IMAGINATION: IMAGINING AND THE IMAGE

The prismatic character of imagination has inspired radically diverse descriptions. For Pascal, it was "the mistress of falsehood and error," while for Baudelaire it "created the world." [1] Such assertions, though possessing rhetorical or poetic force and attesting to the elusiveness of the phenomenon, add little to an understanding of the actual nature of imagination. The overbearing influence of accepted doctrine or personal belief must be set aside if we are to view imagination more clearly. In this paper, an objective description of imagination will be undertaken; the approach will be largely phenomenological. This orientation is reflected in the structure of the paper: Part I, which treats the act of imagining proper, and Part II, which considers the image and the imagined object, are examples respectively of noetic and noematic analysis understood liberally. This means that the two Parts are more closely correlated than I have had the space to indicate; but it is to be hoped that the two complementary analyses preserve a sense of the rich and continuous phenomenon of imagination as a whole.

I

Even if most contemporary philosophers would agree with Gilbert Ryle that "there is no special Faculty of Imagination," we need not give equal assent to his claim that there is also no "nuclear operation" of imagining.[2] Of course, under the term "imagining" we may include quite disparate phenomena – anything from perceptual illusion to pretending. But the fact that we do not ordinarily consider such things to be examples of imagining in the fullest sense indicates that there is a more typical kind of imagining which manifests an operation or function common to all acts of imagining proper. This more typical case is that of "merely imagining" in the sense of revery, daydreaming, and

[1] Pascal, *Pensées,* ed. L. Lafuma (Paris: Seuil, 1962), p. 54; Baudelaire, "La Reine des Facultés" in *Curiosités esthétiques et l'Art romantique,* ed. H. Lemaître (Paris: Garnier, 1962). p. 321.

[2] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), p. 257.

certain more controlled acts (such as we find in artistic creation). What then is the central operation of imagining in this sense?

I conceive the basic, invariant function of imagining proper to be *the conscious projection and contemplation of objects posited as pure possibilities*. Thus baldly stated, this cursory definition may seem vacuous or at best trivial. It might be asked, what else do we project mentally *but* possibilities? Is this same activity not found as well in the act of understanding? Heidegger, for example, characterizes understanding *(Verstehen)* as precisely the projection of possibilities.[3] It is evident that the first thing we must clarify is the vexing notion of possibility itself.

One important, if obvious, distinction is that between hypothetical and pure possibility. A hypothetical possibility is the sort of possibility that is contemplated with a view to its realizability in experience. Thus, by "hypothetical" I refer not so much to the pure "as if" character of a possibility as to the related notion of "as if it were *real*." Construed in this sense, hypothetical possibilities are essential to certain acts of imagining which are employed as aids in coming to know or understand something. In these auxiliary acts, we project possibilities as hypotheses, ideas, or options through which we can gain a more certain inroad into empirical reality – the spatiotemporal world of everyday experience – in any of its past, present, or future forms. The projection of hypothetical possibilities appears thus as an example of what Dewey called "dramatic rehearsal."[4] In a very different context, Heidegger has conceived understanding as the projection of those hypothetical possibilities that are existentially determinative for *Dasein*. The crucial point is that hypothetical possibilities are not projected or entertained for their own sake, but only with a certain aim in mind (whether the aim is implicit or explicit does not alter the essential character of the act). This aim is, in most cases of understanding, a clearer and more encompassing grasp of our perceptual experience, historical situation, or existential condition. Hypothetical possibilities are projected as means to this improved comprehension.

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[3] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. E. Robinson and J. Macquarrie (New York: Harper, 1962), pp. 182-88. Heidegger's existential sense of possibility is characterized by what he calls "potentiality-for-being" *(Seinkönnen)*, but this is only a special case of what we shall call "hypothetical possibility."

[4] See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Random House, 1957), pp. 190-91. Cf. Ryle, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-71, for a similar notion of imagining as "rehearsal." Ryle makes the hypothetical element explicit by calling it the "sham" or "mock" character of pretending, which he takes to be central to imagining. Thus, in Ryle's view, imagining becomes a sort of preparatory rehearsal for action, a series of abstentions from an action postulated as hypothetically realizable. Ryle is led to this mistaken position by falsely analogizing imagining to pretending.

