in the making involves an exploration of a myriad of interminable corridors, a journey that reveals: "Thinking is not building cathedrals or composing symphonies. If the symphony exists, it is the reader must create it in their own ears."[10]

In Castoriadis's view, therefore, a work of reflection involves the activity of "elucidation."[11] Embracing and developing the Kantian depiction of the term, the activity of elucidation is defined as "the labour by means of which individuals attempt to think about what they do and to know what they think." In this regard, the activity of elucidation endeavours to achieve something more than the simple act of thinking itself. In the form of a struggle or in the form of a striving, elucidation attempts to think about the activity of one's own thinking – to question what is known and to question what is not known. It does so, for the activity of thinking is always and necessarily a "social-historical creation." As there exists no place or no point of view outside of, or prior to history and to society, the act of thinking is in fact a form of *doing*, or more specifically a form of "social-historical *doing*" – an activity specific to a particular social collective, or a particular social-historical moment.

And yet, the procedure of thinking particular to the social-historical is unbeknown. There is, as Castoriadis highlights, an "internal" necessity within this social-historical doing. In order that one can be, exist and operate in the "proper" social-historical world, one must *necessarily* engage in the activity of thinking unique to that world. Thinking is an activity of the subject, but it is an activity that always occurs in relation *to* something. A private thought is always a representation of an internal relation *to* something other.

Envisaging the act of thinking as a form of social-historical doing is crucial to the activity of elucidation because conscious acknowledgement of the form of relation that exists between the subject and the social-historical allows thinking to become lucid about itself. It allows reflection on the mode and manner of one's own thinking and the necessities internal to it. Castoriadis refers to this activity as praxis – a conscious activity that "can only exist as lucid activity."[12] And yet, "it is something quite other than the application of prior knowledge." Praxis is based on knowledge but, and as Castoriadis explains, knowledge is "always fragmentary and provisional." Knowledge is fragmentary because "there is no exhaustive theory of [humankind] and of history" and knowledge is provisional because "praxis itself constantly gives

rise to new knowledge." Praxis involves, therefore, the process of elucidation and of "transformation."

Forming the foundation of Castoriadis's own movement of thought, the activity of elucidation rendered thinkable what was not previously thinkable. The activity of elucidation provided the means in which Castoriadis could rupture and contest historically conceived notions of the imagination, allowing the emergence of a new way of thinking about the creative and constitutive power of the imagination and, of course, of the imaginary. Castoriadis's own movement of thought thus engaged with and yet moved beyond the determinate bounds imposed by the Kantian and Fichtean conceptions propelling the idea of the creative imagination into new and unexplored realms.

Although providing a new way of thinking about the creative and constitutive power of the imagination, Castoriadis's own work of reflection remains in itself amenable to contestation and re-figuration laying the ground, so to speak, for the possibility of the emergence of a new movement of thought. As discussed, the amenability or the openness of his work of reflection to ongoing elucidation pertains directly to the presence of several layers of indetermination residing within his work.

The first layer of indetermination relates to the trail of "tentative, embryonic thoughts" Castoriadis leaves behind within his work.[13] Acknowledging the limitations of time and the limitations imposed by the determinate bounds of his own elucidations, Castoriadis alludes, in passing, to several avenues for ongoing elucidation. For the most part, these embryonic thoughts are intimately tied to Castoriadis's desire to surpass, not simply in theoretical but also in practical terms, the notion of the Freudian Unconscious.[14] Freud was and remains a dualist, and to date, attempts to resolve the paradox of the being of human – the being of which is both psyche and soma – have failed. Castoriadis directly acknowledged this failure and although unable to resolve this eternal paradox, he provided within his own work of reflection a series of tentative thoughts highlighting future avenues for ongoing elucidation.

The second level of indetermination residing within Castoriadis's work of reflection relates specifically to the series of aporias and antinomies that begin to emerge in his reflection on the "weighty ontological implications" of the "fact of creation."[15] Of the fact that creation is *ex nihilo* but it is not *in nihilo* nor *cum nihilo*, a declaration that shatters the hypercategory of determinacy.[16] While a compelling observation on Castoriadis's behalf and one that certainly resonates with elements of the Kantian and Fichtean depictions of the creative capacity of the power of the imagination, Castoriadis creates, so to speak, a series of aporias and antinomies in his attempt to accommodate the dominion of the imagination *and* the imaginary through recourse to the concept of the radical imaginary. While these indeterminations will be explored in the following chapters, for the moment, it is suffice to say the indeterminacy

evoked by the experience of these aporias and antinomies residing within Castoriadis's elucidation of the concept of the radical imaginary openly exposes a distinction he begins to create between the concepts of the radical imagination and the creative imagination. Emerging in the latter stages of his writings, this terminological distinction leads the way toward a new a new way of thinking about the signification of the creative imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation.

THE RADICAL IMAGINARY

In principle, Castoriadis positions his own work of reflection around a unique and thought-provoking conception of the imagination – one that definitively breaks from the "gross inadequacies" of historical conceptions.[17] One such example is Lacan's concept of the imagination, which focuses exclusively on the realm of the "scopic." According to Castoriadis, the figures of the imagination embody something much more than simply the form of an image. In the imagination of a musical composer, for example, figures surge forth that are not in the least visual. They maybe auditory or they may be kinetic – they may contain a form of rhythm. Conceived in this way, the composer does not simply *see* the score, the composer can *hear* the "totality" of the piece.

Castoriadis thus faces without evasion or conciliation the limitations imposed by inherited conceptions of the imagination. The imagination is not, for Castoriadis, a productive or a reproductive power of the human soul subject to the mastery of reason but is the capacity to give rise to something that is "not the 'real.' "[18] Reference here to the "not the real" introduces the idea that the imagination is "the deployment of a space and of a time" – the activity of the imagination *creates* space and time as well as positioning the subject in *its* own space and time. In this regard, the subject *creates* and organizes "*for itself*" its *own* imaginary world through the activity of the imagination.

By introducing the imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation, Castoriadis defines the imagination as forming the seat of the *vis formandi* of the being of human because it gives form to being through the creation of *figures*– figures, which, as discussed, *embody* the full sensorial experience.[19] Figures that allow the subject to create and organize *for itself* its *own* world. And yet, as Castoriadis explains, these figures of the imagination are indissociable from the *vis formandi* of the social-historical field. In what can be described as a definitive move beyond the determinate bounds imposed by the Kantian and Fichtean presentations, Castoriadis argues that the common, collective and social space of the social-historical world is also and necessarily

an imaginary creation.[20] The possibility of language, of culture, of social institutions and of society are contingent on the creation of "social imaginary significations," imaginary forms of meaning unique to each particular social-historical collective. Social imaginary significations are the imagined creations of the anonymous collective and provide the means through which a collective can coexist meaningfully in a unified, yet inherently diverse form. Castoriadis thus regards society as creation and creation of itself. Society is "self-creation" as each particular society is representative of a new ontological form – of a new *eidos* – representative of a new mode and a new level of being.

Based on these remarkable series of elucidations, Castoriadis defines the source of the *vis formandi* of the being of human and of the *vis formandi* of the social-historical as the "radical imaginary."[21] As a *figure* of the thinkable, the concept of the radical imaginary is almost unthinkable because Castoriadis is proposing here the power of formation and of creation resides both within the subject and within the collective space of the social-historical field. By introducing these two domains of ontological creation, Castoriadis accordingly reveals that the radical imaginary – as the "creative force" or the *vis formandi* of the singular human being *and* of the social–historical domain – in fact comprises two indissociable dimensions.[22]

The first dimension of the radical imaginary exists as the psyche/soma of the singular human being and "surges forth" by means of the "radical imagination," which, through the positing and creation of figures, posits, creates and brings into being *for* the psyche/soma. Associated with the Aristotelian concept of the first imagination and the Kantian concept of the transcendental imagination, the radical imagination of the psyche/soma presents as an indissociable and "perpetual, truly Heraclitean, flux of representations *cum* affects *cum* intentions."[23] Castoriadis's use of the term "radical" highlights the fact that in the singular human being, the imagination is not a productive, nor reproductive force. Rather, the imagination is defunctionalized – it is a "spontaneous, creative, afunctional force" that is *not* predetermined by biological need.[24] Removed from the determinations of biological functions and drives, the radical imagination is the activity through which reality exists for the singular human being and through which reality exists as it exists.[25] That is, the radical imagination exists in and through the positing and the creation of an indeterminate realm of figures that are in themselves indissociable from the "presentification" of meaning and of meaning as always figured or represented.[26]

The second dimension of the radical imaginary exists as the anonymous collective of the social-historical field and surges forth by means of the "radical instituting social imaginary," which, through the positing and creation of social imaginary significations, posits, creates and brings into being *for* the anonymous collective. As a power of formation and of

creation, the social imaginary exists within the social-historical field allowing the anonymous collective to create and establish forms of meaning particular to that collective. By positing, creating and bringing into being the concepts of "God; polis, citizen, nation, state, party; commodity," for example, the social imaginary provides the means in which society and institutions are instituted and, at the same time, are instituting.[27] In this respect, the social imaginary exists in and though the positing and creation of social imaginary significations and the instituting society exists in and through the presentification of these significations and of these significations as instituted.

By introducing the concept of the radical imaginary, Castoriadis captures and more accurately portrays the imagination as an unceasing and interminable power. Evoking the feeling of an essential dynamism, or perhaps in homage to Aristotle, the radical imaginary evokes the feeling of a movement, not simply within the subject itself or between subjects, but a form of movement between the subject and the social-historical field.[28] Because of the indissociable association between the subject and the social-historical, Castoriadis does not define the realm of the imaginary simply as an "image *of*" something.[29] Rather, the radical imaginary is "the unceasing and essentially *undetermined* (social-historical and psychical) creation of figures/forms/images." The radical imaginary is "ontological creation" because both dimensions bring into being a form that was not there before.[30] Both dimensions allow the presentification of meaning through the positing and creation of figures/forms/images which are essentially and fundamentally associated with the activity of creation.

As the radical imaginary gives form to being and gives form to the being of the social-historical, then for Castoriadis, the figures/forms/images of the radical imaginary form the precursors to the possibility of the conceptual forms of the rational and the real. In other words, the figures/forms/images of the radical imaginary form the precursors to any form of determinacy – specifically to the form of logic or identitary logic underpinning the foundations of Greco-Western thinking.[31] Moreover, these figures/forms/images underlie the possibility of any form of movement between the rational and the real because it is through the radical imaginary that these domains are both created, enacted and recontested. Castoriadis thus reinstates the Kantian and Fichtean thesis concerning the indissociable form of relation between imagination and freedom because the concept of the radical imaginary includes, as he does in fact suggest, the dimension of freedom espoused by the idealist philosophers.[32] However, and on Castoriadis's view, the dimension of freedom – representative of the capacity to create new forms, new forms of being and new forms of thinking – is premised upon the "radical" seed of indeterminacy.

NOTES

1. Cornelius Castoriadis, "Preface," in *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), xxvii. The text is published in English.

2. Castoriadis defines the "social–historical" as:

"the anonymous collective, the impersonal–human element that fills every given social formation but which also encompasses it, setting each society in the midst of others, inscribing them all within a continuity in which those who are no longer, those who are elsewhere, and even those yet to be born are in a certain sense present. It is, on the one hand, given structures, 'materialized' institutions and works, whether these be material or not; and, on the other hand, *that which* structures, institutes, materializes. In short, it is the union *and* the tension of instituting society and of instituted society, of history made and of history in the making."

"Marxism and Revolutionary Theory," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 184.

3. "From the Monad to Autonomy," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 173.

Castoriadis openly writes about the trajectory of his writings in: "Done and to Be Done," 370–75. "General Introduction," in *Political and Social Writings*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

See also Breckman's account of Castoriadis' emergent interest in the realm of the imaginary in: Warren Breckman, *Adventures of the Symbolic. Post Marxism and Radical Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 96–138.

4. Cornelius Castoriadis, "A Provisional Assessment," in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 44–45.

5. "The Discovery of the Imagination," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 213.

6. "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," in *Figures of the Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher, Meridian Crossing Aesthetics (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 73.

7. "Done and to Be Done," 369.

8. *On Plato's "Statesman"* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 82.

9. "Preface," 1.

10. Ibid., 2.

11. Ibid., 3.

12. Castoriadis, "Theory and Revolutionary Project," 76.

13. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 331.

14. Castoriadis acknowledges that he may not have the "capacity, the forces, and the time" to reflect upon the idea that the "human Unconscious surpasses the Freudian Unconscious." See: "From the Monad to Autonomy," 179.

15. "Done and to Be Done," 369.

16. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 326–27.

In the *Imaginary Institution of Society*, Castoriadis only speaks of creation *ex nihilo*. The qualification that creation is not *cum* or *in nihilo* was established later in

his writings. See: Suzi Adams, *Castoriadis's Ontology: Being and Creation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011). 118–20.

17. Castoriadis, "From the Monad to Autonomy," 182.

18. Castoriadis's negation of the term "real" moves against Husserl and Heidegger's concept of *Lebenswelt* as the "real" lifeworld. See: ibid., 181.

19. Castoriadis, "Culture in a Democratic Society," 342.

20. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 332–33.

See Castoriadis's discussion on social imaginary significations in: "Social Imaginary Significations."

21. Castoriadis traces the emergence of the concept of the radical imaginary within his own thought in the following essay: "The Logic of Magmas and the Question of Autonomy," 290–91.

22. "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," 73.

Castoriadis acknowledges the two dimensions of the radical imaginary in the following essays: "The Discovery of the Imagination," 245. "Social Imaginary Significations," 369.

23. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 327.

Castoriadis defines the "flux" as Heraclitean in order to draw on the Heraclitean position, which is "you will never dream the same dream twice." "From the Monad to Autonomy," 183.

24. "The Psyche and Society Anew," in *Figures of Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher, Meridian Crossing Aesthetics (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 205.

25. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 321.

26. "Social Imaginary Significations," 369.

27. "The Imaginary: Creation in the Social-Historical Domain," 7.

28. Castoriadis explores the imagination in the writings of Aristotle in the following essay: "The Discovery of the Imagination."

29. "Preface," 3.

30. "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads.," in *Figures of the Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 73.

31. As Castoriadis states, identitary logic forms "an essential and inexpungible dimension not only of language but also of all life and all social activity." See: "The Social–Historical Institution: Legein and Teukhein," 221.

32. Castoriadis argues here that the dimension of freedom is more "appropriately" termed "indeterminacy." See: "The Institution and the Imaginary. A First Approach," 146.

Chapter 11

The Radical Imagination

Castoriadis's proposition that the radical seed of indeterminacy underlies all forms of human creation is in its essence premised upon a profound reconceptualization of Western depictions and characterizations of the human "subject."[1] Negating the "point-like ego" of the Kantian I think, negating the subjectivist concept of the subject as pure activity unencumbered by constraints, and negating the declaration of the "death of the subject," Castoriadis returned the subject to its rightful place by raising, once again, the question of the subject.

On initial consideration, the question of the subject begins, for Castoriadis, in the realm of activity. As the subject is activity and as it is always acting on something, the subject is necessarily determined through two distinct yet interrelated acts. The first act of determination involves the intentional act of positing. As the subject is always acting *on* something then through its own activity, the subject will posit an object. The subject is, therefore, codetermined by what it gives itself as an object because the intentional activity of positing "carries the subject into the world" and it continually puts the "subject in the street."

Alongside this determinate and intentional act of positing, there occurs another act of determination. Unlike the first, this second act of determination "carries the world into the subject and introduces the street into what the subject may take to be its own den." By being in the world and by being in a world of meaning, the world is brought into the subject through the subjects "gaze," through their thinking and through their body. The "productive union" between the subject and the world endows the subject with the capacity to participate in the world for the possibility of thought and the possibility of thinking about the world can only ever occur by being in the world. As Castoriadis is at pains to point out, the "fundamental truth" of the fact that

the subject is "traversed through and through by the world and by others" has been forgotten by subjectivist philosophy. Upon entry into the world, the subject is infiltrated by a "torrent" of external forms of meaning and because of this in the "subject *as subject* we find the non-subject." Moreover, as the support for the union between the subject and non-subject is given through the body then the body also participates in *being* in the world. The body is, as Castoriadis argues, "heavy with virtual meaning" – heavy with the figures/forms/images of the radical imaginary.

Exposing the fundamental truth of the fact that the subject is determined through two distinct yet interrelated acts allowed Castoriadis to provide an entirely new conception of the subject. One that envisages the subject as a "strange totality" – as a "paradoxical compound" comprising a biological body, a social being and a conscious being with unconscious psychical processes.[2] While these various regions of being are, for Castoriadis, "indissociable in character," they are "heterogeneous in makeup" promoting an antinomical conception of the subject as a totality that is one and yet, it is a totality that does not reside as one.

Although offering an entirely new way of thinking about the subject, Castoriadis also brings to the fore two fundamental issues that need to be considered when addressing the question of the subject. The first issue concerns Freud's discovery of psychical reality and of the fact that the psyche and its plethora of psychical instances and sub spheres embody the attributes of a "*for-itself*" or a self. The psyche is essentially *for-itself* for, and as Freud has highlighted, the psyche resides in its own world and pursues its own goals through its own means – a fact that indicates the psyche embodies the attributes or the characteristics of self-finality, self-preservation, calculation and a world of one's own.

And yet, these particular characteristics are not limited to the realm of the psyche. As Castoriadis argues, they "govern a much vaster region: they are valid everywhere the *for-itself* exists." The characteristics of self-finality, self-preservation, calculation and a world of one's own are to be found in other regions of the *for-itself* – regions, which include, for Castoriadis, the living being, the social individual, society, the "*human subject* properly speaking," and finally, "autonomous" society. Each of these regions of being are *for-itself* – each of these regions embody varying degrees of autonomy in the sense that each living being, each social individual, or each society, for example, create for themselves their own world through their own actions and interactions.

The second issue that needs to be considered when addressing the question of the subject pertains to the fact that human subjectivity cannot be characterized through reference to the attributes of self-finality, self-preservation, calculation and a world of one's own nor can it be defined simply through

reference to the realm of the psyche. As the subject is supported by the animate body and as the subject is codetermined through a productive union with the world, human subjectivity does not simply reside within the psyche. The psychical "instances" spoken of by Freud and, for that matter, the "representations" spoken of by Kant and by Fichte are valid in the psyche *and* they are valid in the social-historical domain.

By bringing attention to these series of essential concerns, Castoriadis provided the theoretical and practical means in which to finally address the question of the subject. The question of which is centred around an ontological distinction between the subject as *simply being* and the subject as *reflexively being*. Although fuelling the foundation of Castoriadis's pervasive political project, which will not be discussed here, the distinction between these two presentations or states of the subject is premised upon the presence of two particular "levels" of being. On Castoriadis's view, the subject as *simply being* resides at the level of the *merely real* and comprises the heterogenous yet indissociable regions of the living being, the psychical, the social individual and society.[3] Embodying a heteronomous nature, the subject as *simply being* is a state of the subject that is ontologically "given" through these indissociable yet heterogenous regions of being.

In contrast, the subject as *reflexively being* resides at the level of the "not merely real" and comprises the indissociable regions of the human subject properly speaking and autonomous society.[4] Embodying an autonomous nature, the subject as *reflexively being* is a state of the subject that is not simply given but is made and makes itself under certain historical conditions and circumstances through these indissociable yet autonomous regions of being.

Notwithstanding the political motivation behind the division between these particular levels of being, Castoriadis's introduction to the subject as *simply being* or as *reflexively being* is associated with a detailed and complex elucidation of the radical imaginary. In his elucidation of the role of the radical imaginary in giving form to the subject at these varying levels of being, Castoriadis freely draws on and introduces such concepts as the sensorial imagination, the logical imagination, the corporeal imagination, the defunctionalized imagination, the bodily imagination, the nonfunctional imagination, the unbridled imagination, the theoretical imagination, the radical instituting imaginary, the radical social instituting imaginary and finally, the creative imagination. Not to be dismissed as a series of erroneous or superfluous terms, these conceptual forms are integral to Castoriadis's work of reflection, playing an invaluable role in his attempt to give form to the emergent idea that the incessant, unceasing and *creative* activity of the radical imaginary arises out of the "two expressions of the radical imagination" – the first expression is the radical imagination existing as the psyche/soma and the second expression is the social imaginary existing as the social-historical.[5]

THE LEVEL OF THE *MERELY REAL – SIMPLY BEING*

Castoriadis develops his proposal that the two expressions of the radical imagination underlie the ontology of the being of human and of the being of the social-historical through a consideration of the various regions of being that comprise the level of the *merely real*. Outlined in principle within the essay "The State of the Subject Today," this consideration provides a general overview of how the *for-itself* and the regions of the living being, the psyche, the social individual and society create for themselves their own world through their own activity.

In the process of elucidating how each region of being is *for-itself*, Castoriadis is forced, however, to confront the "weighty ontological implications" of the "fact of creation."[6] Of the fact that in the domain of humankind, creation is *ex nihilo* but it is not *in nihilo* or *cum nihilo*.[7] The ontological implications of this acknowledgement are twofold. Broadly speaking, at one level, the fact that creation is *ex nihilo* demands an elucidation of how creation can occur out of nothing [*à partir de rien*], from nothing.[8] And at another level, the fact that creation is not *in nihilo* or *cum nihilo* demands an elucidation of where creation arises and how creation surges forth.

Castoriadis addresses these two perspectives pertaining to the fact of creation by providing, what can be regarded to be, a theoretical and a practical account of creation *ex nihilo*. A theoretical account is provided within an elucidation of *how* the regions of the living being and of the psychical within the being of human are given ontological form. In order to account for the fact that both regions of being are *for-itself*, Castoriadis demarcates the radical imagination as psyche/soma into *two* dimensions – the *corporeal* dimension, which creates the ontological form of the region of the living being and the *defunctionalized* dimension, which creates the ontological form of the region of the psyche.[9] It is in the context of this demarcation that Castoriadis introduces the radical imagination as ontological creation.

A practical account of creation *ex nihilo* is provided within an elucidation of *how* the subject as *simply being* in the social-historical domain is given ontological form through the regions of being that comprise the level of the *merely real*. In order to account for the fact that the subject comprises the indissociable regions of the living being, the psyche, the social individual and society, Castoriadis introduces the radical imaginary as ontological creation.

The distinction between these two levels of ontological creation is critical. Not only does it allow an understanding of the complexity of the issues at play when addressing the question of the subject, it also exposes the "weighty ontological implications" Castoriadis is faced with when moving from theoretical to practical concerns or when moving from one level of ontological creation to another.[10] Castoriadis is attempting here to explain how the subject

is a totality that is one but is not one. He is attempting to explain and resolve the issue of *how* each of the four regions of the *merely real* are *for-itself* – how the regions of the living being, the psychical, the social individual and society create for themselves their own world. *And*, he is attempting to explain and resolve the issue of how the subject in the form of *simply being* is also a *for-itself* – how the subject creates its own world through the interplay between the indissociable regions of the living being, the psychical, the social individual and society. The subject is *for-itself* and yet the subject comprises various regions of being that are also, essentially, *for-itself*. Grasping the essence of Castoriadis's positioning of the question of the subject can only come to the fore by reflecting upon the radical imagination *and* the radical imaginary as two domains of ontological creation. Accordingly, the essence of Castoriadis's thesis concerning the radical seed of indeterminacy underlying the ontology of the being of human and of the being of the social-historical is not given as such but arises out of one's own work of reflection.

THE REGION OF THE LIVING BEING – THE CORPOREAL DIMENSION OF THE RADICAL IMAGINATION

The first region of the *for-itself* is the region of the living being, which also forms the initial *for-itself* or the archetypal *for-itself*.[11] Representative of a region of being that forms the foundation of *all* finite beings – including the being of human – the region of the living being is *for-itself* for, and as Castoriadis argues, the living being creates its *own* world through its own actions and interactions. The region of the living being thus embodies a form of autonomy, as all activity signifies "self-finality" or "being one's own end."

According to Castoriadis, the ability to create one's own world necessitates the capacity to participate in the "proper world of the species." Yet the proper world of the species is not given – nature does not contain "information," as such, waiting to be gathered. On the contrary, information is "created" by the *for-itself* in "its *own* manner of doing so." The X that is out there simply "informs" the living being that "there is" something "outside." Drawing explicitly on Fichte, Castoriadis confirms that this informing is "not information" but simply "creates a shock (*Anstoss*…) which sets in motion the formative (imaging/imagining, presenting and relating) capacities of the living being." The shock arising from the presence of the external world encourages the living being to *create* an image or a perception "be where X is."[12] The living being begins to create its own sensations and organize for itself "something out of the world" through the *creation* of subjective determinations.[13] The X becomes a subjective determination "only by *being*

formed (in–formed) by the for-itself that forms it … Information is created by a 'subject' – obviously in its *own* manner of doing so." As such, the living being does not passively perceive the external world but *creates* for *itself* its own proper world in response to the *Anstoss* of the world. The living being is to be conceived, therefore as "self-creation" as a living form that is self-constituting.[14]

In Castoriadis's view, however, the ability to *create* information involves something more than simple image making. Deviating once again from the limitations imposed by the Lacanian concept of the imagination, Castoriadis argues the *creation* of information involves "presentation, representation and a bringing into relation of that which is represented."[15] In the form of "actual information," a presentation [*Vorstellung*] is "always a *setting into images*." And yet, the image is a "*bringing into relation*" an indeterminate number of elements that are indissociably united. Castoriadis defines this bringing into relation as the cognitive function of the living being, which unites, indissociably, the different dimensions of imaging *and* of relating. The dimension of imaging in the form of the "aesthetic" or the "sensorial" is indissociable from the dimension of relating in the form of the "noetic" or the "logical." This is because "there is always a 'logical' organization of the image, just as there is always an 'imaged' support for every logical function."

It is of interest to note that within this particular elucidation of the relationship between the aesthetic and the noetic dimensions of imaging in the living being, no reference is made to the role of the imagination. However, in the later essay titled, "The Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," Castoriadis associates the aesthetic and the noetic dimensions of the image with the "sensory and logical imagination."[16] As he explains, the "ultimately indescribable X" that resides "out there" becomes something definite and specific for the *for-itself* through the activity of the "sensory and logical imagination," which "filters," "forms," and "organizes" the external shocks. The sensorial component of the perception is "*itself* a creation of the imagination" because the imagination gives form to "sensible *quale*" – the imagination gives form to "something which, 'in itself', has no relation with *that* form." Sensible quale are pure *creations*, not simply of the senses but of the imagination in its most "elementary" form.

And yet, the sensorial component of the perception is always logical because it "possess unity and a formidable organization" – it possesses a form of "elementary logic." Therefore, the presentation is an original creation of the sensorial and logical imagination, which arises out of a reaction to something – of a reaction to the X. And, as Castoriadis is keen to point out, this reaction always arises out of the "total state of the subject ('body' and 'soul')."[17]

Several times within his writings, Castoriadis also associates the capacity of the living being to *create* sensations with the "*corporeal imagination*."[18] Although residing as a brief and undeveloped elucidation, the corporeal imagination is described as fundamental to gesture and proprioception. Involving the domains of sight, of sound, of taste and of touch, the corporeal imagination gives form to perceptual forms of presentations – a definition, which equates the function of the corporeal imagination with the activity of the sensorial and logical imagination.

Although the sensorial and logical imagination or the corporeal imagination gives form to perceptual forms of presentations, as Castoriadis goes onto argue the *source* of the sensorial and logical imagination is in fact the "radical imagination."[19] The radical imagination is the "source of the perceptual *quale* and of logical forms" and is "what makes it possible for any being-for-itself (including humans) to *create for* itself an own [or proper] world 'within' which it also posits itself." As a "power of presentation" and as a "power of organization" that renders possible all acts of perception, Castoriadis defines the radical imagination in the region of the living being as the "first aspect" or the first dimension of the radical imagination – a dimension that is, in its essence, "perceptual" or "geared to the outside."[20] Due to its perceptual nature, this dimension of the radical imagination posits/creates and gives *form* to something in response to the X. It is in this context that Castoriadis declares that "perception is inseparable from the radical imagination" – an elucidation that offers a significant contribution to the field of phenomenology.[21]

Although the region of the living being is given form through the activity of the first dimension of the radical imagination, Castoriadis also highlights the fact that the region of the living being is also given form through "two other essential determinations."[22] Presenting as the characteristics of affect and of intentionality, these two determinations also contribute to self-finality and self-preservation. The notion of affect reveals that in the living being, presentations must necessarily be "*valued*." What is presented must be "*affected*" by a value or a feeling of good or of bad, which in itself provides the support for evaluation. The process of evaluation guides the living being through intention, or it guides the living being through desire leading to the evocation of a corresponding action, inaction, or otherwise.

The capacity of the living being to create information and to act and react to an environment through affect and intentionality presupposes the living being still retain the capacity to "*be aware of* … this environment."[23] The environment is *present* for the living being but what is present is *represented* by the living being according to the finalities of that being. This involves the activity of "representation," which Castoriadis defines as "representation through and for 'someone.' " In other words, and moving against the Heideggerian thesis, representation is not, for Castoriadis, an objective activity for the act

of representation is "necessarily 'adjusted' " to the subjective finalities of the individual living being. What is "perceived" on a determinate and functional level for that particular individual living being leaves out, at the same time, "an infinitely larger mass of the non-perceived."

The capacity for perception also reveals that the external world must in itself be determinable, differentiable and organizable.[24] And, while the world and the cosmos are amenable to forms of organization, the ability to differentiate the quality as well as the quantity of perception necessitates the shocks of the external world can, in some form or another, be determined and organized into differentiable forms. The organizable capacity of the region of the living being is crucial to the survival of the *for-itself* because it enables the differentiation between, for example, the sense of sight and the sense of sound.

Although fundamental to the ontology of *all* living beings, Castoriadis is at pains to point out that in all living beings other than the being of human, the radical imagination is "determinate," essentially "*limited*" or "*specific*."[25] There is a quantitative and a qualitative dimension to the act of presentation and of representation ensuring the living being creates an image of the world "once and for all, always, 'in the same fashion' by enslaving it to the requirements of functionality."[26] Each shock or each encounter with the living world or with the proper world of the species becomes associated with a specific reactive sensation rendering representation, affect and desire or intention indissociable from biological functions, such as preservation or reproduction. Consequently, in all living beings, other than the being of human, the radical imagination is, for Castoriadis, "enslaved to functionality and [is] given once and for all."[27]

Despite establishing a biological distinction between the being of human and all other living beings, Castoriadis's introduction to the necessity for an "elementary" form of imagination in the region of the living being reveals the *vis formandi* pertaining to the human condition must include a *corporeal* domain of formation and of creation. Representative of the "first aspect" or the first dimension of the radical imagination, this corporeal domain of formation and of creation *creates* for itself its own world by positing an object in a distinct way. The *corporeal* dimension of the radical imagination in the being of human can make be an object or present an object in specific relation to the shock or the *Anstoss* of the X. Representative of a form of positing that is "perceptual" or "geared to the outside," the *corporeal* dimension of the radical imagination posits/creates and gives *form* to something in response to the X.[28] And while these creations are "conditioned" or lean on the presence of the X, they are not "caused" by the X. The radical imagination simply creates sensible quale as *form*, yet this *form* has "in itself" no "relation with *that* form [of the X]."[29] In other words, and drawing implicitly

on Fichte, Castoriadis argues that the *corporeal* dimension of the radical imagination creates "out of an X" something, which is really "not." It gives form to the X, makes be and posits the X as form by positing the X as an image. Given this capacity, Castoriadis offers the theoretical proposition that the region of the living being in the being of human "constructs … or creates, *its own world*" through, what can be described as, the corporeal dimension of the radical imagination."[30]

THE REGION OF THE PSYCHICAL – THE DEFUNCTIONALIZED DIMENSION OF THE RADICAL IMAGINATION

The second region of the *for-itself* is defined as the region of the "*psychical*."[31] Although the psychical region is to be found in other living beings, the human psyche is of particular interest to Castoriadis due to the presence of a unique series of attributes. Comprising a set of "specific characteristics" that accord the human psychism with a degree of "specificity," the region of the psychical in the being of human is, for Castoriadis, characterized by the presence of a particular series of "transversal or horizontal" psychical traits and a series of "vertical" psychical traits.

In Castoriadis's view, the emergence of these unique series of horizontal and vertical traits in the human psychism can be directly attributed to the "quantitative expansion of the nervous system" and the "extraordinary complexification of its organization."[32] However, and in distinction to historically conceived notions, Castoriadis does not associate the neoplastic transformation of the human psychical sphere with an increase in the rational or logical capacities of the singular human being. Rather, and as he argues, the radical expansion and complexification of the human psyche is associated with the "inordinate swelling of the imagination" and its "immense deployment."[33]

Transversal or Horizontal Traits of the Human Psychism

For Castoriadis, therefore, the specificity of the region of the psychical within the being of human can be attributed to the incessant and unceasing activity of the "defunctionalized imagination." In distinction to the psyche of all other living beings, the activity of the defunctionalized imagination of the human psychism has led to the emergence of a unique series of five transversal or horizontal traits. Castoriadis defines these traits as horizontal in nature as they apply to *all* forms of psychical instances and render the human psychical sphere with an essentially nonfunctional or non-logical nature.