Imagining proper is an act differing significantly from the kind of imagining that may be involved in coming to know or understand something. The reason for this is that in imagining proper we project or entertain possibilities for *their own sake*. More exactly, we posit objects as possibilities *simpliciter*, not as possibilities that might be confirmed or discredited by experience. In a paradigmatic imagining act (e.g., in daydreaming or an artist's inspirational state) there is no attempt made to treat possibilities as hypothetical constructs or as explanations of experience. Rather, possibilities are contemplated as what we could call "mere" or "pure" possibilities. This does not mean that such possibilities have no reference at all to experiential reality; but such references as they do have involves no direct effort to comprehend, and much less to manipulate, this reality.[5] As contrasted with hypothetical possibilities, these possibilities are not grasped as primarily applicable to experience by way of explaining, copying, or anticipating it. They are not schematic statements of what we have experienced, or even of what we do or will experience. It is in this largely negative sense that they are "pure" – pure, that is, of a certain application or use, namely that by which we come to know and control empirical reality more completely.

But it is not enough to characterize imagining proper negatively and by way of contrast alone with other less central kinds of imagining. For imagining proper has its own sort of object and its own positing or "thetic" character. Without being wholly redundant, we can say that the object of an act of imagining proper is an "imaginary" object or state of affairs; this means that in being imagined it is posited as merely possible. But this object or state of affairs may be in itself either a) empirically real or b) wholly unreal. Let us consider the former case first – that in which the object is real. We can very well imagine a real person, place, or event; any of these real entities or occasions can be "visualized" in what Leonardo da Vinci called "the darkness of the mind's eye."[6] This envisioning of real objects does not, however, entail the additional assertion of Leonardo's that the imagined "object does not

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[5] "Empirical reality" is opposed not only to "essential reality" in a Platonic or Husserlian sense, but also to the Kantian transcendental factor, the wholly unreal (in the sense of the fantastic), and the purely possible (the character of the objects of imagining proper). We should note that science is not limited to hypothetical possibilities in its theorizing. The importance of "Gedankenexperimente" suggests that theoretical science may profit as greatly as art from the projection of pure possibilities. See Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1961), Appendix IX; and N. R. Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1965), pp. 126, 137, 140.

[6] In the *Trattato della Pittura.*

come from without." [7] It is clearly the case that, in many instances of imagining, the whole object imagined is also a possible object of our perceptual experience, although the real object as imagined is felt to be absent from our *present* perceptions. This is true even in the case of imagining an object derived from memory, because memory is in turn founded upon perception of the empirically real. Thus, it would be mistaken to claim that all imagined objects are themselves imaginary in the sense of empirically unreal.

But it remains true that even when we imagine real objects that are absent from perception, we imagine them in a special way; we posit them as purely possible. As Collingwood has seen, this act of positing cannot be reduced to ascribing unreality to such objects: "to imagine an object is not to commit oneself in thought to its unreality; it is to be wholly indifferent to its reality." [8] Yet this view, like Sartre's similar notion of "neutralization," [9] does not go far enough in positively characterizing the thetic aspect of imagining proper. For, beyond "indifference" and "neutrality," there is a special thetic modification involved in all prototypical imagining. This concerns the positing of the imagined object as "merely possible" in the sense discussed above. The imagined object thus possesses an existential status of its own: that of pure possibility, which cannot be explicated in terms of reality or unreality or a mixture of the two together.[10] In imagining proper, we posit an object merely *as possible,* and nothing more; we do not posit it as either real or unreal, nor are we entirely neutral or indifferent toward it.

Entering now upon the second of the two cases mentioned above, we are nevertheless forced to observe that the object thus posited as merely possible may be in fact unreal. We can and do imagine unreal objects – that is, objects that we do not expect to, and indeed cannot, find in our ordinary experiential world. In imagining, we do not posit such objects *as* unreal, but upon analysis they may be revealed to be so. Thus, in the fervor of imagining the poet may speak of, and even "describe," [11] a hippogriff; in this act, the poet is not concerned with

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[7] *Ibid.*

[8] R. G. Collingwood, *Essays in the Philosophy of Art,* ed. Alan Donagan (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. 1964), p. 54.

[9] This term, originally Husserl's, is used extensively by Sartre in his description of imagination in *L'Imaginaire* (Gallimard, 1940). It should be noted, however. that neutrality is only one of four alternative ways in which the imagined object may be posited; the other three are absence, nonexistence, and existence elsewhere.

[10] Hence we depart here from Collingwood's claim that "the imaginary is not the opposite of the real, but the indifferent identity of the real and its opposite" (*op. cit.,* p. 54).