The first transversal or horizontal trait is described as "the *defunctionalization* of psychical processes as they relate to the biological substratum (component) of the human being."[34] In distinction to all other living beings, all psychical instances within the human psychical sphere no longer assume a functional form of relation. The relationship between representation, affect and intentionality has been radically altered through the defunctionalization of psychical processes – a process attributed to the pathological and neoplastic development of the radical imagination. It is for this very reason that Castoriadis attributes the defunctionalized deployment of all psychical instances in the human psychism to the emergence of a "new dimension" of the radical imagination.[35] Other than the corporeal dimension previously described, this new, "fully psychical" and defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination "surges forth" in the form of "a perpetual, truly Heraclitean, flux of representations *cum* affects *cum* intentions."[36] Presenting in an "absolutely spontaneous" way devoid of corporeal concerns, the Heraclitean flux of the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination "continues whether or not there is any "outside stimulation"; it unceasingly makes *itself*." [37]

Castoriadis thus defines the incessant flux of psychical instances within the human psychical shere as defunctionalized because it is unrelated to biological or sensorial concerns – it is "essentially nonfunctional, beyond biological functionality, and capable even of bringing on the destruction of this [biological] functionality."[38] And, as this incessant and radical flux is assignable to no end, it can deform the perceptions of the external world by disconnecting the image from the shock, from the X. Corporeal representations of the "real" world can be deformed, transformed, annulled, or recreated through the defunctionalized radical imagination rendering the representational flux of the human psychism as "unrelated to 'vital needs' and even contrary to them."[39] And while the capacity to create varying and nonfunctional forms of representations, intentions and affects are "identical" or "essentially similar" in all human beings, the creations of the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination are necessarily and "absolutely singular for each human being."[40]

The afunctional nature of the psychical sphere relates specifically to the second transversal or horizontal psychical trait, which Castoriadis defines as the "*domination of representational pleasure over organ pleasure*".[41] The domination of the "pleasure of representation" enables psychical instances to take on a form of functionality other than biological forms. Castoriadis refers here to the Freudian notion of the "magical omnipotence of thought," whereby representations are transformed with the aim of rendering them more pleasing. He also refers to the pleasure associated with preserving one's own self-image. In instances such as these, pleasure takes on the form of "a defunctionalized sort of pleasure" because the pleasure associated with

retaining one's self-image may, in some instances, override the pleasure associated with self-preservation. Because of this trait, the singular human being can begin to adopt, both intentionally and unintentionally, a form of being that embodies a functionality of another order. The possibility for varying forms of functionality includes the emergence of a psychotic state of being in which representational coherency overtakes self-preservation and even overtakes the feeling of pleasure itself.[42]

The third transversal or horizontal trait, which is presupposed by the preceding traits, is the "*autonomization of the imagination*" – which is the capacity "to posit that which is not, to see in something that which is not there."[43] Castoriadis premises this trait on the fact that in the singular human being representations, affects and desires are subject to conditions but are never predetermined. As the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination in the singular human being is a "spontaneous, creative, afunctional force," it is "not enslaved to an ascribable end."[44] There is a rupture between the correspondence of the image with the shock of the X and a break in the fixed succession of images.

The fourth transversal or horizontal trait is the "*autonomization of the affect*".[45] This trait proposes that in the singular human being, affect, representation and desire are not necessarily indissociable; they may be both "interrelated *and* independent." Affect may not necessarily be associated with representation and desire; it may exist independently on its own suggesting that representation may be dependent on affect, rather than representation determining affect.

The fifth and final transversal or horizontal trait is the "*defunctionalization and an autonomization of desire*." In a similar vein as the fourth trait, this trait is premised on the fact that desire is also indissociable from the traits of the autonomization of representation and of affect.

While these five transversal or horizontal traits describe the radical transformation that has occurred within the human psychical sphere, Castoriadis also acknowledges there remains within the human psychism the "floating debris of the animal's functional 'psychical' apparatus." In other words, the human psychical sphere still retains psychical mechanisms dependent on "ensidic logic" because the capacity of all living beings to organize and create for themselves a world of their own world requires the capacity to perceive and order the ensidic elements of the world.[46]

Creation *Ex Nihilo* – A Theoretical Conception

The introduction to the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination opens onto Castoriadis's pervasive interest in the fact that in the being of human creation is *ex nihilo*. Castoriadis offers a series of theoretical

elucidations concerning creation *ex nihilo* by distinguishing between the two dimensions of the radical imagination. As discussed, the corporeal dimension can make be an object or present an object in specific relation to the shock or the *Anstoss* imposed by the experience of the world, of the X. In distinction, the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination can make be an object *prior* to the experience of the shock or the *Anstoss* of the X. As an "a-causal" power of formation and of creation, the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination can, as Castoriadis describes, make "a 'first' representation arise out of a nothingness of representation, that is to say, *out of nothing* [*à partir de rien*]."[47] In other words, the defunctionalized imagination creates *out of nothing* by positing an object "in an 'absolutely spontaneous' way."[48]

By drawing on the phrase "*out of nothing* [*à partir de rien*]," Castoriadis implicitly plays homage to Fichte's remarkable definition of the productive imagination. However, Castoriadis moves beyond the determinate bounds of Fichte's theoretical proposal by emphasizing the fact that the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination can posit an image or an object "starting from *nothing at all*."[49] Highlighting the phrase "*nothing at all* [*rien*]" allows Castoriadis to bring attention to the fact that unlike the Fichtean conception of the power of imagination, the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination moves "autonomously." It can, in his view, posit independently to the activity of reason; it can posit independently to the internal activity of the somatic drives, and it can posit independently to the *Anstoss* elicited by external concerns, by the X.

Although the implicit affinities with the Fichtean presentation are in fact palpable, Castoriadis main intent is to bring to the fore the aporias residing with the Freudian system. In particular, of Freud's inability to recognize or even acknowledge the essential role of the imagination in the psychical life of the human subject. Castoriadis locates Freud's lack of acknowledgement to his particular description of drive [*Trieb*] as a "*push* which is of somatic origin."[50] In the attempt to unite the realms of the somatic and of the psychical, Freud proposed the somatic push of the drive compels the psyche to produce the initial form of the "*Vorstellungsrepräsentanz des Triebes*." The drive sends into the psyche "ambassadors," which are comprehensible for the psyche because they "present as representations." As representations are, for Freud, simply presentations of a somatic drive, then the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz des Triebes* unites the somatic and psychical realms of being under the directive of a drive.

Although Castoriadis positions his argument against the Freudian paradigm, he implicitly evokes once again the Fichtean presentation. In principle by suggesting that as the first delegation of the drive in the psyche takes on the form of an affect – either as pleasure or displeasure – then *nothing* in this affect can possibly account for the *form* or content of representation.[51] There

is *nothing* in the psyche that can create or give form to a "representational or 'canonical' object of the drive." In Castoriadis's view, the capacity to *create* a representation in the form of a "canonical representation" is a capacity that must be inherent to the human psychical sphere. In other words, and developing the Kantian introduction to form, the psyche is the capacity to create form – the activity of representation is the "moment of creation in the psychic process."[52] And although *the* moment of creation is described as the capacity to posit or to create "from *nothing at all* [à partir de *rien*]," Castoriadis also refers to this moment as "creation *ex nihilo*" because what is created – the *form* that emerges in the psyche – cannot be reduced to any prior form of determination or drive. The defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination creates *form* – a form that suddenly arises and is posited or created *ex nihilo*.

As the psyche can produce an initial representation out of a nothingness of representation, Castoriadis defines this initial representation as an "originary phantasmatization" of the radical imagination, or more precisely, of the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination – a "primal representation (*Ur-vorstellung*)" which, through its very presence, enables the drive to "attain psychical existence."[53] And, although it must, at the same time, relate to an initial drive or affect, as Castoriadis argues, this primal representation (*Ur–vorstellung*) does so even though at this time "nothing ensures this relation."[54]

In this respect, the capacity of the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination to create *ex nihilo* reveals that the "emergence of representation" is an "irreducible and unique mode of being," particular to the human psychical sphere. It is a unique mode of being because the psyche is formed by its "being put into images." Or, to put it another way, the "psyche is a *forming*, which exists in and through *what* it forms and *how* it forms." In Castoriadis's view, and one that explicitly evokes the Kantian notion of the transcendental schema, the psyche is "a *forming*" because the initial representation or primal representation (*Ur-vorstellung*) forms the schemata for all future forms of representation. Forming the "non-deducible, inconstructible root" of all psychical activity, the initial representation forms the seed for all future forms of figuration.[55] Although created from nothing, the initial representation contains within its own *form* a unity and an organization that organizes all the elements of the psychical world, including the "decisive additions" from the outside. Representative of the creations of the corporeal dimension of the radical imagination, these outside additions are received and incorporated into the psychical world in accordance with the requirements posited within the *form* of the initial representation.[56]

Given the defunctionalized imagination gives ontological form to the psychical region of being, Castoriadis reveals that the *vis formandi* pertaining to the human condition also includes an a-causal domain of formation and of creation. Representative of the "fully psychical aspect" or the second dimension of the

radical imagination, this domain of formation and of creation allows the region of the psychical to *create* for itself its own world – a world, which, in the being of human, can represent and refigure the world of the region of the living being. As the region of the psychical creates *ex nihilo* its own world, Castoriadis offers the theoretical proposition that the radical seed of indeterminacy underlying all human creation is the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination.

NOTES

1. Cornelius Castoriadis, "Theory and Revolutionary Project," in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987; reprint, 2005), 105.

2. "The State of the Subject Today," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 141.

3. Castoriadis is again playing with the notion of the "real" through this introduction to the levels of the "*merely real*" and the "not merely real."

4. It is imperative to keep in mind here the distinction Castoriadis makes between the human subject and the "*human subject*" properly speaking.

5. Castoriadis describes the indissociable realms of the psyche/soma and the social-historical as the "two expressions of the radical imagination." See: Castoriadis, "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 274.

6. "Done and to Be Done," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 369.

7. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 321.

As Adams has made clear, Castoriadis only speaks of creation *ex nihilo* in the *Imaginary Institution of Society*. The qualification that creation is not *cum* or *in nihilo* was established later in his writings. See: Suzi Adams, Castoriadis's Ontology: Being and Creation (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 118–20.

8. For other discussions concerning creation *ex nihilo* in Castoriadis's writings, see: Jeff Klooger, "From Nothing: Castoriadis and the Concept of Creation," *Critical Horizons* 12, no. 1 (2010). Angelos Mouzakitis, "Creation *Ex Nihilo*," in *Cornelius Castoriadis: Key Concepts*, ed. Suzi Adams (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).

9. Castoriadis openly makes reference to the two dimensions or aspects of the radical imagination in: Cornelius Castoriadis, "From the Monad to Autonomy," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 178. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 327. "Social Imaginary Significations," 369.

10. "Done and to Be Done," 369.

11. "The State of the Subject Today," 145.

12. Ibid., 151.

13. Ibid., 145.

14. "The Logic of Magmas and the Question of Autonomy," 308–10.

Castoriadis is keen to highlight an important point of difference between his own conception of the living being and that portrayed by Francesco Varela. Although both acknowledge the living being creates for itself a world of its own, Varela refers

to the living being as exhibiting "biological autonomy," whereas Castoriadis chooses to use the term "self-constituting." The distinction highlights Castoriadis's particular signification of the term "autonomy," which will be discussed in detail in chapter 13.

15. Ibid., 145–46.

16. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 326–27.

17. Ibid., 324.

18. It is important to note this reference to the *corporeal imagination* only appears twice in Castoriadis's writings. See: Castoriadis, "The Social–Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 334; "From the Monad to Autonomy," 178.

19. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 326.

20. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 259.; "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 327.

21. Castoriadis explores this association in connection with the work of Merleau-Ponty. See: "Merleau-Ponty and the Weight of the Ontological Tradition," 283.

22. Castoriadis suggests here that these attributes of the living being, namely, representation, affect and intention, were "first sifted out as distinct elements in Ancient Greece during the fifth century B.C.E." See: "The State of the Subject Today," 146.

23. Ibid., 147–48.

24. Castoriadis explores the ensidic nature of the natural world and cosmos quite extensively within his writings. Some examples are: Castoriadis, "Done and to Be Done." "The Ontological Import of the History of Science," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford Oxford University Press, 1997).

25. "The State of the Subject Today," 147.

26. Ibid., 151.

27. Castoriadis, "From the Monad to Autonomy," 178.

28. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 327.

29. Ibid., 323.

30. Castoriadis, "The State of the Subject Today," 148.

31. Ibid., 150–54.

32. Castoriadis, "From the Monad to Autonomy," 177.

33. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 263.

34. "The State of the Subject Today," 150.

35. "From the Monad to Autonomy," 178.

Rundell also acknowledges Castoriadis's distinction between the two dimensions of the radical imagination. See: John Rundell, "Imaginary Turns in Critical Theory: Imagining Subjects in Tension," *Critical Horizons* 2, no. 1 (2001): 71.

36. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 327.

37. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 301.

38. "The Construction of the World in Psychosis," in *The World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 199.

Castoriadis specifically refers to the defunctionalized imagination as the "non-functional imagination." See: "The State of the Subject Today," 159.

39. "The Ontological Import of the History of Science," 354.

40. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 327.

41. "The State of the Subject Today," 151.
42. "The Construction of the World in Psychosis."
43. "The State of the Subject Today," 151.
44. "The Psyche and Society Anew," in *Figures of Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher, Meridian Crossing Aesthetics (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 205.
45. "The State of the Subject Today," 152.
46. Castoriadis refers to the term "ensidic" in many of his essays and develops this role of "ensidic logic" through the concepts of *legein* and *teukhein*. See: "The Social–Historical Institution: Legein and Teukhein."
47. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 283.
48. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 327.
49. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 260.
50. Ibid., 253–54.
51. Castoriadis, "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 282.
52. "Epilegomena to a Theory of the Soul," in *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), 25.
53. "The Social–Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 286–87.
54. Ibid., 282–83.
55. Ibid., 337.
56. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 327.

Chapter 12

The Radical Imaginary

Castoriadis offers an account of the radical imaginary as ontological creation by addressing the question of *how* the subject is given ontological form – a question, which, in its essence, demands the subject be considered as indissociable from the being of the social-historical world. As the subject at the level of the *merely real* comprises the regions of the living being, the psychical, the social individual and society, then the radical imaginary – composed of the dimensions of the radical imagination and the social imaginary – becomes integral to an elucidation of the ontological form of the subject as *simply being*. Accordingly, the domain of the radical imaginary as ontological creation begins to take form through Castoriadis's ongoing elucidation of how the indissociable regions of the psychical, of the social individual and of society give ontological form to the subject as *simply being*.

THE REGION OF THE PSYCHICAL – THE RADICAL IMAGINARY

The domain of the radical imaginary as ontological creation begins to take form through Castoriadis's ongoing reflection on the region of the psychical. In particular, of the vertical dimension or form of stratification that accords a unique "specificity" to the human psychical sphere.[1] On Castoriadis's view, the emergence of this form of stratification relates in part, to the defunctionalized nature of all psychical instances within the human psychical sphere and in part, to the fact that each of these instances endow the human psychical sphere with a psychical history. As each psychical instance is essentially *for-itself* and as each instance becomes associated or cathected with a particular object,

value, or affect for example, then all psychical instances within the human psychical sphere are never "transcended" nor "harmoniously integrated" but forever remain within the "contradictory" and "incoherent totality" of the psyche. Evoking the Fichtean notion of the imagination as a form of wavering between irreconcilable forms, the human psychical sphere presents, for Castoriadis, as a dynamic form – it is closed and yet it is capable of radical periods of change. Intra-psychical forms of conflict allow the closed totality of the psyche to open up and take on a new form through the creation of new psychical instances and new forms of relation between instances.

Given this portrayal of the psyche, it is interesting to observe Castoriadis does not draw on the Fichtean depiction of the self as being open to something other. Instead, and developing a Freudian analogy, Castoriadis argues that within the human psychism, there always remains the possibility for "a relative *rupture* of this closure." Reference to the term "rupture" highlights the fact that the contradictory and incoherent totality of the human psychism presents in the form of a "*magma*" – as "a sui generis mode of coexistence with an 'organization' that contains fragments of multiple logical organizations but which is not itself reducible to a logical organization."[2] The fact that each psychical instance is *for-itself* and the fact that there always remains the possibility for intra-psychical forms of conflict between psychical instances or between organized forms of instances ensures that the human psychical sphere contains within its own determinate form the capacity for a form of *rupturing* – a process, which allows the emergence of a vertical dimension or a form of stratification within the human psychical sphere. As Castoriadis argues, this is evident in the fact that some psychical instances reside within the "forest for the Conscious" and some reside within the "forest for the Unconscious."

Although the psychical plurality within the human psychism does in fact surge forth from both dimensions of the radical imagination, Castoriadis brings attention to the fact that the psychical plurality also leans "heavily on the stages of neurophysiological maturation (and animal learning)" and is "codetermined" by the "unfolding" of the process of socialization unique to a particular society. An elucidation of the psychical region of being must accommodate, therefore, a practical account of *how* the region of the psychical is codetermined by the process of socialization. Or, to put it more specifically, of *how* the process of socialization confers a form of organization upon the region of the psychical – a form of organization, which leads to the emergence of the social individual as *simply being* in the proper world of the social-historical domain.

Vertical Traits of the Human Psychism

Castoriadis offers an account of how the defunctionalized human psyche undergoes a process of socialization by providing an original account of

the stratification of the human psychical sphere. Although the stratification of the human psyche has been explored in the topography of Freud, in the Kleinian positions and in the topography of Piera Aulagnier, it is the Freudian topography and the aporias and antinomies within that inform Castoriadis's desire to present or to create, for that matter, his own system of stratification.[3] Predominantly, Freud's interest in and inability to resolve the paradox of the being of human – the paradox of the being of human "who is two [psyche and soma] that are one."[4] In Castoriadis's view, Freud was and "remains a dualist."[5] His topography, along with the three realms, regions, or provinces of the Super–Ego, the Ego and the Id irretrievably separated the psyche from the soma through the establishment of a deterministic hierarchy, whereby the Conscious rules over the Unconscious.

Although Castoriadis brings to the fore the paradox inherent within the Freudian paradigm, he also acknowledges that "there can be no question of eliminating or 'solving' the time-honored enigmas of this relation [between psyche and soma]."[6] This is because, "the psyche is strongly dependent on the soma …. The soma is strongly dependent on the psyche …. The soma is strongly independent from the psyche …. The psyche is strongly independent from the soma." As these antinomies can never be eliminated, Castoriadis calls for "new modes of thinking" on the relation between psyche and soma, between body and soul – ways of thinking that move beyond the reduction of the psyche to the soma, or vice versa; a way of thinking that moves beyond the "irreversible and irreparable separation of soul from the body."[7]

In Castoriadis's view, a new way of thinking about the relationship between the psyche and the soma could be achieved through the "idea" of the "human Nonconscious."[8] In the form of a tentative or "embryonic" figure of the thinkable, the human Nonconscious was for Castoriadis, an idea that needs to be posited either "behind" or "below the Freudian Unconscious (or the Id)." In other words, the Freudian conception of the Id – as "a cauldron full of seething excitations," of "energy" and of "impulses" arising out of psychical *and* somatic needs – should be retained.[9] And yet, the deterministic hierarchy imposed by the Freudian paradigm should be overcome.

The idea of the human Nonconscious accommodates both aims by proposing there is another indeterminate realm of human experience. Moving beyond, and perhaps even rejecting the theoretical constraints imposed by the Freudian topography, the idea of the human Nonconscious suggests there is an element of human experience that cannot be adequately captured through reference to the notions of the Conscious and the Unconscious, or to reference to the notions of repression or non-repression.[10] As Castoriadis argues, one's heartbeat, for example, is not repressed – it is simply imperceptible, becoming associated with a sense of well-being. And yet, when its functioning

breaks down, one's heartbeat suddenly becomes perceptible, presenting in the form of tachycardia or an arrythmia. On Castoriadis's view, there is something here that is not "purely somatical." The sudden perception or the awareness of an alteration in one's being suggests there is a realm of human experience that can be described in part, as "the living body *qua* human animated body in continuity with the psyche" – a realm of experience that "has a strange status, it being in part radically unconscious and never truly able to be conscious, save under the form of pain or pleasure."[11] The idea of the human Nonconscious proposes, therefore, that there is a "sensory" or "bodily" form of the imagination of which can be felt but due to the "nonfunctional, non-'logical' character" of the radical imagination it cannot be determinatively known.

Although attempting to create a new ground upon which to envisage this particular form of human experience, Castoriadis did in fact acknowledge that the idea of the human Nonconscious remained at the limit of his own ontology.[12] In part due to his own admission that there can be no question of "solving" the ongoing enigma of the form of relation between psyche and soma – an acknowledgment that concedes the immensity of the issues at play. And, in part due to the fact that the tentative *form* of this figure of the thinkable only emerged in the latter part of his writings – Castoriadis was well aware of the limitations of his own capacity, both in relation to time and available resources.

Notwithstanding the fact that Castoriadis's elucidation of the human Nonconscious drew to an abrupt end, a close reading of his detailed and substantial work of reflection reveals that the ground or, to be more precise, the *form* of the idea of the human Nonconscious actually resides within his elucidation of the vertical stratification of the human psychism. Introduced in its most coherent form within the text, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, Castoriadis's original system of stratification reveals how the region of the psychical is codetermined by the process of socialization unique to a particular society. Accordingly, this original system of stratification conceives the first form of stratification as the "monadic core of the primal subject."[13] Necessarily closed in and upon itself, the monadic core bursts apart during a triadic phase of psychical development and, through various processes of sublimation, culminates in the form of the social individual. The primal subject emerges, therefore, as a social individual through a process of psychical organization, one that involves an incessant form of interplay between the regions of the living being, the psychical, the social individual and society. It is within Castoriadis's elucidation of the intersections between these regions of being – representative of the dominion of the imaginary – that the *form* for the idea of the human Nonconscious resides.

The Primal Subject – The Radical Indeterminacy of the Monadic Core

Within Castoriadis's depiction of the stratification of the human psychical sphere, the first form of psychical organization presents as the "monadic core of the primal subject."[14] Reference here to the term "monadic" indicates that the primal subject presents as a state of being that simply refers to itself – it is a state of being that does not have the psychical capacity to distinguish between self and other.[15] Yet, for Castoriadis, this first state of being does not present as a form of primary narcissism for this Freudian concept proposes narcissism involves the "*exclusion*" of the other, or the exclusion of the world. On the contrary, the monadic core of the primal subject presents as a total form of "*inclusion*" – a form of autism which *embodies*, unreservedly and immediately, the "single affect" of "(self–) representation and the intention of the atemporal permanence of this 'state.' "

Conceived in this way, the primal subject is, in its essence, "closed upon itself … constantly endeavouring to enclose in itself whatever is 'presented' to it."[16] All external objects become *embodied* within and necessarily form an indissociable part of the subject – they form an indissociable part of the "inside" – of the imaginary realm of the representative/affective/intentional flux.[17] Due to the nature of the monadic core, the primal subject simply takes on the form of a psychical state of being in which representation, perception and sensation are not yet differentiable. The lack of separation between representation, perception and sensation necessitates that the experience *of* the other becomes incorporated into the subject. Castoriadis refers here to Freud's expression, "*Ich bin die Brust* (I am the breast)" and suggests that the primal being is "being of the breast." Being, in this instance, is indistinguishable *from* the breast/bottle.[18]

In Castoriadis's view, therefore, the primal subject "*is the scene*".[19] The primal subject is in an undifferentiated and monadic state of being that is unaware of anything other than the inclusiveness of its own form – it *is* simply "subject." Moreover, this inclusiveness is simply a manifestation of a desire.[20] Not for an object, as indicated by the suppositions of the Kantian and Fichte presentations, but rather, for total unification – representative of "a desire for the abolition of difference, and of distance" manifesting as "being unaware of difference and distance." For Castoriadis, this desire is the "master of all desires" because in this first state of being the desire for total unification fulfils itself and reigns as the "monster of unifying madness." Desire is "fulfilled *ipso facto* as soon as it arises" and the only way desire can be fulfilled is through unconscious representation – through the "magical omnipotence" of thought itself.

Due to the desire for total unification, the primal subject is a state of being that can never be "presented in the real" and it can never be "given"

as such in representation, or in psychical reality.[21] The master of all desires renders the psychical monad unable to find nor create an image, nor a "proto-representation" in which to depict itself. Therefore, and in contrast to the Freudian paradigm, the monadic psyche is, for Castoriadis, representative of an indeterminate, rather than a repressed state of *being* – it has a non-logical character because there is, as mentioned, a lack of separation between representation, perception and sensation. As neither an object, an image nor a proto-representation can convey nor depict the *form* of this monadic core of desire then the psychical monad is not repressed nor is it repressible . Rather, and as Castoriadis argues, it is simply "*unsayable*."[22]

Because of the undifferentiated and unrepresentable nature of the monadic psyche, Castoriadis refers to this state of stratification as the "zero moment" of the primal subject – the moment where the subject *is* the subject/object/Other. Departing from the fundamental tenets of the Fichtean presentation, Castoriadis regards the zero moment as a state of total unification and un-differentiation. A state that is "not A is B," or subject is object.[23] Rather, the zero moment is state of being in which the subject *and* the object *and* the "copula," which joins them are all the same. As Castoriadis argues, " 'I = am = id' and 'am = I = am' and 'id = am = id' along with all the other possible combinations." In this zero moment, the primal subject coexists with others but only in a "mad" psychical state of total unification and un-differentiation – a state unable to differentiate between representation, perception and sensation.[24] As representation, affect and intention are all understood representationally as one, and as this phantasmatic scene is unrepresentable then, for Castoriadis, representation *is* the human living body: "representation is perpetual presentation, the incessant flux in and through which anything can be given" and "in and through which at a given moment a world arises."[25]

Creation *Ex Nihilo* – A Practical Conception

It is within these series of elucidations concerning the first form of psychical organization that Castoriadis offers a practical conception of creation *ex nihilo*. In principle, by addressing the question of *how* the *unsayable* form of the primal subject is posited/created or bought into being? A question which, in its essence, looks more broadly at *how* the psychical process of figuration endows the monadic core of the primal subject with a form of psychical organization. And a question that, in its intent, regards the psychical monad as a "living body."

Castoriadis addresses these two principle concerns through an elucidation of the figuring activity of the psychical monad:

> The psychical monad is a forming–formed, it is formation and figuration of itself, figuration figuring itself, starting from nothing [*à partir de rien*]**.** It is, to

be sure, an "aspect" of the living body or, if one prefers, it i*s* this body forming/self–forming, as figuring/self–figuring *for* itself.[26]

As the psychical monad is conceived as the living body forming-formed, figuring/self-figuring *for-itself*, then the capacity for figuration must involve a form of interplay between the corporeal *and* the a-causal domains of formation and of creation – between the regions of the living being and of the psychical. Moreover, the capacity for figuration must be accompanied by a *libido formandi* – as the desire for formation.[27] Within the primal subject, the desire for formation is expressed as the unremitting desire for "the abolition of difference, and of distance." The desire of which gives form to the psychical monad by ensuring a form of connection between the primal subject and the Other, as breast/bottle. Although Castoriadis does not explicitly state so, this unremitting desire for connection must inevitably involve the corporeal and the a-causal domains of formation and of creation. The defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination may, as discussed, create "starting from nothing [*à partir de rien*]," but it must always create in relation to the corporeal dimension of the radical imagination, which creates starting from something, starting from the presence of the X.

Castoriadis does in fact imply the necessity for a form of relation between the corporeal *and* the a-causal domains of formation and of creation through reference to the Aristotelian description of the psyche existing only as "*form*" or as "entelechy" of the body.[28] When removed from the metaphysical reference to telos, the Aristotelian reference to the psyche as *form* or as entelechy of the body reveals the "psyche is a form in so far as it is forming" and what it is forming is *of* the living body, subjected to no given end. Although the idea of entelechy implies a form of relation between the corporeal *and* the a-causal domains of formation and of creation, Castoriadis brings attention to the fact that within the psychical monad, the distinction between the regions of the living being and of the psychical does not exist. The living human body is the psychical monad because "all external calls, all external or internal 'sensorial stimulations,' all 'impressions' become *representations*, that is to say, they are 'put into images,' and emerges as figures." All presentations of the corporeal dimension of the radical imagination become representations, emerging as figures or as images through the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination. The "emergence of figures" is not determined by the sensorial or the corporeal for the representative flux of the psyche continues whether or not there is any "outside" stimulation. Nor is it determined by a given end. Rather, the emergence of figures is, and necessarily always, the "rule of figuring-figure of 'everything = self,' where 'activity' and 'passivity' are indistinguishable, just as are 'inside' and 'outside.' "

Due to the indissociability of the inside and of the outside, of the self and of everything, and of the psychical and of the living body, Castoriadis declares that entelechy is the "radical imagination." The "radical imagination" is in this context, the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination, which, and as discussed, can deform, transform, annul, or recreate corporeal presentations and representations. As the psychical monad is the living body and as the activity of figuration occurs through the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination, then a distinction between the dimensions of the radical imagination becomes superfluous. It is from this perspective that Castoriadis regards the human living body as being able to represent "things" and to represent itself through images and figures in a capacity that is "far beyond what would be implied by its 'nature' as a living being." In distinction to all living finite beings, the human living body can create varying forms of representations out of nothing *and* from something and yet, these representations are not determined by biological need or external stimulation. The defunctionalized radical imagination as entelechy renders the human living body as that which *creates* its own end.

The idea of the radical imagination as entelechy becomes developed through reference to Freud's idea of *anaclisis* [*Anlehnung*], of a "leaning on" – an idea which introduces, for Castoriadis, two fundamental claims both of which acknowledge the complexity of the issues at play.[29] The first claim proposes that there can be no oral instinct without the presence of a mouth or of a breast and similarly, that the presence of a mouth or a breast is not reducible to the oral instinct or to cultural appropriations of this instinct. The second claim proposes that the mouth or the breast is not an "external condition" of the psyche because the psyche is, as discussed, defunctionalized from biological concerns. The psyche remains, in a sense, autonomous.

Due to the indissociability of these two fundamental claims, Castoriadis argues that somatic data will "always be taken up" by the psyche. But how this data will be taken up and in what manner "cannot be reflected in the identitary frame of reference of determinacy." The "creativity of the psyche" as the "radical imagination" breaks down the divide between somatic and psychical realms of being rendering "absurd," for example, the idea that the breast/bottle are the "cause" of phantasy. Castoriadis thus regards the radical imagination, "properly speaking" as the "emergence of representation and the alteration of representation."

Although the psychical monad is, as Castoriadis describes, figuring/self–figuring *for-itself* through the activity of the defunctionalized radical imagination it does so in the presence of the Other. Implicitly opening onto and developing a practical conception of creation *ex nihilo*, Castoriadis argues here that the corporeal presence of the Other ensures the "moment of creation" in the psychic process is not simply, as suggested earlier, the creation

ex nihilo of an image or an object. Rather, the moment of creation is indissociable from the creation of *meaning*. The "non-deducible, inconstructible root" of all psychical activity that is created *ex nihilo* is, in this practical context, indissociable from the creation of the "first matrix of meaning."[30] Due to the primal subjects desire for total unification, the creation of the first matrix of meaning presents as the "operating-operated schema of bringing into relation or connection." A schema that brings into relation or connection all acts of representation, perception and sensation – a schema that is, in its essence, "the presentification of an indissociable unity of figure, meaning and pleasure."[31] In other words, creation is *ex nihilo* but it is not *in nihilo* or *cum nihilo*. The moment of creation is the creation of meaning because the defunctionalized radical imagination puts into images all internal and external calls and sensations – the activity of which is rendered possible through the master of all desires and an activity that occurs in the corporeal presence of the Other as breast/bottle. As neither an object, an image nor a proto-representation can convey or depict the *form* of this schema of bringing into relation or connection, then the presentification of this primal desire simply takes on the *form* of a "core of *pleasure*" – a core that is figured through the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination.[32] The primal subject as *"Ich bin die Brust*" takes on the form of "I = pleasure = meaning = everything = being."[33] Creation *ex nihilo* is, in this instance, indissociable from the feeling of pleasure.

The Human Nonconscious

It is in the context of these series of elucidations that Castoriadis tentatively introduces the idea of the human Nonconscious.[34] Faced with the fact that the psychical monad is the human living body and that in the primal subject, the act of representation, perception and sensation are indissociable, Castoriadis declares that there is "no frontier" between the living animated body and the psychical monad. In the primal subject, the living animated body is the psychical monad and the psychical monad is the living animated body. It is for this very reason that Castoriadis introduces the idea of the human Nonconscious as the "living body *qua* human animated body in continuity with the psyche." The idea of which acknowledges that "there is a presence of the living body to itself, inextricably mixed with … the 'movements of the soul' proper."

Although, and as discussed, the idea of the human Nonconscious remained at the limit of Castoriadis's ontology, it is useful to envisage the human Nonconscious as the dominion of *both* dimensions of the radical imagination residing in an indissociable form of interplay with one another. Acknowledging the role of both dimensions accommodates the fact that figuration *is* of the human living body. Specifically, it accommodates the fact that

figuration is of the psychical because the psyche's representative flux continues whether there is any outside stimulation. And it accommodates the fact that figuration is of the corporeal because the living body is in an incessant form of perceptual interplay with something other – with the Other with the world, with the cosmos. Within the form of the human living body, creation is *ex nihilo* and creation occurs from something, from the X. Both forms of creation are ontologically indissociable.

Acknowledging the role of the corporeal dimension of the radical imagination sheds light on how there can be a realm of human experience that presents in the form of a sensory or bodily form of imagination because it moves the domain of figuring or of representation from the exclusivity of the region of the psyche.[35] As Castoriadis has shown, the "object" of the psychical monad's desire is "unrepresentable," it cannot be given in psychical reality – there is no "image" in which the psyche can depict itself.[36] But, the *experience* of the primal subject *is* known. Within the *form* of the primal subject, the capacity for figuration by the "living body *qua* human animated body in continuity with the psyche" can only ever lead to an unthinkable known – expressed as a feeling of pleasure or of displeasure through a sensory or bodily form of imagination. In this regard, it can be argued that the human Nonconscious is given form through the radical, albeit creative interplay or, to draw on Fichte, a form of wavering between the *two* dimensions of the radical imagination. The defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination creates "starting from *nothing at all* [à partir de *rien*]" or creates *ex nihilo* and the corporeal dimension of the radical imagination creates from something, from the X. Both dimensions play a role in the ontology of the primal subject because representation, perception and sensation are indissociable. As the psyche's object is unrepresentable, the interplay between the two dimensions of the radical imagination can only ever be presentified as an indeterminate core of *pleasure* – a core that is vaguely conscious only in the sense that it is felt as pleasure. This is the realm of the human Nonconscious, which, at an ontological level, is simply the expression of figuration in its most primal and unthinkable form.

The implications of this developed conception of the human Nonconscious establish two important suppositions. The first supposition implies that in the primal subject, the creation of meaning – which in this context is creation *ex nihilo* but not *in nihilo* or *cum nihilo* – involves an "originary phantasmatization" of the radical imagination, or more precisely, a "primal representation (*Ur-vorstellung*)."[37] Although this representation is unrepresentable, it is associated with the creation of meaning, which, in this instance, can only ever be expressed through the creation of the indeterminate form of the *unsayable* or of the unthinkable, as the embodied realm of the human Nonconscious. Surging forth from both dimensions of the radical imagination, the realm of

the human Nonconscious gives indeterminate form to the experience of the primal subject. Indissociable from a core of *pleasure*, this indeterminate form of experience necessarily occurs prior to the creation *ex nihilo* of determinate forms of meaning.