[11] The quotation marks indicate that this is an instance of what Sartre has called "quasi-observation" (see *op. cit.,* ch. 1, sec. 3).

whether such a mythical monster is real or unreal; he only assumes that it is an imaginative possibility – a possibility perhaps called for by the context of the poem he is writing. Upon reflection or investigation, he may discover that there never has been – and most likely, never will be – such a creature and that it is therefore eminently "unreal." This is not to deny that some or even all of the *parts* of the imagined hippogriff are drawn from what the poet has perceived – that is, from some segment of his personal experience. They may also be drawn from what the poet remembers of accounts he has read concerning certain real animals – accounts which in turn are based on direct observation and perception.

I have chosen the hippogriff because it is a classic example of what we would call a "complex unreal object." Such an example seems to provide ammunition for the traditional view of imagining as an act of associating images. In this view, the particular images we associate would each be directly traceable to a specific sensation (sometimes through the intermediary of memory). Thus, what Kant called "reproductive" imagination in its empirical employment involves the mere combination of what is already presented in the sensible manifold; and Coleridge spoke similarly of "fancy" as the mechanical association of "fixities and definites." [12] Before these two thinkers, there was general agreement, at least in the empiricist tradition, that the act of imagining was merely the construction of "complex ideas" on the basis of associating "simple ideas," and these latter turned out to be copies of impressions or sensations. From this restricted standpoint, the image (or more exactly, the imagined object) could only be a conjunction of simple ideas, each of which must arise from a determinate impression. "Imagining" consisted in the mere arrangement or rearrangement of these ideas.

One aspect of the philosophical revolution initiated by Kant and continued by Coleridge is that they refused to accept the thesis that the objects we imagine are complex in the sense of merely associational. It was Kant's notion of "synthesis," applied to the special case of imagining, that allowed a new vision of the imagined object to emerge. Without denying the role of a reproductive imagination – indeed, even admitting its essentiality – Kant discerned another function of imagining: the "productive." The productive imagination is what is primarily responsible for the synthetic character of imagined objects – that is, the sense in which they cannot be analyzed exhaustively in terms of the mere

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[12] See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B 152, 181; and S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), I, 202.

association of simple ideas. For association clearly does not exhaust synthesis understood as productive.[13] Each imagined object – real or unreal – represents a synthetic totality defying an analysis that would reduce the synthesis to a mere collocation of constituent elements. Such elements and their ultimate rooting in perception are not denied a function in the creation of the total imagined object;[14] but their merely associative combination is no longer regarded as a sufficient explanation of the emergent synthetic quality of this object. Coleridge termed this new and irreducible quality "esemplastic" or unified in an organic way. Kant was much more elaborate in his analysis of the various modes of possible combination by which synthetic unities could arise. But both men (and Coleridge with the additional aid of Schelling) grasped a dimension of imagining that had been overlooked by the empiricist tradition: the distinctly synthetic, wholistic character of imagined objects.

Lacking the space for further discussion of Kant, I want here only to trace out the consequences of his seminal insights for any adequate theory of imagining. With the aid of these insights, we can focus on the act of imagining proper and observe that, as productive of synthetic unities, it cannot be reduced to being a copy of perceptions or sensations. Of course, Hume would perhaps never claim that a complex unreal object like a hippogriff could, as imagined, be traced to a *single* impression.[15] But he and other empiricists failed to grasp the sense in which a mere collection of ideas, however vivid, can never produce a truly synthetic image of the hippogriff; the image as merely complex remains a conglomerate and cannot present itself as internally unified. Yet Kant would not restrict his thesis to complex unreal objects of imagination. In his view, every full act of imagining is productively synthetic; hence even simple imagined objects, real or unreal, are not fully comprehensible as simulacra or faded copies of impressions. The epistemological and ontological continuity between impression and idea is broken by a basic difference in type; accordingly, sensations and images are fundamentally different *kinds* of things. This means that, while constituents or parts of images may be correlated with or even traceable to certain specific sensations, the image as a whole (whether simple or complex) cannot be adequately accounted for in terms of the mere

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[13] *Critique,* B 152; strictly speaking, association belongs to reproductive imagination alone.

[14] *Ibid.,* A 770, B 798.

[15] The only such object that could be so traced would be the image of an *external* image of the hippogriff—e.g., an engraving of the mythical beast. But the impression of an external image, while perfectly possible, does not count as the impression of the beast itself. We shall return to this point below.

combination of such sensations or the direct transcription of such a combination at a higher level of awareness.