In order to expand on this idea of the experience of an indeterminate form of meaning, it is useful to draw on and develop Castoriadis's fragmentary series of psychoanalytical, philosophical and physiological reflections concerning the act of cathexis. Castoriadis provides an illuminating series of psychoanalytical reflections through an engagement with Freud's discussion of the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz des Triebes* and his theory of narcissism. In Castoriadis's view, the "originary narcissistic cathexis" of which Freud spoke of, must involve "primordial form" *and* it must involve the primordial representation of "the *Self*."[38] The primal subject is not "this thing or that thing *in* phantasy." The Self *is* phantasy. The Self is at once the representation *and* the investment of "a Self that is All" – with the "All" being the experience of Self in continuity with and indistinguishable from the breast (bottle/Other). In this regard, within the originary form of the primal subject, representation and cathexis are indissociable. And, as the primordial form of the monadic psyche is unrepresentable, the object of the originary narcissistic cathexis can only be represented through the core of *pleasure* – through the dominion of the human Nonconscious. In other words, the primal subject is initially and originally invested in the creation of an indeterminate form of meaning, of an unthinkable known that can only ever be experienced through the living body in a form of relation with the Other. As Castoriadis regards the psyche as being "governed" or "dominated" at one end by the monadic core then it can be argued here that the psyche is governed or dominated by an investment in an unthinkable known given through the human Nonconscious.[39]

At a physiological level, Castoriadis also speaks here briefly of "psychical energy."[40] As he argues, whenever the human psychical sphere procures an activity that involves something more than maintaining a form of homeostasis, there is a "disqualification/requalification of energy." The activity of representation and the act of cathexis lead to a modification of psychical energy – the act of which is always accompanied by the emergence of new objects and the act of which can present in varying intensities. For Castoriadis, this suggests that reference to the movements of the soul is not simply metaphorical because a primitive or "psychic force" can be conceived as a modification of movement, as an alteration.[41] As is evident within the context of the psychoanalytic setting, psychical forces are in play leading to an alteration or to a resistance to an alteration. Although not one of these attributes is measurable in the sense that it is associated with the *unseen* activity of representation/movement/alteration, it is measurable in the sense that on a biological level, the psyche is, as Freud described,

an "infrastructural network" of neurons, of energy and of "traces," and of "charges" all interwoven among a circulatory apparatus and all complying to "physico–*logical* laws."[42] And yet, this logical conception of the psyche still fails, as Castoriadis highlights, to capture the fundamental essence of these movements of the soul.

Although Castoriadis does not develop these series of reflections any further, it can be argued that forms of psychical energy do not simply arise out of the psyche as such, but are created through a form of interplay between the two dimensions of the radical imagination – a claim that demands a reconceptualization of the term "psychical energy." In this regard, it may be more pertinent to simply refer to the Aristotelian reference to movement, or to alteration. The indeterminate and *unsayable* realm of the human Nonconscious could be conceived, not as a form of psychical energy but as a movement or as a bodily alteration of energy in the capacity of the "living body *qua* human animated body in continuity with the psyche." The act of representation and of cathexis could be regarded, therefore, as evoking a movement or an alteration of which is vaguely felt through the realm of the Nonconscious.

It is important to keep in mind here that these series of ruminations do not propose that organ pleasure overrides representational pleasure. As Castoriadis reiterates throughout his work of reflection, the human psyche is characterized by the horizontal trait of the domination of representational pleasure over organ pleasure. In this regard, these ruminations simply suggest that due to the figuring or representational activity of the human living animated body, representational pleasure does not simply surge forth from the region of the psychical but surges forth from "the living body *qua* human animated body in continuity with the psyche."[43] Castoriadis does in fact accommodate these concerns indirectly by regarding representation as indissociable from affect and intention. In this regard, the affect of pleasure or, for that matter, of displeasure can be represented through the realm of the Nonconscious.

The idea of the human Nonconscious establishes a second supposition, which proposes that the primal subject will not simply experience the corporeality of the Other as breast/bottle, but it will also experience the indeterminate and unsayable *form* of the Nonconscious of the Other. Both forms of experience are ontologically indissociable. Foreshadowing the possibility of the rupturing of the mad psychical state of the primal subject is the necessity for the capacity to lean on, but not be reducible to the realm of the imaginary of the other. The creation of *meaning* involves the creation of *form*, which, in this originary unrepresentable and *unsayable* moment, is given form by leaning on the unthinkable *form* of the Nonconscious of the Other and yet by not being reducible nor determined by *that* form.[44]

The Triadic Phase – The Radical Indeterminacy of the Socialized Psyche

The second phase of psychical organization within the primal subject is described as a "triadic phase" of organization – a form of psychical organization, which leads to the presentification of determinate, rather than indeterminate forms of meaning.[45] Accordingly, the triadic phase of psychical organization is a phase of psycho-maturation and social development in which the closed and mad state of the monadic core becomes *ruptured*, allowing the primal subject to open itself up to something other – specifically, it opens itself up to the imaginary significations of the social-historical world.

Drawing implicitly on Fichtean terminology, Castoriadis suggests that this psychical phase of maturation involves a "clash" between two histories – a clash between the history of the psyche of the primal subject and the history of the social-historical world. The clash between these histories transforms the monadic psyche of the primal subject – the history of the social-historical world imposes on the monadic psyche "a mode of being which the psyche can never generate out of itself." Or, to be more precise, the imposition of the social-historical world breaks up or ruptures the closed and mad state of the psychical monad – a process that "produces-creates" the social individual.

Central to the production or the creation of the social or "rational" individual is the clash of the primal subject with the other dimension of the radical imaginary – the social imaginary. The collision between these two imaginary worlds brings into the primal subject the social imaginary significations of the social-historical world. Castoriadis defines this process as the "socialization of the psyche" – a process in which the social-historical world becomes *imposed* upon the subject. Departing from the principal essence of the Fichtean reference to the closed yet open self, Castoriadis argues that the monadic core of the primal subject becomes ruptured through the *imposition* or the "invasion" by Others. The relationship to the socialized Other imposes a "violent break" on the monadic psyche such that the primal subject is torn from its own mad world.[46] Castoriadis's choice of terminology reveals that the socialization of the monadic psyche is experienced as a violent and radical process of change.

Although the socialization of the psyche is a process that is *imposed* upon the primal subject, it is a process that allows the "emergence of *separation*." It is a process that leads to the creation of a social individual, an individual that is both separate to and yet an indissociable part of society. The emergence of *separation* is, for Castoriadis, grounded on the essential nature of the representative flux of the defunctionalized dimension of the radical imagination. As this flux "unceasingly makes *itself*," it is the activity that allows the "emergence of figures." Drawing on the Kantian reference to the monogram

as the *form* of figures in space, Castoriadis proposes that the *form* of an initial representation provides the means in which the emergence of *separation* is made possible.[47] The *form* of the initial representation makes possible all forms of logical operations because this initial representation contains within itself the possibility of organizing *all* representations. As a "schemata of figuration," the initial representation allows the "separation" within the representative flux of the psyche of an "ensemble of objects," which are capable of being determined in a "space" and in a "time."[48] And although the schemata of figuration provides the means in which objects can be determined in a space and a time, it does not reduce the ensemble of objects to any form of logical organization. The schemata of figuration retains within its own *form* an essential indeterminacy, which renders possible the creation *ex nihilo* of new objects, new forms and new forms of meaning.

Although the emergence of *separation* is grounded in the *form* of the initial representation, the socialization of the psyche can only ever begin in the presence of another social individual – as a bearer of the social imaginary significations specific to a social-historical world. As the bearer both speaks of themselves, speaks to the child/primal subject and speaks of objects and their relations *and* as this bearer also has a corporeal manner of being, of doing and of touching, this bearer begins to impose onto the primal subject social imaginary significations *and* the corporeal or embodied sensibility of these forms.[49] The imposition of these imaginary and corporeal forms ruptures the closed and mad monadic core of the primal subject allowing the presentification of determinate forms of meaning. As Castoriadis explains, this process is associated with the *creation* of three specific forms of schemata – the schema of the subject, the schema of the object and the schema of the other.

The presentification of determinate forms of meaning begins when the primal subjects quest for the satiation of desire is challenged by the absence of the breast/bottle. Given the absent breast/bottle "*cannot* have the meaning of the cause of hunger," this absence leads to the "negation of meaning or a negative meaning." The absence "breaks up" the core of pleasure or breaks up the original narcissistic cathexis for the negation of meaning can only be presentified as the feeling of "*unpleasure*." The feeling of unpleasure becomes, therefore, indissociable from the creation of a "figure," which represents for the psychical monad "a non-sense or negative meaning." The presence of this figure breaks up the closed monadic state of the psyche as it creates a hole in the "subjective sphere." As Castoriadis states, "an 'outside' is created" through the psyche, which "invents-figures" the initial form of an outside through the creation of an "embryonic object" – as the bad breast/bottle. This creation is a *projection* because it allows the psyche to "cast off" into the outside that which it wishes to exclude. What must be cast off, is not the core of *pleasure* – representative of the breast – rather, it is, for Castoriadis, "the

breast of unpleasure." Casting off this embryonic object leads to the emergence of a form of dehiscence within the primal subject because this outside can only be felt as the feeling of unpleasure – as the *other* to pleasure. Yet, this outside is on the "inside" – albeit in the form of a feeling. Because of this, Castoriadis describes this "dehiscence" as an internal dehiscence, whereby the monadic core of *pleasure* is ruptured, fracturing the indissociability of the psyche/soma. The original narcissistic cathexis is accordingly fractured leading to the creation of a new cathexis. And yet, as Castoriadis highlights, the emergence of this new cathexis is invested in an imaginary object because the internal form of dehiscence between the psychical and the somatic is "never fully realized" – it is only an imaginary dehiscence, one created by the primal subject when invaded or imposed upon by the Other. The primal object creates a new cathexis through the creation of the imaginary object of the bad breast/other.

It is interesting to highlight here that, for Castoriadis, the socialization of the psyche is accompanied by a radical dehiscence between psyche and soma. A dehiscence that is associated with the creation of imaginary objects and the feeling of unpleasure, and a dehiscence that is accompanied by an *introjection*. This introjection is the incorporation into the subject of a "second sense" – as an awareness of the relative *otherness* of the object. Although Castoriadis does not makes any reference here to the realm of the Nonconscious, it can be argued that the awareness of the relative otherness of the object is given through the realm of the Nonconscious. By incorporating the feeling of the "bodily" or "sensory" imagination into the psyche – by incorporating the feeling of the human Nonconscious – the primal subject develops a sense of self because it now *embodies* an inside and an outside. The primal subject becomes aware of itself as having an inside *and* an outside. The inside/psyche is the unrepresentable form of the psyche's lost object and is indissociable from the feeling of pleasure. And, the outside/soma is the representable form of the embryonic object and is indissociable from the feeling of unpleasure.

As the primal subject is always connected to another socialized being, the imaginary products of the psyche become juxtaposed against something other – against something "*real*." The two imaginary schemata of the subject as good breast/bottle and the object as bad breast/bottle become "connected" to a "third entity." This third entity is the "ground" of both, but it is not identical to it. The third entity is present but the bringing in of this third entity into the psyche is an activity that involves an original act of presentification by the subject. In other words, the subject experiences itself *and* it experiences the Other and at the same time the subject associates this experience with in a "third entity." The object as Other is apprehended by the subject and the subject apprehends the fact that this object is Other. The Other is not simply an imaginary object of the primal subject but becomes, for the subject,

something that *embodies* its own power. It becomes something beyond the "grasp of the subject." It becomes something external to the primal subject for it has its own imaginary signification. As a result, the imposition of this third entity introduces into the primal subject the significations of the realm of the social imaginary. The Other as object can only become "real" for the primal subject once it becomes truly "lost" – once it becomes something beyond the grasp of the "subject."

By incorporating the Other into itself, the primal subject also incorporates into itself, not simply the realm of the social imaginary but, as discussed, it incorporates the *form* of the Nonconscious of the other. Moreover, the form of the Nonconscious of the Other is fundamental to the creation of the schema of the subject, the schema of the object and the schema of the Other. Although not acknowledged by Castoriadis, the creation of these three schemata are necessarily accompanied by an indeterminate form of feeling. The schema of the subject is accompanied by the feeling of pleasure and arises out of a positive cathexis, the schema of the object is accompanied by the feeling of displeasure and arises out of a negative cathexis, and the schema of the Other is accompanied by the feeling of ambivalence and arises out of an ambivalent cathexis. These cathexes necessarily arise out of form of relation to the Other and are associated with the creation of imaginary schemata, the creation of which allows the psyche to become opened up to the elements of the "real."

It is for this very reason Castoriadis argues that representations in the form of social imaginary significations can only be something or be spoken of in the presence of another representation. Therefore, and moving beyond the constraints imposed by phenomenology, Castoriadis proclaims that experience in the form of the "*now*" is never simply one's own but is always an encounter with the "double temporal horizon" imposed by one's own movement into the world.[50] The double temporal horizon is simply a *creation* arising in association with the horizon of the Other. It is an imaginary creation that arises out of the indeterminacy of the radical imaginary.

Although Castoriadis was unable to give determinate form to the idea of the human Nonconscious as exemplified in this discussion, the tentative form of the idea does in fact reside within his elucidation of the socialization of the psyche. As has been shown, it is not simply the activity of the defunctionalized radical imagination that leads to the socialization of the monadic psyche. Rather, and as discussed, it is both dimensions of the radical imagination in an intimate form of relation with each other and with something other than itself. It is both dimensions of the radical imagination imposed upon by limits – imposed upon by the *Anstoss* of the psychical/corporeal form of the Other and by the *Anstoss* of the imaginary forms of the social-historical world. The imposition or the clash between self and other leads to the creation and the

embodiment of three imaginary worlds – the *embodied* self, the *embodied* other and the *embodied* realm of the social imaginary.

THE REGION OF THE SOCIAL INDIVIDUAL – THE RADICAL IMAGINARY

The un-elucidated realm of the human Nonconscious continues to inform Castoriadis's exploration of the final two regions of the level of *the merely real* – the "social individual" and "society" – the two regions of being in which Castoriadis introduces and elucidates in greater detail the role and activity of the social imaginary. However, in the attempt to elucidate these final regions of being, Castoriadis succumbs to his own form of deterministic hierarchy. In principle, by conceiving the realm of the imaginary as purely psychical, rather than accounting for the possibility that the imaginary is given form through one's own embodied and corporeal experience of the social-historical. In other words, and developing the idea of the human Nonconscious, it can be argued that within the region of the social individual and society, the incorporation of the realm of the social imaginary is necessarily and always accompanied by the incorporation of the Nonconscious of the other.

Forming the third region of the *for-itself* at the level of the *merely real*, the social individual is, for Castoriadis, "a speaking entity that has an identity and a social state."[51] As the bearer of the social imaginary significations unique to a social-historical world, the social individual "conforms more or less to certain rules, pursues certain ends, accepts certain values" and acts in a "sufficiently stable" way that remains amenable and comprehensible to other social individuals. As the social individual establishes their own identity and social state *through* social imaginary significations, the imposition of these imaginary significations leads to the emergence of another level of stratification within the human psychical sphere. The region of the social individual equates, therefore, to the final psychical process of stratification or organization involved in the socialization of the monadic psyche.

In the attempt to elucidate this level of stratification, Castoriadis draws on and yet offers a revised account of the Freudian notion of sublimation. In Castoriadis's view, the act of sublimation involves the psyche taking up "forms, *eide*" – forms that are socially instituted and forms that convey the significations of the social-historical.[52] Conceived in relation to the necessary rupture of the monadic core of the primal subject, the socialization of the psyche requires that the psyche is "forced" to replace its' own "private objects" with objects or "forms" that actually exist and have a

value inscribed on them by social institutions – a process that involves two activities.

In the first instance, the imposition of societal and cultural forms onto the psyche necessarily leads to the sublimation or the concealment of the private, imaginary objects and their corresponding cathexes within the psyche of the subject. This act of sublimation is indissociable from a second act, which involves the creation of another object to replace the one that is concealed. The social individual must begin, therefore, to *create* for itself other "causes, means or supports of pleasure" by leaning on the objects or forms that are posited by the imposition of the social-historical. Accompanied by the emergence of new forms of cathexes, the object that now becomes posited carries with it a new signification even though it remains in a physical sense the "same" object. In this respect, representational pleasure is still autonomized, but the socialization of the psyche allows the social individual to develop the capacity to begin to create ways of doing that can generate *other* forms of pleasure. The generation of other representational forms of pleasure is necessarily and always associated, therefore, with a loss, or a sublimation of the psyche's own private psychical world.

Accompanying the act of sublimation is, for Castoriadis, a change in psychical energy. As he explains, energy is no longer directed simply to "motor discharges" – cathexes are no longer invested in corporeal forms of experience.[53] Instead, energy becomes concentrated on representation and on the representational flux such that the cathexis becomes invested in an imaginary, albeit "nonprivate, public, that is to say, *social* object."