This bifucation of type becomes more difficult to maintain when one attends to the *objects* of images. Our identifying references are often strikingly similar in the case of the objects of both imagination and perception. I can refer to my friend "Robert" with the same proper name whether I perceive or "image" him. Moreover, the identifiable object of an image often presents itself as being the same general kind of thing that we perceive; it seems to be perceivable "in principle." The combination of these two factors makes it difficult to deny at first the seemingly plausible claim that "the imagination appears to have the same *sort* of objects as perception." [16] But the emphasis in this sentence should really be on "appears" and not on "sort." For the only meaning that "sort" has in this context is an extremely tenuous one; it points to a very diffuse genus that includes objects with similar identifying references but in fact sharing only a quite weak "theoretical" perceivability. Of course, some imagined objects – namely, those that are in themselves empirically real – are perceivable in a stronger sense in subsequent acts of apprehension, that is, once they are "disimagined" by being taken out of the imaginary sphere altogether. But unreal imagined objects are perceivable only in the weak sense that they are the sort of thing that *might* be perceived if the nature of the world or our co-ordinate conceptual framework were somehow altered. They are not perceivable, as we say, "in the normal course of events." Only if this course of events were radically altered would they become perceivable – for instance, if the hippogriff's mythical world were magically substituted for the present experiential world. Yet this move, in the present world-order, can be effected by imagination alone; it is not anything that the perceptual world itself suggests or elicits.

Therefore, to talk about unreal imagined objects as "in principle" or "theoretically" perceivable is to make a largely insubstantial claim. The hippogriff belongs essentially – given our present perceptual apparatus – to an imaginary realm; this is the only kind of domain in which it *could* be perceived, and to claim that it is perceivable in principle is to limit oneself to the odd and attenuated sense in which hippogriffs are somehow "perceived" or rather quasi-perceived in imaginary space. To claim this is to fall prey to a false analogy between imagining and perceiving, as if there could be an act of paraperceiving which is neither wholly perceptual nor wholly imaginational in character. To make hippogriffs perceivable, even in an imaginary world, is already to change

[16] Robert R. Ehman, "Imagination, Dream, and the World of Perception," in *The Journal of Existentialism* (Summer, 1965), p. 390. The italics are Ehman's.

our concept of a hippogriff: it is to include the rider that a hippogriff is "unperceivable except in imaginary space." But perception in an imaginary world would be itself a form of imagination; thus the hippogriff, however much we may qualify its concept, remains unperceivable in fact *and* in theory (in any strong sense of this latter term).

II

In turning from the act of imagining to the image, I want to consider first a claim that is frequently made or at least implied: viz., that a mental image is in some sense perceivable as a whole, or that the unreal object of such an image is perceivable. We have already touched on the second part of this claim, though we shall return to it below. For the moment, I want to examine the first part of the claim, that concerning the perceivability of the mental image.

It might be thought that such a claim is absurd ab initio on the ground that there are no such things as mental images to start with. Such seems to be the position of Ryle, who simply denies the existence of mental images.[17] But imagining as an intentional act requires an image to complete its intentional structure. It will not do to substitute "mental picture" for "image,"[18] for this tends to restrict images to representational ones. If mental images always contain imagined objects, these objects (real or unreal) are not necessarily *depicted* by the image. In fact, the image plays a more basic role, which we shall examine shortly. I want now only to indicate that a rejection of mental images altogether is simply misguided.

My argument in brief is that there are features of the imagining experience that cannot be attributed either to the act itself or to the real or unreal objects we imagine – hence the need for a third element, the image. To take J. M. Shorter's example: how do we account for the experience of having a "blurred image" of someone's face? Is it merely that our *act* of imagining is itself vague (as Sartre would suggest)[19]? This seems insufficient as an explanation, for the act may be distracted or fragmentary, but hardly *blurred* in itself. Is it then the object of the act that is vague? This seems more plausible – at least

[17] See Ryle, *op. cit.*, p. 246 f.

[18] This is a tendency among contemporary followers of Wittgenstein who trade on the ambiguity of the word "*Bild*" (which can mean either image, depiction, or painting). J. M. Shorter's article "Imagination" in D. F. Gustafson, *Essays in Philosophical Psychology* (Anchor, 1954), illustrates this tendency, though with more sophistication than Ryle, who makes "imagining" and "picturing" interchangeable (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 264f).