Accordingly, these two activities imply the psyche/soma is radical imagination because the act of sublimation necessitates the psyche create or posit something in place of something else. And, it implies the social-historical is the social imaginary because the act of sublimation necessitates the positing of forms, forms of which the psyche can never generate out of itself. The interplay between the radical imagination of the psyche/soma and the social imaginary of the social-historical is, for Castoriadis, a "non–empty intersection" – an intersection between the private world of the subject and the public or common world of the social-historical.[54] Within the *form* of this intersection, the private object is thrust into new forms of relation – it becomes "*another* object" through its association with a particular signification. Castoriadis describes this process as *another* form of separation, yet a subliminal one, because the psyche remains oblivious to this transformation. To draw on Fichte, it is necessarily covered over in order for it to become "real." That is, in becoming another object, the product of the activity of sublimation leads to a division in the world of the psyche. The psyche becomes divided into a private world and a public or common world.

Arguably, however, while the non-empty intersection arises out of the interplay between the imaginary schemata of the private world and the public world, this intersection also involves an interplay between the Nonconscious of the socialized individual and of the Other. The non-empty intersection is the scene of creation *ex nihilo* because it is the scene of indeterminacy, composed of the interplay between the sayable and the *unsayable* imaginary realms of the self and of the Other – an interplay that embodies the indeterminacy of corporeal, psychical and social-historical forms. In this respect, the social individual is always and necessarily figuring/figuration of self and figuring/figuration of something other, a process that involves the presence of both determinate and indeterminate forms of meaning. Although Castoriadis does not explicitly entertain this idea, the unique ontological form of the being of human and its indissociability from the social-historical demands the figuring/figuration of self and of the social-historical involve the dominion of the Nonconscious, representative of the indissociable interplay between the corporeal and the defunctionalized dimensions of the radical imagination..

THE REGION OF SOCIETY – THE RADICAL IMAGINARY

Castoriadis defines the final region of the *for-itself* as "society," which represents "a totality of institutions" held together because they "embody, each time, a magma of social imaginary representations."[55] Although these social imaginary significations reside within society at the same time, the magma of social imaginary representations resides within the social individual. In this respect, the process of socialization is always "in operation" – as long as there are social individuals, society and its social imaginary significations.[56]

Because of the interplay between the social individual, society and the magma of social historical significations, society and psyche are, for Castoriadis, "inseparable and irreducible."[57] Both modes of being are indissociable and yet, both modes of being are "radically other." As Castoriadis is at pains to point out, the "institution of society can never absorb the psyche in so far as it is radical imagination." The activity of the radical imagination, properly speaking is, in itself, not reducible to society. The presence of society and the socialization of the social individual "does not and cannot abolish the psyche's creativity, its perpetual alteration, the representative flux as the continuous emergence of other representations." As such, the magma of the anonymous collective imaginary will never stagnate but always embodies the potentiality to incessantly swell, rupture and subside.

However, and within the context of these series of illuminating reflections, it can be argued that it is not simply the psyche that is inseparable and irreducible

to society. It is the "living body *qua* human animated body in continuity with the psyche" that is inseparable and irreducible to society. Reducing the act of representation to the realm of the psyche fails to accommodate the fact that the *vis formandi* of the being of human includes a corporeal and an a-causal domain and is indissociable from a *libido formandi*, all of which can be expressed through the dominion of the human Nonconscious and the radical imaginary.

It is in the context of this remarkable aporia that the radical seed of indeterminacy underlying the ontology of the being of human and of the being of the social-historical is not simply, as Castoriadis suggests, the nonfunctional activity of the radical imaginary – composed of the dimensions of the radical imagination and the social imaginary. Rather, it can be convincingly argued here that the radical seed of indeterminacy underlying all human creation is the creative yet nonfunctional activity of the radical imaginary to be conceived as the indissociable interplay between the corporeal and the defunctionalized dimensions of the radical imagination and the social imaginary.

NOTES

1. Cornelius Castoriadis, "The State of the Subject Today," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 153–54.

2. See also Castoriadis's reference to the magma in: "The Logic of Magmas and the Question of Autonomy," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997). "Social Imaginary Significations," in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 340–44.

3. "The State of the Subject Today," 153.

4. "From the Monad to Autonomy," ibid., ed. David Ames Curtis, 180.

5. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 330.

Freud outlines his topographical model and the three realms of the ego, id and superego in the following essays: Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious," in *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, ed. James Strachey, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institutue of Psycho-Analysis, 1957). "Lecture XXXI. Dissection of the Personality," in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, ed. James Strachey (USA: W.W. Norton & Company. Inc., 1933).

6. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 330–31.

7. This new way of thinking forms an important, albeit brief part of Castoriadis's later writings. See also: "From the Monad to Autonomy."

8. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 331.

Klooger also explores the realm of the human Nonconscious in Castoriadis's writings. See: Jeff Klooger, *Castoriadis: Psyche, Society, Autonomy* (Leidon, Boston: Brill, 2009), 106–08.

9. Freud, "Lecture Xxxi. Dissection of the Personality," 73–74.
10. Castoriadis, "From the Monad to Autonomy," 179–80.
11. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 331.
12. Castoriadis acknowledges that "I do not know if I will have the capacity, the forces and the time truly to work out this idea and, especially, to give to it, beyond a theoretical interest, some practical relevance, but I think that the human Unconscious surpasses the Freudian Unconscious." See: "From the Monad to Autonomy," 179.
13. Castoriadis also introduces and formalizes his system of stratification in: "The State of the Subject Today," 153.
14. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 294.
15. Castoriadis uses the term "state" and "organization" in a sense that is "diametrically opposed" to traditional meaning. Also, it is important to acknowledge that Castoriadis's use of the term "subject" here is in fact tentative because he questions if there can even be the form of a "subject" in this primal state of being. See: ibid., 294–95.
16. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 330.
17. Castoriadis refers to the "inside" and the "outside" in this essay: ibid., 327.
18. Castoriadis, "The Social–Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 297.
19. Ibid., 295.
20. Ibid., 298.
21. Ibid., 296.
22. Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 331.

    See also Castoriadis's reflections on the "unsayable" in the essay: "The Sayable and the Unsayable," in *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambride, MA: The MIT Press, 1984).
23. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 294.

    As discussed, Fichte describes the necessary identity of subject and object as subject-object. See footnote * in J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, ed. Peter Heath and John Lachs, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 99.
24. Castoriadis often refers to the being of human as a "mad animal" who becomes rational. See: Castoriadis, "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 299; "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 331. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 262.
25. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 331.
26. Ibid., 300.
27. Castoriadis, "Culture in a Democratic Society," 342.

    Although Castoriadis only briefly makes mention of the *libido formandi*, in his work of reflection, he makes many references to humankinds poietical activity. See: "Psychoanalysis and Philosophy," ibid., ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford). "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," in *Figures of the Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).
28. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 300–01.
29. Ibid., 290.
30. Ibid., 299.

31. Ibid., 296.
32. Ibid., 303.
33. Castoriadis, "Psychoanalysis and Philosophy," 358.
34. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 331.
35. The site of figuration remains, for Castoriadis, ambivalent. For the most part, he refers to the psyche as the radical imagination. See: "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things." Whereas, at other times, he refers to the psyche/soma as the radical imagination. See: "Social Imaginary Significations," 369.
36. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 296.
37. Ibid., 286–87.
38. Ibid., 287.
39. Ibid., 298.
40. Castoriadis, "The State of the Subject Today," 161–65.
41. "Epilegomena to a Theory of the Soul," in *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), 31–32.
42. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 250.
43. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 331.
44. Klooger also opens indirectly onto this idea as he suggests a form of "conflict" arises between the psyche/soma of the subject *and* the psyche/soma of the other. See Klooger, *Castoriadis: Psyche, Society, Autonomy*, 107.
45. Castoriadis, "The Social–Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 300.
46. Ibid., 301.
47. Ibid., 283.
48. Ibid., 337.
49. Castoriadis, "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 306.
50. "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 325.

Castoriadis also explores this theme in the work of Merleau–Ponty. See: "The Sayable and the Unsayable," 119–44.

51. "The State of the Subject Today," 155.
52. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 312–13.
53. "The State of the Subject Today," 162.
54. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 312–13.
55. "Psychoanalysis and Philosophy," 358.
56. "The State of the Subject Today," 155.
57. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 320–21.

Chapter 13

The Creative Imaginary

Castoriadis's interest in bringing to the fore those aspects of the human condition that have been effaced and covered over fuels the distinction he establishes between the level of the *merely real* as *simply being* and the second level of being – the level of the not merely real, as *reflexively being*. Comprising the regions of the *human subject* properly speaking and autonomous society, the level of the not merely real represents a state of being and of society that are not condemned to the realm of heteronomy but have the capacity to reflect, to deliberate and to actively modify their own ways of being.[1] Within the level of the not merely real, the *human subject* and autonomous society can purposively unleash their immense potentiality – they can unleash their *vis formandi* and their *libido formandi* in order to create and to give form to their own ways of being and their own ways of thinking.[2]

Therefore, and in distinction to the regions of being that are ontologically "given" as such through the non-functional activity of the radical imaginary, the regions of the *human subject* and autonomous society are to be made and make themselves through the functional activity of the radical imaginary – functional in the sense that the radical imaginary no longer resides as an unbeknown, a repressed, or an indeterminate power. Under specific historical conditions and circumstances, the *human subject* and autonomous society can unleash the non-functional activity of the radical imaginary allowing the evocation of a form of *creative* indeterminacy – an indeterminacy that, in its essence, allows the rupturing of old ways of being through the creation and the posting of new forms of being. Castoriadis thus introduces another realm of human creation – a realm that is contingent on the radical imaginary but is, in many respects, other than the radical imaginary because this imaginary realm of creation can be used in a purposive or functional way. Inciting the foundation of an enduring political project, this imaginary realm of creation

is, for Castoriadis, indissociable from "a social and political awakening, a renaissance, a fresh upsurge of the project of the individual and collective autonomy."[3] In other words, and as Castoriadis argues, the emergence of the regions of the *human subject* and autonomous society is associated with "an awakening of the imagination and of the creative imaginary."

THE LEVEL OF THE NOT MERELY REAL – *REFLEXIVELY BEING*

Although the figure of the "creative imaginary" appears only briefly within Castoriadis's writings and accordingly presents in an un-elucidated form, it can be regarded as a term that aptly and succinctly encompasses the fact that the regions of the *human subject* and autonomous society actively and knowingly participate in the ongoing and enduring creation of their own ontological form.

It is for this very reason that Castoriadis's elucidation of the regions of the *human subject* and autonomous society are premised upon an original definition of "autonomy" – a definition that both engages with and yet moves beyond the bounds of the term imposed by the reflections of Freud and Lacan.[4] Freud's maxim of " 'Where Id was, Ego shall come to be' (*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*)" provided, for Castoriadis, an important point of departure. As he explains, this Freudian maxim portrays the mistaken notion that autonomy is "consciousness's rule over the unconscious." If autonomy is to be portrayed as a form of self-regulation rather than a form of regulation by another then this Freudian maxim offers the dichotomous view that autonomy is "my law" as opposed to the unconscious, which is "another law, other than myself."

In distinction to the erroneous grounds of Freud's maxim, Lacan's suggestion that "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other" offered, for Castoriadis, a more compelling view. In particular, it promoted the idea that autonomy is "my discourse" taking place over the "discourse of the Other." As discussed, Castoriadis promotes the view that the subject is infiltrated with a torrent of external forms of meaning such that within the subject resides the non-subject, which as the discourse of the other is the "discourse that is in me, ruling over me: speaking through myself." Although remarkable for its introduction to the social dimension of the unconscious, in Castoriadis's view, Lacan failed to truly capture the essential qualitative characteristic of the discourse of the Other. Specifically, of its relation to the domain of the *imaginary*. As the subject is ruled by the discourse of the Other the subject is, for Castoriadis, "ruled by the imaginary." This is evident in the fact that at the level of the *merely real*, the subject is ontologically "given"

through the regions of the living being, the psychical, the social individual and society. As the subject is "given" through these regions of being, the function of the imaginary becomes autonomized through the process of socialization. The sublimation of one's own reality and desires through the process of socialization ensures the creation of new realities and desires become defined through the social imaginary, through the Other. Alienation does not arise, therefore, out of the conflict between reality and desire but emerges out of the conflict that arises between drives and reality on the one hand, and the imaginary development of these drives and reality within the subject on the other.

It is from the perspective of the domain of the imaginary that Castoriadis presents his own definition of autonomy. A definition that proposes that autonomy involves the creation of a discourse that negates the discourse of the Other – not in the sense of its content but rather, in the sense that *it is* the discourse of the Other. That the origin or that the source of this discourse that is in "me" – that forms part of "me" – is the discourse of the Other. Being aware of this fact enables the negation of the autonomization of this discourse allowing it to be captured, reflected upon, redefined and represented in relation to the subjects' own discourse. Castoriadis thus promotes the idea that autonomy is not the negation nor the autonomization of these imaginary realms but is the active and lucid engagement *with* these imaginary realms. A form of engagement that allows the creation of a new form of relation between the discourse of the Other that is in "me" and the discourse in "me" that is my own. Freud's maxim of psychoanalysis is, for Castoriadis, to be reconceived as: " 'Where Ego is, Id must spring forth' (*Wo Ich bin, soll Es auftauchen*)."

Arguably, this compelling definition of autonomy incites the distinction Castoriadis creates between the levels of the *merely real* and the not merely real. The capacity to move away from heteronomous forms of being and of society involves the capacity to be open to and to creatively engage with the realm of the imaginary. Autonomy is not to be conceived, therefore, as a form of closure, as form of closed self-regulation. Rather and on Castoriadis's view, autonomy is to be conceived as "ontological opening," a form of self-regulation that is open to the emergence of new ontological forms:

> Autonomy is not closure but, rather, opening: ontological opening, the possibility of going beyond the informational, cognitive, and organizational closure characteristic of self–constituting, but *heteronomous* beings. It is ontological opening, since to go beyond this closure signifies altering the already existing cognitive and organizational 'system', *therefore* constituting one's world and one's self according to *other* laws, *therefore* creating a new ontological *eidos*, another self in another world.[5]

Despite being linked to political motivations that will not be discussed here, this explicit definition of autonomy highlights the fact that through a process of ontological opening, the human subject and society can irrevocably *rupture* preconceived, heteronomous or closed ways of being. By unleashing their *libido formandi* and by opening themselves up to the nonfunctional realm of the imaginary, the human subject and society can rupture the ontological form of being allowing the creation of "another self in another world." Castoriadis thus extends and develops his consideration of ontological creation by proposing that the *human subject* and autonomous society are regions of being that embody the capacity to embrace their own potentiality by actively engaging with indeterminacy of the creative imaginary.

THE REGION OF THE HUMAN SUBJECT – THE CREATIVE IMAGINARY

Accordingly, Castoriadis's answer to the question of the subject finds its final resting place in the region of the *human subject* because in this region of being, the subject is actively and intentionally participating in the process of being made and of making itself. An example of the *human subject* is given within the context of the psychoanalytic setting where the subject "is at once the setting, the means, and the goal (the finality)."[6] The subject is not that which is given but is made and is in the process of making themselves through the activity of reflectiveness and through deliberative action motivated by will.

The process of making oneself through the activity of reflectiveness opens onto the idea of self-referentiality – an essential component of the human condition, or more specifically of the "human Conscious."[7] However, and as Castoriadis acknowledges, self-referentiality is "most of the time … a simple accompaniment." "Knowing that one knows" is a fact that simply resides within the background of daily functional existence.

Knowing that one can know something *other* underlies the region of the *human subject* because the activity of reflection involves the intentional and specific use of the capacity for self-referentiality. Deviating from historical rhetoric concerning the role of reason, Castoriadis introduces the disquieting revelation that the "absolute condition" for the activity of reflectiveness is "the imagination (or phantasmatization)" – specifically, the radical imagination.[8] As the radical imagination can posit something that is not so, then the *human subject* can posit through the act of reflection something as existing when it really does not. In other words, the act of reflection is integral to the psychoanalytic setting because in the act of reflection, the *human subject* can "see *oneself*" while "seeing oneself as other." Directly evoking the Fichtean

notion of the double series of being and of seeing, the capacity to see *oneself* and to see *oneself* as other is, at the same time, the capacity to represent oneself and to represent oneself as representational activity.[9] Castoriadis elaborates on this important proposal in the following paragraph:

> In reflectiveness we have something different [to self-referentiality]: the *possibility that the activity proper to the "subject" becomes an "object," the self being explicitly posited* as a *nonobjective object or as an object that is an object simply by it being posited as such and not by nature*. And it is to the extent that one can be for oneself an object by being posited as an object and not by nature that *the other*, in the true sense of the term, becomes possible.[10]

The positing of the non-objective object is a form of positing, which allows oneself to represent oneself as a "purely imaginary being."[11] The capacity to represent oneself *and* the capacity to represent oneself as an imaginary being enables the *human subject* to exist in an indeterminate state of "pure activity" – a state that implicitly conjures the image of the Fichtean notion of the power of the imagination as the wavering between irreconcilable forms. Castoriadis makes no mention of this Fichtean reference arguing instead that this state of pure activity – of being suspended between two representations of oneself – has no "determined and certain content" and yet it has "possible contents." The indeterminate state of pure activity is a state of being that puts its own determinate state into question. It is a state of being that is open to the "*possibility*" of a form of interrogation through the intentional evocation of a creative state of indetermination, the state of which enables the emergence of something "other," the emergence of otherness.[12]

Castoriadis concedes herewith that the emergence of otherness – as the emergence of a "new object" – is at the same time associated with the positing of a new "psychical investment" or, as discussed, it may in fact be associated with the positing of a new bodily investment.[13] Although indeterminate and unqualifiable, psychical energy is never fixed nor determined but can be modified through a "disqualification-requalification" of energy. The creation of a new cathexis leads to a form of movement in the sense that it opens "breaches" in the closure of thought through the positing or the emergence of a "new 'object' of psychical investment, a nonobject, an invisible object."[14] An object that is associated with psychical/somatical energy.