[19] See *L'Imaginaire*, ch. 1, Conclusion.

until we examine the phenomenon more closely. What we find is that the imagined object often presents itself as *indeterminate* in a special sense: incomplete and yet not completable by further inspection or examination. No amount of extra scrutiny will help to determine more accurately the nature of the object *as imagined.*[20] Thus the object is not so much blurred or vague as simply undeterminable. This leaves the *image itself* as the blurred item. It is in fact the image that is vague because, as we shall see, the image is really nothing but the mode in which the imagined object is presented to consciousness. This interpretation fits with our common-sense tendency to say that it is the *way* the object is presented in imagination that is vague, not the object itself. Thus, we can agree with Shorter that "the blur does not represent anything in the face visualized. It is, so to speak, a feature of the image in its own right."[21] But it is dangerous to interpret the image as a quasi-picture or -depiction, as Shorter proceeds to do. For this view takes us perilously close to the traditional error which Ryle has correctly exposed: the notion that we somehow 'see' images in a private theater of the mind.

The first part of the above claim is actually only another form of this classical mistake. For to say that we 'see' images, depictions, and the like with our mind's eye is to make an overextended analogy between imagination and perception. Of course, if perception is understood in a broad Lockean manner, it may not seem erroneous to assert that we 'perceive' nonsensory representations like images. The real issue arises, however, when a similar claim is made with respect to perception construed as strictly sensory. Then the question becomes whether images are themselves sensory in character and hence possible objects of perception. Such a view is tempting even to an avowed nonempiricist like Husserl, who makes sensory perception the basic "simple" or foundational act of consciousness.[22] This view, put forward in the sixth *Logical Investigation,* has as its corollary the "necessary parallelism" between perception and imagination: "to every possible perception there

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[20] This is another feature of "quasi-observation" in Sartre's view. We should note that the radical undeterminability of the imagined object contrasts strikingly with the typical (i.e., perceptual) 'noematic object" for Husserl, who describes the latter as a "determinable X" filled in with appropriate predicates. (See *Ideen I.* sect. 131.) The imagined object does not present itself as a "subject" term which can be fully determined by the ascription of predicates on the basis of observation.

[21] Shorter, *op. cit.,* p. 169.

[22] *Logische Untersuchungen,* VI (Halle: Niemeyer, 1913), sect. 47; cf. Marvin Farber, *The Foundation of Phenomenology* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1967), p. 455f.

corresponds a possible imagination." [23] Since perception is interpreted as exclusively sensory, the consequence of this view becomes, in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* the belief that images are strictly correlated with sensations: "to sensed red corresponds a phantasm of red." [24] Moreover, a phantasm or image is said to be a "presentification" or "re-presentation" *(Vergegenwärtigung, Re-präsentation)* of a sensation or "primal impression." Although images do possess their own "impressions," they depend for their "total content" [25] on underlying sensations. Only primal, sensory impressions are originary and unmodified; images are always "modifications" of such impressions. In spite of this dependence of images on sensory perception, Husserl never explicitly makes imagination into what Eugen Fink has called "a determinate mode of perception." [26] Nevertheless, he maintains that images are not only founded on perceptions, but are accessible to us through the latter alone. Hence he talks of the "perception *of* imagination," [27] and of presentification as "the object of impressional consciousness." [28] This comes perilously close to holding that the sensory basis of images allows them to be objects of perception.

I have taken Husserl as paradigmatic of a tendency on the part of both empiricists and phenomenologists to press the analogy between images and sensations to the point of a partial or even a total coincidence. There are at least two major problems with the resulting doctrine of images, especially as this appears in Husserl's early writing. First, on Husserl's own criteria, an image or imagination itself can never be the object of perception, for such an object must be present "corporeally" and "in person." The image is never present in this direct self-giving way; only physical objects and essences possess self-presence.[29] Secondly, by making images into "presentificational modifications of sensations," [30] Husserl risks falling into a reductive-genetic account of images that would ally him with the classical empiricists. The very notion of "re-

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[23] *Logische Untersuchungen, VI,* sect. 47; Farber, p. 458.

[24] *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* trans. J. S. Churchill (Bloomington: Univ. of Indiana Press, 1964), sect. 42, Appendix II.

[25] *"Gesamtgehalt": Ibid.,* sect. 31.

[26] "Vergegenwärtigung und Bild," in *Studien zur Phänomenologie* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1966), p. 75.

[27] *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* sect. 19; my italics.

[28] *Ibid.,* sect. 42.

[29] Husserl does speak of "self-presentification" (*Ibid.,* Appendix II), but it is clear that this possesses none of the concrete self-presence of sensory perception; the same holds for the "intuitive" character of presentification *(Ibid.),* which is not genuinely intuitive at all.