Yet for Castoriadis, the opening of the closure of thought is conditional on the "*lability* of cathexis."[15] The possibility of reflectiveness necessitates that sublimated cathexes remain open in the sense that they are amenable to ongoing figuration and contestation. As he argues, the *lability* of cathexes is only possible when the singular human being has been educated in such a way that they can deny the authority of a "supreme being" and that they can call into

question the validity and objectivity of established truths. Examples of these states are given through reference to a scientist who acknowledges scientific truths already cathected and yet remains critical of their truths, or a citizen who obeys societal rules and yet remains willing to discuss the effectiveness of such rules.

It is in this context that Castoriadis describes the process of reflection as involving "*scission* and *internal opposition*".[16] The act of reflection involves the act of "*putting oneself into question"* by detaching oneself from the "certitude" of one's own consciousness, and by detaching oneself from the investment in one's own imaginary objects, or in the imaginary objects of the discourse of the Other. The act of detachment requires the intentional suspension of the "axioms, criteria, and rules of thought itself" on the supposition that other axioms, criteria and rules "not yet certain, perhaps not yet known, might replace them." True interrogation can only occur by putting the certitude of one's own consciousness into question.

Considered in relation to the psychoanalytic setting, the detachment from the certitude of one's own consciousness occurs when a "*figure of the psychic*" is "created/posited/proposed" through the act of "association."[17] Yet, for Castoriadis, the activity of association does not involve "free association."[18] Within the context of the psychoanalytic setting, the act of association is "neither free nor not free" – it is simply "the partial unveiling of aspects of co-belonging." It is, as he poetically describes, the "thread drawn between two summits of a submersed mountain chain, a thread often disappearing in the crevices of oceanic depths." The act of association involves, therefore, the unfolding of a series of co-belonging yet not logically determined representations/affects/intentions that are created by the unfolding of the works of the radical imagination. These psychical figures become for the analyst *and* the analysand an object of reflection and through a reflection on these objects, the relationship between these associated psychical instances becomes altered.[19] The aim of psychoanalysis is, therefore, to alter the role of the Ego through the recognition of the unconscious and the co-belonging contents of the radical imagination and reflection upon them. The act of reflectiveness becomes possible through the space, which opens up within the analytic context – a space whereby the radical imagination is freed from repression, inhibition, or impulsive avoidance.

For Castoriadis, the second parameter conducive to the possibility of the emergence of the autonomous *human subject* is the precarious notion of "*will*."[20] The capacity to imagine something other than what is requires the capacity to will or to desire, for that matter, something other than what is. One must have the will and the desire to place oneself in a position of being ontologically open and one must have the will to bring one's attention to their representational flux – to focus in a "systematic and sustained way"

on the figures/forms/images that are posited in the psyche. By wilfully placing oneself in this position – by placing oneself between what is known and what is not known, the human subject is in the moment of "pure activity" – a moment that will create its own form of "unity."[21] Much like the Kantian acknowledgement of the work of the genius, Castoriadis too highlights the fact that rules unfold in the moment of creation, such that the rules, unity, or the act of synthesis for that matter, can only ever be found at the end of the process of creation. And, while the rules unfold in the moment of creation, consciousness itself will not unfold because in this moment of deliberative reflectiveness, the *human subject* is both seeing oneself and seeing oneself as other. One is able to observe oneself and one is able to observe the unfolding of the works of the radical imagination and because of this, one can either chose to acknowledge and embrace these unfolding works, or one can chose to negate these works. By reflecting upon the moment of seeing oneself while seeing oneself as other, the *human subject* consciously embraces a moment of creative indeterminacy – a moment of being that is infused with creative potentiality. Representative of the unelucidated dominion of the creative imaginary, this moment of creative potentiality is other than the potentiality of the radical imaginary simply for the fact that the human subject remains open to the possibility of the creation of new objects of cathexis. Cathexes are not condemned to sublimation by the discourse of the Other but remain labile. It is for this very reason that Castoriadis regards psychoanalysis as a "practical/poietical activity."[22] As an activity that unleashes both the *vis formandi* and the *libido formandi*, psychoanalysis is fundamentally poietical because it leads to self-alteration – to the "appearance of another being," and it is practical because it involves the act of praxis whose object can only ever present as human autonomy.

It is interesting to note here that within his elucidation of the capacity of the *human subject* to embrace their own creative potentiality Castoriadis simply refers to the "radical imagination," representative of the defunctionalized radical imagination. Had he considered the form of interplay that emerges between the two dimensions of the radical imagination – as the human Nonconscious – he could have developed his conception of the *human subject* and the creative imaginary even further. One such example can be applied to his consideration of the act of association. Although Castoriadis does not explicitly state so, the co-belonging of associations may be accompanied by a feeling arising from the bodily or sensory imagination. Associations may be accompanied by an unthinkable known. In this regard, the activity of association does not simply involve reflection upon the radical imagination properly speaking because the unthinkable known embodies something unrepresentable, something *unsayable* but something that can be felt. The psychoanalytic setting could be regarded, therefore, as space in which the unfolding of the

works of *both* dimensions of the radical imagination are freed with the ensuing evocation of a creative indeterminacy allowing the unsayable objectless cathexis to become sayable through the reflection upon a new object posited by the radical imagination.

THE REGION OF AUTONOMOUS SOCIETY – THE CREATIVE IMAGINARY

The level of the not merely real also comprises the region of autonomous society. Exemplified by Ancient Greek society, an autonomous society is defined by Castoriadis as a society, which is capable of reflecting on itself, capable of deliberation and capable of making decisions based on this form of self-deliberation.[23] An autonomous society knows, therefore, that it has created its own laws and that it institutes itself in such a way that it enables the freeing of the radical imaginary.[24] In particular, of the freeing of the radical imagination in each *human* subject. If each human subject of a particular society frees their radical imagination, then, and as Castoriadis argues, the radical imagination can supply "new contents" upon which the deliberative activity of the collectivity could reflect upon. In this respect, the constraint imposed by the presence of others and by the laws of society are, as Castoriadis suggests, to be conceived as a source of freedom, of action and of facilitation simply for the fact that they provide a "spring and a source of strength."[25] Society provides its own sources of "riches" because through the act of genuine reflection on the new contents provided by each *human subject*, autonomous society can put into question and challenge the validity of its own laws, its own institutions, and its own socially instituted representations through the evocation of the creative imaginary.[26]

For Castoriadis, therefore, the emergence of an autonomous society is indissociable from the emergence of the reflexive *human subject.*[27] As he argues, the emergence of new contents that can be reflected and deliberated on can only occur in a space or a society where sacred truths can be challenged, where cathexis remain labile. The possibility of reflection and the creation of new forms, new forms of being and new ways of thinking about something can only occur when it becomes possible to question the foundations of social laws, order and institutions and where it becomes possible to question the foundation of one's own thought or one's own identity.

Accordingly, and on Castoriadis's view, the appearance of *reflexively being* and the upheaval and fundamental reshaping of the entire social-historical field can only occur through the "awakening" of the radical imagination and the creative imaginary. By awakening the radical imagination and the creative imaginary, the *human subject* and autonomous society are to be made and

make themselves through the process of becoming ontologically open to the emergence of something other. Castoriadis thus challenges the determinacy of the figure of the radical imaginary by introducing the idea that the seed of indeterminacy underlying human creation in the regions of the *human subject* and autonomous society is premised upon the dominion of the creative imaginary.

NOTES

1. Cornelius Castoriadis, "The State of the Subject Today," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 143.
2. See Castoriadis' discussion on the *vis formandi* and the *libido formandi* in: "Culture in a Democratic Society," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Harvard: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 343–44.
3. *Figures of the Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher, trans. Helen Arnold (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 86.
4. "Theory and Revolutionary Project," in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987; reprint, 2005), 102–04.
5. "The Logic of Magmas and the Question of Autonomy," 310.
6. "The State of the Subject Today," 143.
7. Ibid., 158.
8. Ibid., 159.
9. J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, ed. Peter Heath and John Lachs, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 17.
10. Castoriadis, "The State of the Subject Today," 158.
11. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 268.
12. "The State of the Subject Today," 158.
13. See Castoriadis' discussion on psychical energy and investment in: ibid., 164.
14. Castoriadis, "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 271.
15. "The State of the Subject Today," 165.
16. Ibid., 158.
    Castoriadis, "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 268.
17. "Psychoanalysis: Project and Elucidation," in *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), 93.
18. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," 276–77.
19. "Psychoanalysis and Politics," 128.
20. "The State of the Subject Today," 160.
21. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 268–69.
22. "Psychoanalysis and Politics," 129.
23. "The State of the Subject Today," 144.
24. "Psychoanalysis and Politics," 132.
25. "The 'End of Philosophy'?," *Salmagundi* 82/83 (1989): 9.
26. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," 267.
27. Ibid., 268.

Chapter 14

The Creative Imagination

Castoriadis extends his thought-provoking consideration of the immense potentiality of humankind through a resounding series of elucidations exploring the ability of humankind to embrace and purposively unleash their potentiality in order to reimagine what has already been "imagined."[1] The ability of the *human subject* or autonomous society to put into question and to contest existing ways of being and of doing necessitates a form of poietical activity, which renders "thinkable what was not previously thinkable, or not in that way."[2]

The capacity to give thinkable form to something previously unthinkable involves, as discussed, the creation of *figures* of the thinkable – *figures*, which through their very presence rupture contested ways of thinking providing in the process a new way in which being in the realms of theory, of philosophy, of mathematics, of science, of politics and of art, for example, can be thought about. Accordingly, figures of thinkable are not to be conceived as being given through an act of reason nor through an act of the understanding because neither of these capacities can "*posit* anything that is *new* and has a *content*."[3] Nor are they simply the private phantasms of one's own psyche or for that matter, an already instituted social imaginary signification. Rather, figures of the thinkable are given form through an act of creation, which purposively introduces into society a new way of thinking about theory, philosophy, mathematics, science, politics and art.

In his own attempt to give thinkable form to the capacity of humankind to create figures of the thinkable Castoriadis draws on, for the most part, the emergent concept of the creative imagination. It is an emergent concept in the sense that the figure of the creative imagination takes on varying significations across the course of Castoriadis's work of reflection. Tied to the notion of ontological creation, at times within his writings Castoriadis's

defines the creative imagination as another signification of the defunctionalized radical imagination. This is exemplified through his reference to the "radical, constantly creative imagination."[4] The defunctionalized radical imagination is conceived in this context as the "constantly creative imagination" because it creates *ex nihilo* an "unmasterable flux of representations, affects and desires."

And yet at other times within his writings, Castoriadis intimates the creative imagination is to be regarded as another "expression" of the radical imagination. Playing a determinative role in reimagining what has already been imagined, the creative imagination is in this context described as a power of the soul that can be purposively unleashed. Reference here to the term "expression" highlights the fact that the radical imagination can, in certain instances, present ontologically in different forms. One such example is the social imaginary. As an expression of the radical imagination, the social imaginary is the open stream of the anonymous collective of the social-historical field, which posits, creates and brings into being social imaginary significations.

Given these varying significations of the term, the concept of the creative imagination contains within itself a form of indetermination rendering it open to ongoing elucidation and of course, interpretation. This is exemplified by the fact that to date there remains varying elucidations and interpretations of Castoriadis's use of the term.[5] Notwithstanding the contribution these elucidations and interpretations have played in giving form to or developing Castoriadis's work of reflection, within the context of the distinction he creates between *simply being* and *reflexively being*, it can be argued Castoriadis is introducing the idea that the creative imagination is to be conceived as another expression of the radical imagination – an expression that allows the *human subject* and autonomous society to actively and purposively think *beyond* the bounds of what has already been given through the creation of figures of the thinkable.

In order to begin to elucidate in greater detail this emerging signification of the creative imagination, it is useful to return to Castoriadis's elucidation of the concept of creation – one that is contextualized in specific relation to the Ancient Greek notion of chaos, as "the void."[6] As Castoriadis explains, in the writings of Hesiod, the void was portrayed as "an initial state of formless confusion," one that is inexhaustible and forever present. On Plato's view, chaos was referred to as *chõra*, as "pure, absolute becoming" or as a "total indetermination." The context of these historical significations introduce the idea that the void should be considered as something completely indeterminate. The void forms "the abyss behind everything that exists," the conception of which promotes the view that chaos is the "creative force" – chaos is the *vis formandi* that underlies the possibility of the "upsurging of forms." For Castoriadis, therefore, all living beings embody a creative force – all living beings embody an inexhaustible potentiality that arises out the indeterminacy or the "chaos/abyss/bottomlessness" of being.[7]

Yet for Castoriadis, humanity presents in its ontology as an "offspring" of "overall Being/being [*l'être–étant global*]."[8] Due to the nonfunctional and nonlogical nature of the radical imaginary, the *vis formandi* of humankind embodies a form of agency or a form of self-referentiality that moves beyond biological concerns. Moreover, as the *vis formandi* of humankind is accompanied by a *libido formandi*, humankind does not simply embody the potential for formation and of creation. Rather, humankind embodies the *desire* for formation and of creation extending the potentiality of being into new nonfunctional domains. For Castoriadis, therefore, the *libido formandi* forms the "poietic" element of humanity, which "gives form to the Chaos."[9] As humankind forms, creates and desires its own end, the possibility of emergence is extended into entirely new realms. This is evident in the fact that the subject and society as *simply being* are given ontological form through the radical imaginary and yet the subject and society as *reflexively being* can alter their ontological form through the creative imaginary. The being of human and the being of the social-historical are never determined by a given end but create their own end either heteronomously or autonomously.

THE CREATION OF FIGURES OF THE THINKABLE

Arguably, therefore, it is within his elucidation of the purposeful unleashing of humanity's *vis formandi* and *libido formandi* that Castoriadis begins to create a terminological distinction between the radical imagination and the creative imagination. Not often reflected upon nor discussed – even by Castoriadis himself – this un-elucidated distinction is remarkable and worthy of further elucidation.[10] In particular, because it highlights the fact that the creative capacity of the imagination is not, as Kant once suggested, simply limited to the domain of artistic creation. Nor is creation associated with *natura naturans*, the conception of which emerged within Romanticism's attempt to unify humankind with nature.[11] Rather, and in line with the Fichtean conception, Castoriadis appears to be promoting the view that the creative imagination is an ontological power of formation and of creation that can be actively and purposively used to create new thinkable forms.

It is for this very reason that Castoriadis defines the creative imagination as a faculty of the "socialized soul" – of an individual who has access to "language and a historical heritage."[12] Reference here to the "socialized soul" portrays the creative imagination as an "expression" of the creative character of the nonfunctional radical imagination for having access to language and a historical heritage provides the foundation upon which figures can be refigured or reimagined. By reflecting on the determinations and the indeterminations provided by theory, by mathematics, by philosophy, by science, by politics,

or by art, for example, the socialized soul can purposively place themselves between what is known and what is not known, allowing the evocation of a form of indeterminacy. It is from this position that a socialized soul can begin to create new figures of the thinkable by drawing on the purposeful use of their creative imagination.

In relation to the realm of philosophy, for example, the socialized soul purposively immerses themselves into the act of critique. As Castoriadis explains, the act of critique involves the comprehension of what has been said and of what has not been said, rendering philosophy as a self-reflexive activity that deploys itself freely and yet it always deploys itself under the constraint of its own past.[13] A past that is not cumulative, nor destined to a Heideggerian end but is, in its ontology, "a spring and a source of strength." Through the purposeful use of the creative imagination, the socialized soul can immerse themselves into this spring and source of strength with the intent and the desire to create *figures* of the thinkable. *Figures* that give form to the "chaos underlying the *cosmos*, the world, the chaos that is below those successive layers of appearances."[14] *Figures* that allow a socialized soul to create, as Fichte himself has suggested, in a "purposeful manner."[15] Purposeful in the sense that by creating *ex nihilo* a newly figured figure, the thinkable content of reflection, of theory, of philosophy, of mathematics, of science, of politics and of art becomes developed in completely new ways.

Accordingly, Castoriadis defines the "core component" of "nontrivial thinking" as the "creative imagination."[16] By leaning on and by not being determined by that which lays before the socialized soul embodies the capacity to create the form of the "newly thinkable." Specifically, through the act of reflection. However, and in contrast to the psychoanalytic setting whereby the act of reflection leads to the positing of a "*figure of the psychic*," the act of reflection on the content of theory, of philosophy, of mathematics, of science, of politics and of art actively contributes to the content of these domains by providing the form of the newly thinkable.[17] Castoriadis thus introduces the work of the radical imagination as playing two distinct roles in regard to the act of reflection. As discussed, the work of the radical imagination can be used when the act of reflection puts into question the ontology of one's own being, as exemplified in the formation of the *human subject*. Or, as outlined in the following paragraph, the work of the radical imagination as the creative imagination can be used when the act of reflection puts into question the content of theory, of philosophy, of mathematics, of science, of politics and of art:

> All theoretical work, all work of reflection, the entire history of science show that the creative imagination is at work positing figures/ models which are not

> fixed once and for all, which in no way could be considered as empirically inferred but which are, on the contrary, conditions for the organization of empirical knowledge or, more generally, of the object of thought.[18]

By positing new *figures* or new models of the thinkable, the creative imagination creates the conditions for the organization of empirical knowledge introducing a new way of thinking about something, It does so, by inciting a movement of thought before the ground that lays before. The poietical activity of the creative imagination ruptures and breaks open forms of cognitive closure by bringing into the social-historical realm the form of a thinkable *figure* that was not there before. Castoriadis thus embraces the Fichtean concept of the creative imagination for the creation of the form of the newly thinkable renders possible a form of movement, not simply within the realm of one's own thought but within the social-historical realm.

Contextualized in relation to the realm of philosophy, these series of elucidations propose that the creation of *figures* of thinkable take on the form of "philosophical significations," which provide the means through which being, thought and nature, for example, can be thought about.[19] Philosophical significations are not to be conceived, therefore, as "rational" productions. An "idea," for example, does not arise out of a logical deduction or an empirical induction. Rather, and on Castoriadis's view, the idea is a prerequisite for both with every great philosophical work or every great philosophical idea presenting as "an imaginary creation."

In relation to the realm of science, the creative imagination creates figures in the form of "new imaginary schemata." These schemata lead to the emergence of a "new hypothesis" because they give form to something newly thinkable. Similarly, the creative imagination of the mathematicians can posit "*new axioms*" other than those that already exist.[20] And although these figures of philosophy, science or of mathematics are created *ex nihilo*, the creative imagination does not create *in nihilo* or *cum nihilo.* These imaginary creations are created "under the constraint of available experience" – under the constraint or the source of strength provided by the content of philosophy, of science and of mathematics. And yet, Castoriadis is keen to highlight the fact that the creation of these *figures* of the thinkable do not follow on from that experience. There is no logical connection between one figure and another.[21] Nor do these *figures* introduce the notion of progress or of a given end. On the contrary, the creative imagination creates *ex nihilo* for what has been created is not "producible or deducible from what 'was there.' "[22] The creative imagination creates out of the horizon of meaning – out of the constraint imposed by the significations of the social-historical realm – but during the process of creation, the horizon of meaning becomes ruptured, torn apart and recreated through the emergence of a new figure of the thinkable.

In this respect, the creative imagination leans on the significations of the social-historical realm. It leans on an imaginary form, but one which is embodied in the sense that this imaginary form is invested in the act of cathexis. Scientific truths are already cathected. And yet, for an enquiring scientist, these cathexes remain labile rendering all scientific truths open to ongoing figuration and contestation allowing the creation of new objects of cathexis.[23] Castoriadis thus promotes, albeit implicitly, the view that the *figures* of the creative imagination should be conceived as embodied *figures*. Simply because of the fact that the creation of the newly thinkable *figures* of theory, of mathematics, of philosophy, of science, of politics, or of art are always associated with the creation of a new cathexis.

The activity of the creative imagination also gives form to chaos through the realm of art.[24] In distinction to philosophy, science and mathematics, art gives form to chaos in its own way. As Castoriadis suggests, art "does not work under the constraint of experience. The constraints with which it must deal are of another order; they are internal." To be more specific, these constraints are imposed upon by the various stratifications of one's own "Being-being" and that of the cosmos. As the creative imagination has access to and can draw on these internal constraints then art gives form to chaos and creates new worlds "relatively freely." This freedom arises out of the capacity to reflect freely on the chaos of one's embodied own inner world and that of the social-historical, the world, or of the cosmos. This would suggest that in reflection on one's own inner world, the creative imagination has access to the entire *stratification* of Being-being – access to the world of the Conscious, the Unconscious and for that matter, of the Nonconscious. The radical imaginary may create these various stratifications of being, and yet Castoriadis is presenting the view that the creative imagination can engage with the imaginary dimensions of these varying levels of stratification leading to the creation of new figures of the thinkable.

Castoriadis's also extends the activity of the creative imagination into the realm of the collective for, and as he argues, the conscious and deliberate activity of the collective is that which enables the recreation of society. Through the use of a collective creative imagination, society can begin to recreate, reposit and reinvent "what in a sense is already there in order to be able to think it."[25] Although the radical imaginary underlies the possibility for the emergence of an autonomous society, Castoriadis is presenting the view here that the conscious and deliberate capacity of autonomous society to create new ways of thinking about being in the social-historical world is rendered possible through the collective and purposive use of the creative imagination. Reimagining being in the social-historical world does not simply involve the radical imaginary, it requires another expression of the radical imagination. In the form of the creative imagination, this expression of the radical imagination consciously, purposively and deliberately draws on the evocation of the creative imaginary.

Notwithstanding the remarkable nature of these lucid and alluring series of elucidations, the emergent figure of the creative imagination exposes a resounding fissure residing within Castoriadis own thesis. The capacity of the socialized soul to "arbitrarily" invent or create a new form fractures the indissociable form of relation between the *human subject* and autonomous society because, and as Castoriadis does in fact acknowledge, the subject embodies within *itself* a "creative potentiality."[26] Coupled with an embracement of one's own *libido formandi*, this creative potentiality is a "source of innovation" allowing the alteration of social-historical knowledge through the positing of new figures as "knowable and thinkable." The creative imagination is a source of innovation for it can never be absorbed by the institution of society or by its realms of theory, of philosophy, of science, of mathematics and of art. Rather, through reference *to* language and through reference *to* the tradition of research, a socialized soul can create something more than private phantasms – the socialized soul can "create a *knowledge*" by freely drawing on their own creative imagination.

Although at times during his writings the creative potentiality of the subject is associated with the radical imagination, as revealed within this elucidation Castoriadis appears to be signifying the fact that the capacity to create *figures* of the thinkable involves another expression of the radical imagination. The socialized soul embodies a creative indeterminacy, which when purposively and poietically embraced can be used to create the form of the newly thinkable. By consciously positioning themself in a moment of indeterminacy, the socialized soul in the form of the philosopher, the scientist, the mathematician, or the artist can reflect upon the activity of their own creative imagination, which in the context of the content of philosophy, of science, of mathematics, or of art allows the emergence of otherness as the emergence of a new figurable form. Forms that through their very presence contribute to the *content* of philosophy, of science and of art extending these domains into new domains. The activity of the creative imagination thus creates a movement within the thought of others and within the social-historical field by providing a new way of thinking about something. Castoriadis thus challenges the determinacy of the figure of the radical imagination by introducing the idea that the seed of indeterminacy underlying purposeful acts of human creation is the creative imagination, which, as an ontological power of formation and of creation, is to be conceived as another expression of the radical imagination.

NOTES

1. As discussed, the two dimensions of the radical imaginary form "two expressions of the radical imagination" – the first expression is the radical imagination, which exists as the psyche/soma and the second expression is the social imaginary,

which exists as the social-historical. See: Cornelius Castoriadis, "From the Monad to Autonomy," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 178. "The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things," in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 369.

2. "Preface," in *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), xxvii.

Castoriadis's interest in the poietical activity of humankind is explored in detail in: Cornelius, Castoriadis, "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," in *Figures of the Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher, trans. Helen Arnold (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

3. "The Ontological Import of the History of Science," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford Oxford University Press, 1997), 373.

4. "Psychoanalysis and Philosophy," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 356.

5. Arnason describes the radical imagination is synonymous with the creative imagination. See Johann P. Arnason, "The Creative Imagination," ed. Suzi Adams, *Cornelius Castoriadis: Key Concepts* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).

Adams describes the creative imagination as being composed of "two poles," with the first pole being the radical imagination and the second pole being the radical imaginary. See: Suzi Adams, *Castoriadis's Ontology: Being and Creation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 13, 83.

Angelos Mouzakitis refers to the role of the creative imagination in the emergence of figures of the thinkable but he does not introduce a terminological distinction between the radical and the creative imagination. See: Angelos Mouzakitis, "Creation *Ex Nihilo*," in *Cornelius Castoriadis: Key Concepts*, ed. Suzi Adams (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).

6. Cornelius Castoriadis, "False and True Chaos," in *Figures of the Thinkable*, ed. Werner Hamacher, Meridian Crossing Aesthetics (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 239–41.

7. "Psyche and Education," 171.

8. "From the Monad to Autonomy," 184.

9. "Culture in a Democratic Society," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Harvard: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 342–43.

10. Klooger makes no mention of the "creative imagination" in his consideration of Castoriadis' oeuvre. See: Jeff Klooger, *Castoriadis: Psyche, Society, Autonomy* (Leidon, Boston: Brill, 2009).

11. Engell provides a detailed overview of the signification of the creative imagination as a power, which unified humankind with nature and of the role of *natura naturans*. See: James Engell, "The Essential Idea," in *The Creative Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

12. Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Limits of Formalization. Cornelius Castoriadis in Dialogue with Alain Connes.," in *Postscript on Insignificance*, ed. Gabriel Rockhill (London, New York: Continuum, 2011), 75.

13. "The 'End of Philosophy'?," *Salmagundi* 82/83 (1989): 9.

14. "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," 80.

15. J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, ed. Peter Heath and John Lachs, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 250.

It is interesting to acknowledge, however, that Castoriadis does not make any direct reference to Fichte's concept of the creative imagination. Instead he proposes it is the productive imagination, which founds the Fichtean thesis. See Footnote 53 in: Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 391.

16. "The Greek *Polis* and the Creation of Democracy," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 1997), 270.

17. "Psychoanalysis: Project and Elucidation," 93.

18. "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," in *World in Fragments*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 269.

19. "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," 79.

20. "The Ontological Import of the History of Science," 367.

21. "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," 79.

22. "Time and Creation," 392.

23. "The State of the Subject Today," 165.

24. "Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads," 80.

See also Castoriadis's reference to art through discussions concerning poetry and music in: *On Plato's "Statesman"* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 83–86. "The Ontological Import of the History of Science," 367.

25. *On Plato's "Statesman*," 83.

26. "The Ontological Import of the History of Science," 373.

Fourth Movement

THE EMBODIED SEED OF INDETERMINACY

Chapter 15

The Embodied Seed of Indeterminacy

It would be fair to argue that Kant, Fichte and Castoriadis certainly succeeded in bringing to the fore the untenable and uncontainable question of the creative imagination. Actively confronting the inner depths of the human soul, these three great philosophers have through their own form of philosophical presentation provided a series of innovative reflections on the creative potentiality of the human imagination. Opening onto an emergent signification of the concept of the creative imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation, this powerful theme contains within itself and accordingly evokes the notions of indeterminacy and embodiment. This is most evident in the fact that reflection on these moments in which the creative and constitutive power of the imagination ruptures into Western philosophical discourse is accompanied by the *experience* of indeterminacy. To draw on Fichte's proclamation, one's own *experience* of and struggle with the indeterminacy that lies within these great works actively contributes to the comprehension of these various conceptions of the imagination, inciting in the process a new way of thinking about the creative imagination.

The struggle with the antinomical nature of the Kantian unknown unveiled the seed of indeterminacy underlying all forms of human creation as the form of the monogram. Described as an original product of the pure a priori imagination, the monogram formed, for Kant, the seed for all acts of figuration within the mind. Playing a determinative role in the formation of self-consciousness, in the formation of all forms of cognition and in the formation of all forms of aesthetic experience, the creation of the monogram was, for Kant, accompanied by the feeling of pleasure, as the feeling of life. Confronting the intersection between the human subject and nature, between the human subject and others, Kant unveiled the fact that the hidden and creative art of the representational power of the imagination was in fact located in both the a priori and the empirical faculties of the productive imagination. Defined as

an embodied power of the human soul, the productive imagination played, for Kant, an indispensable and creative role enabling the human subject to be of nature and yet be able to transcend the determinate bounds of nature.

Similarly, the absolutely *incomprehensible* experience of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a *Darstellung* of the system of the human mind revealed the ontological form of the being of human was, for Fichte, premised upon the indeterminacy of the creative imagination. And although indeterminate and unable to be raised to consciousness, on Fichte's view, the creative imagination gives ontological form to the being of human through the *Anstoß* that arises from contact with the world, with the Other, or with one's own experience of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. The experience of the world, of the Other, and of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is acutely sensed as a feeling of indeterminacy, as the feeling of wavering between irreconcilable forms and through reflection on this feeling, one can begin to create in a purposeful manner by actively reflecting upon the creations of or the images one's own creative imagination.

Castoriadis opens onto the evocation of the unceasing and incessant indeterminacy of the human condition through the concept of the radical imaginary and his introduction to the concept of the human Nonconscious. Given the ontological form of the human subject is, for Castoriadis, given form through the incessant interplay between the creative power of the corporeal and the defunctionalized dimensions of the radical imagination and the social imaginary, Castoriadis portrays the being of human as embodying the indeterminacy of the works of the various dimensions of the radical imagination as it unfolds in the embodied presence of the Other as the being of the social-historical. Juxtaposed between these domains, the human subject creates for itself its own world and through the purposeful use of the creative imagination, the human subject can also create for the social-historical a new way of thinking about the world. Although the act of creation is *ex nihilo* as Castoriadis reminds us, creation is not *in nihilo* or *cum nihilo* for the being of human is indissociable from the embodied relationship with the world and with the being of the social-historical.

Accordingly, and as Kant, Fichte and Castoriadis have all shown, the imagination is, in its unfettered state, inherently creative and yet as an ontological power of creation and of formation it can only create meaningful, communicable and purposive forms when residing in an unfettered form of interplay with the world or with others. This perhaps is one of the most important legacies residing within these three remarkable movements of thought. On Kant's view, the power of the human imagination is inherently creative and yet it can only create purposeful and determinate forms of meaning when residing in an intimate form of relation with the higher cognitive powers of the soul – a form of relation that is only rendered possible through

the aesthetic experience of the world. On Fichte's view, the power of the human imagination is inherently creative and yet it can only create purposeful and determinate forms of meaning when residing in an intimate form of relation with the pure and practical faculties of reason – a form of relation that is only possible in the presence of an "external prime mover." And finally, on Castoriadis' view, the power of the human imagination is inherently creative and yet it can only create purposeful and determinate forms of meaning when residing in a form of relation with the social imaginary – a form of relation that is only possible in the presence of an embodied socialized Other.

In this respect, while the indeterminacy of human creation has been described as unknown, absolutely *incomprehensible* and radical, it is perhaps more pertinent to consider the indeterminacy of human creation as radically embodied. As has become evident through the experience of these three remarkable movements of thought, the power of the imagination as psyche/soma embodies its own indeterminacy *and* that of something other. To draw on Castoriadis's call to develop new ways of thinking about the paradoxical nature of the singular human being, it can be proposed that the uniqueness of the human condition arises out of its capacity to *embody* its own radical form and that of the Other, of the social-historical. Because of this capacity, the essential and radical character of the indeterminacy of human creation is one of continual rupturing and emergence, but it is a rupturing and an emergence that always leans on the embodied presence of something other, and it is a rupturing and an emergence that is always felt through the creation of new cathexes.

This important elucidation provides the means in which to develop the signification of the creative imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation. Embracing Castoriadis's concept of the human Nonconscious and confronting the mind body divide that has permeated Western thought, the creative imagination can be conceived as a radically embodied power of the soul that gives ontological form to the being of human. Moreover, it can be conceived as a radically embodied power of the soul that can be purposively used in order to actively create and enact new ways of being and of doing – in order to think in an innovative way about something or to purposively challenge the rhetoric of dominant social imaginaries or of the conception of the being of human as being-determined. As has been shown, however, the creative imagination can only be purposively used by knowing and by embodying the fact that one is *in* the world, that one is in the world of others and that one is *in* the world of theory, of philosophy, of mathematics, of science, of politics and of art. By acknowledging the indeterminacy of one's own being and of the significations of the being of social-historical, one can actively embrace the experience of the emergence of otherness allowing the emergence of figures of the thinkable and the emergence of unthinkable knowns experienced through the dominion of the human Nonconscious.

Although presenting in an indeterminate form, the feeling of an unthinkable known in the form of a hunch, an intuition or an instinct underlies the possibility of all thinkable knowns and because of this, should be regarded as playing a fundamental role in the act of elucidation.

Conceived in this way, the creative imagination must be envisaged as a radically embodied and inherently creative power of the soul that can be purposively used to give ontological form to the *experience* of the indeterminacy that arises in the presence of the Other, of the world and of the social-historical. Embracing the experience of the feeling of indeterminacy will eventually lead to the creation *ex nihilo* of figures of the thinkable, which, in the moment they come to light, provide a new way of thinking about being in the social-historical, in the world or in the realms of philosophy, science, mathematics, politics, or of art.

Unquestionably, this elucidation of the creative imagination as an ontological power of formation and of creation ruptures the ground of that which lays before and presents its own moment of truth. This moment of truth may be accompanied by feelings of pleasure forming the seed for further elucidation. Or, this moment of truth may be accompanied by feelings of displeasure. Or, to conclude, the experience of this moment of truth may lead to another movement of thought – one that will, it its ontology, draw on the purposeful use of the creative imagination.

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