[30] *Ibid.,* Appendix II.

presentation" tends to deny any unique presentational feature to images, reducing them to second-order extensions of sensations. Thus described, they lose that "rush of immediate transition" which Whitehead claimed was typically overlooked by philosophers too concerned with "remote consequences." [31] It is not surprising that Fink, in spite of his strong doctrinal allegiance to Husserl, tried to restore to images their inherent "intuitive" character: their genuinely presentational nature.[32]

We could indicate other ways in which Husserl, in the formative stages of his thought, might advocate both parts of the above claim.[33] But the important point for our purposes is that the two parts are intrinsically connected: the empiricist-phenomenological reductionism applies both to the image as a whole and to its object. Both are conceived as belonging to the order of the perceivable, since both represent mere modifications of perceptual awareness. Yet the model for this awareness remains narrowly sensationalist. For Husserl as much as for Hume perception is inexorably sensory in character: "perception is built upon sensations." [34] With this model, sensational content is easily smuggled into both perception proper and imagination. Therefore, it can be seen that Husserl, along with many empiricists, is at least tacitly committed to the additional claim that sensation is a real *constituent* of imagination.[35] Further, we begin to suspect that the two claims are fundamentally allied in a basic empiricist-phenomenological theory of experience. But my objections to both claims constitute a critique of this theory prima-

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[31] *Process and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1929), p. 181.

[32] Fink, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-78. Fink stresses the difference between the founded character of presentification per se and the originary nature of pure images. By subsuming all images under presentification, Husserl, in spite of his efforts to the contrary. was forced to deny their genuinely intuitive quality.

[33] The same may hold even in the case of the later notion of "passive synthesis." Its "universal principle of association," though assuredly not psychophysical, is nevertheless modelled upon Hume's similar explanation of the genesis of complex unreal objects. Even the co-ordinate notion of "active synthesis" does not achieve a truly creative sense of synthesis; though it is supposed to "constitute new objects originally," it is in fact founded on passive synthesis. See *Cartesian Meditations,* sect. 38, and *Analysen zur Passiven Synthesis,* p. 177f., p. 385f.

[34] *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* p. 70.

[35] More exactly, Husserl claims that the *hyle* is a "real *(reelles)* [i.e., immanent] component of concrete lived experience" *(Ideen,* sect. 97). But the *hyle* also appears to by real in the stronger, psychophysical sense of *"reales"* because Husserl sometimes identifies it with the sense-datum *(Empfindungsdatum),* as when he claims that "sensory color" *(Empfindungsfarbe)* is a "hyletic moment of concrete lived experience" *(Ibid.).* The entire analysis of *hyle* is obscured by Husserl's vacillation between these two senses of reality, which he elsewhere succeeds in keeping separate (e.g., in *Idee der Phänomenologie*).

rily as it applied to the case of imagining alone. However adequate traditional empiricism and early forms of phenomenology are in accounting for perceptual experience, they are much less successful when directed at a mental act like imagining. More thoroughly than remembering, expecting, or even understanding, imagining proper resists a sensationalist reductionism.

But pointing out Husserlian or Humean errors is not yet to answer the first claim fully. It will be recalled that we have admitted that a *real* imagined object is perceivable as a whole, though only in a different context and on another occasion. But we cannot perceive an unreal object of imagining *at all,* on any occasion. At the most, an unreal imagined object is only "apparently perceivable"; as we have seen, it is the sort of thing that *might* be perceived, if our perceptual powers or the world itself were radically altered — e.g., if centaurs could really issue from the union of a man with a horse. Yet this merely postulated perceivability — which is "theoretical" only in a weak sense — is inconsequential in view of the fact that we human beings, using our given perceptual apparatus and living in our present experiential world, cannot perceive centaurs, hippogriffs, or the like. Except in schematic form — i.e., as an external image [36] and not in itself — a centaur or hippogriff cannot be perceived; it is a wholly fictitious entity, or rather, it is an entity that is fictitious or imaginary as a whole, though not necessarily in its component parts. But these parts are not merely atomic parts; they enter into a synthetic whole as inwardly unified ingredients. Of course, the perceivability of the parts, insofar as they are momentarily isolated, does not mean that these parts are actually perceived when we *imagine* the hippogriff or centaur, or that when we do in fact perceive these parts separately they are perceived *as* parts of such mythical creatures. In spite of its thin "theoretical" perceivability, the unreal object imagined as a whole asserts itself as indissoluble into the particular, genuinely per-

[36] The term "external image" is Sartre's and refers to what Husserl calls an "image-object" *(Bildobjekt)* in his discussion of Dürer's engraving, "The Knight, Death, and the Devil" in *Ideen,* sect. 111. An external image is at the opposite end of the scale from a mental image; it is located wholly and securely in the spatiotemporal world of physical things. But it is not merely a physical object like a stone; instead, it is an object that "depicts" other objects or states of affairs. Thus, an external image is similar to what Wittgenstein terms a "picture-object" *(Bildgegenstand)* in *Philosophical Investigations,* p. 194, though Wittgenstein limits his consideration to essentially ambiguous external images (the "duck-rabbit" in this case). An external image is also very like what we shall discuss below as the perceivable "bearer" of a mental image; the latter phenomenon is in fact a special case of the external image, which possesses no *essential* relation to mental images.

ceivable origins of its parts. Moreover, whenever we do imagine a hippogriff or centaur, we imagine it as a whole; otherwise, it would not have the full meaning accruing to the terms 'hippogriff' or 'centaur.' Though we may also imagine parts of unreal objects, they are then imagined precisely *as* parts of the whole – e.g., the 'front half *of* a hippogriff.' (This synthetic-wholistic character also belongs to real objects that are imagined. But such objects can subsequently be *perceived* as wholes, whereas unreal objects cannot.)

It will be recalled that the first claim above also included the putative perceivability of the mental image as a whole. By now we have seen that such a claim is erroneous, as is the attenuated form of this claim that only *part* of the mental image is directly perceivable. For the mental image, unlike the external image, is of a wholly different order from perceivable objects; its intrinsic character, as well as its mode of apprehension, are unique. If we can admit that the unreal objects of a mental image sustain a certain tenuous relation with a largely empty sense of theoretical perceivability, the image itself does not in any way fall under this broad genus. One reason why unreal objects are subject to this deflated, drawn-out "perceivability" is that they are still *objects* of a sort that resemble perceivable things more than they do wholly nonperceivable unreal entities such as we find in mathematics. Thus, most unreal objects *appear* as the kind of "thing" we can or might perceive. But mental *images* are not objects or things in the first place, except in the special sense of being "intentional objects" (and such objects need have no physicalistic, thing-like properties).

In an effort to combat the view that mental images are thing-like it is perhaps natural to go to the other extreme and claim that mental images are simply acts of consciousness. This is what Sartre does when he proclaims that "the image is an act, not some thing." [37] But such a move flies in the face of language and exact description, for the act of imagination is what we call "imagining," not the "image." A more adequate interpretation of the image is found in regarding it as *the presentation of an imagined object to consciousness*. "Presentation" here has the force of *a* presentation – something possessing direct givenness – and not an *act* of presenting. The image (henceforth shorthand for "mental image") is the mode or pattern in which an imagined object is apprehended by our consciousness. This mode assumes the form of a *field* in which the imagined object (real or unreal, simple or complex) appears as the focal point of our attention. This field forms the ground for the imagined object as the explicit figure or theme. The image, then, is a field-

[37] *Imagination,* p. 146.

phenomenon – and it occurs necessarily in acts of imagining proper. The imagined object is given *with* and *in* the field formed by the image as a whole; it also appears *through* it in that the image as field is what makes the appearances of the object manifest to consciousness.

In any event, it is certain that the image does not necessarily refer directly to something sensuously perceivable. In many instances, an image will be primarily self-referential; [38] any connection we may trace between it and empirical reality is secondary and often related to a concern for providing a causal-genetic analysis of the image. This does not mean, however, that Wittgenstein is justified in claiming that "Images tell us nothing, either right or wrong, about the external world." [39] This is correct only if it is meant that they tell us nothing *directly* about the world, for there are a significant number of indirect links between images and empirical experience. For one thing, they often utilize or presuppose knowledge that is founded upon this experience; that is to say, they often involve such cognitive factors as recognition, identification, or time-sense.[40] These factors may be employed in the act of imagining itself. Nevertheless, this act does not inform us in any immediate way about the experiential world. At the most, images present to us certain cognitive possibilities; but these possibilities, as we have seen, are not related to this world (or to the self, for that matter) in any necessarily descriptive, explanatory, or even hypothetical way. This does not mean that they may not *lead to* eventual knowledge concerning the empirically real – and perhaps also to metaphysical insight. But in themselves, pure possibilities are not empirically falsifiable; [41] only subsequent interpretation

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[38] Thus, in Fink's term, images possess a "self-designatability" *(Sichzeigenkönnen)* – cf. Fink, *op. cit.*, p. 72 – that distinguishes them from symbols and signs, which typically have exterior referents. This distinction is seen most clearly in art, where a successful image draws and keeps our attention on itself – while a mere "symbol" distracts our aesthetic concentration, forcing us to refer beyond the presented work to an extraneous content.

[39] *Zettel,* ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967), par. 621.

[40] Of course, this is not the ordinary time-sense employed in perception and memory, but a radical modification of it. Husserl has suggested that we have to do with a "quasi-time" (as well as a "quasi-space") in the imaginary world. See *Erfahrung und Urteil* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1964), pp. 188-203; also Sartre, *L'Imaginaire,* Part IV, sect. 1, and Fink, *op. cit.*, sect. 20.

[41] Non-falsifiability is also part of the meaning of fiction, even realistic fiction. For characters in novels are not to be taken as referring to historical prototypes; even when they do so refer, they are posited as merely possible – as 'fictitious' as centaurs. This is why objective reference to real objects has no privileged position in the imaginary realm, as it does in memory or history proper.

and application in the light of memory, perception, or theory bring them into a corrigible relation to reality. But precisely at this later point, they cease to be pure possibilities. They become images deflected from their inner nisus: the transcendence of the real toward the purely possible. The illumination which, as pure possibles, they may cast on the experiential world is not direct, but inferred. The independence of images from reality – more generally, of imagination from perception – may be precarious and even relative, but it is nonetheless essential.

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As nonfalsifiable, imagined objects and images themselves might seem to be wholly subjective and idiosyncratic items. Yet they do possess an objectivity that goes beyond even their intrinsic meaning or structure. Or rather, we should say that the objectivity of this meaning or structure is somehow reinforced when imagined objects or images are described and made comprehensible to others. The objectivity I have in mind here is not reducible to the way in which an imagined real object may refer to its "noematic correlate";[42] for centaurs and hippogriffs, which lack noematic correlates, can also become publicly accessible. How is this so, when it is the case that something unreal by nature cannot be conveyed *directly* by perceptual means to someone else? Such an object seems to remain an object of what Shakespeare called "the soul's imaginary sight," and as such only an object of an individual imagining consciousness. Yet poets – as well as painters and occasionally even philosophers – do succeed in expressing to *others* the pure possibilities they posit or envision. How is this to be accounted for?

The phenomenon is to be explained, I believe, in terms of a distinction between the image itself (including the object presented in it) and its physical "bearer" or "support."[43] While the image is not itself perceivable – since it is not composed of anything empirically real in the form of sense-data, secondary qualities, or any other psychophysical constituents – what bears and presents it to perception *is* physically, spatiotemporally real. It is this material support that we can in fact perceive: the canvas and oil paint in the case of the painter,[44] the printed or spoken word in the case of the philosopher and poet. Such inherently perceivable bearers are what makes expression of otherwise private mental images possible in a social universe like our own. The bearers make manifest and public what is otherwise doomed to lie latent in the rela-

[42] In Husserl's sense of the term in *Ideen,* sect. 128-133.

[43] See Fink, *op. cit.,* p. 73 f, for a similar distinction.

[44] More exactly, the *surface* of the canvas and paint, as Fink points out (*Ibid.,* p. 76).

tively supine and isolated imagining consciousness; and this public character of mental images is not a new trait they gain, but a potentiality they realize when embodied and revealed in various material supports.

The reason why this phenomenon is often overlooked is that our thematic attention in imagining is focused on the imagined object; only marginally are we aware of the image as its presentational field. This means that the bearer is typically neglected, and often assumes the character of "hiddenness." [45] This is most evident in art, where the medium or support may be spontaneously transcended toward the objects borne and "meant" by this support. But the artist more frequently calls attention to his medium than does the philosopher, who tends to demand the immediate surpassing of the printed page or spoken word toward a carefully cultivated realm of concepts. But both artist and philosopher, poet and prose-writer, typically direct us to something beyond the range of the perceivable. In this paper, those metaperceivable entities called concepts have been purposely neglected in order to concentrate on another decisive class of metaperceivable items: imagined objects and the images in which they appear. These objects, posited as purely possible, and the images that present them are the intentional correlates of the act of imagining treated in Part I. Together, they compose the total phenomenon of imagination in its most essential form.

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[45] "*Verdecktheit*" is Fink's term for this phenomenon; see *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.