

Fiction and Phenomenology

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Source: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Sep., 1968), pp. 16-33

Published by: International Phenomenological Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2105815>

Accessed: 22-05-2020 16:27 UTC

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## FICTION AND PHENOMENOLOGY

### I

Little has been said about the special significance of fancy in Husserl's philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Insofar as philosophy shows its power primarily in the making of distinctions, and secondarily in the derivation of a science which takes these distinctions as axiomatic, the means Husserl uses to make the distinction most central to his science of phenomenology has been ignored. It is in some casual remarks about fancy — remarks not following from any ruling stipulations — that Husserl demonstrates

*the positing of the essence . . . does not imply any positing of individual existence whatsoever: pure essential truths do not make the slightest assertion concerning facts.*<sup>2</sup>

Husserl asserts that “the general and essential nature of immediate, intuitive essence-apprehension”<sup>3</sup> is assured more by pure essence “exemplified intuitively” “*in the mere data of fancy*”<sup>4</sup> than by pure essence exemplified “in the data of experience, data of perception, memory, and so forth.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Perception is seen as superior to imagination, or at the most the “parallelism between perception and imagination” is emphasized. But this parallelism, by reason of which “a simple imagination is coordinated with every single perception,” gives the edge to perception: “no matter how great the completeness of an imagination, there is still a difference as opposed to perception: it does not give the object itself, not even in part; it gives only its image, which, so long as it is an image, is never the thing itself.” Marvin Farber, *The Foundation of Phenomenology*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1967, pp. 458, 441-2. Hereafter *Farber*. In general whatever the “homogeneous of perceptions and imaginations,” (*Farber*, p. 413) phenomenology is said to give perception “priority” over imagination. See e.g. Alphonse De Waelhens, *Phénoménologie et Vérité*, Louvain, Editions Nauwelaerts, 1965, p. 9. My paper will bring this assumption in question. The ambiguity of the connection will be explored; the special significance of imagination for phenomenology — the prerogatives allowed it which perception does not have — will be emphasized.

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 57. London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1952. Hereafter *Ideas*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ideas*, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> *Ideas*, p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Husserl's concern with "free fancies" which "assume a privileged position over against perceptions"<sup>6</sup> arises indirectly, from his effort to establish a "logic" for the apprehension of phenomena and absolute data. In the course of his presentation of this logic Husserl falls into contradiction. Part I of this paper will demonstrate the meaning of the privilege (*Vorzugsstellung*) of fancy and show it to be necessitated by the logic of essence-apprehension. Part II will study the consequences of Husserl's contradiction of this conception of fancy, for Husserl says that while free fancy is privileged "even in the phenomenology of perception itself," "sensory data" or the data of "outer perception" are "prior" to the data of fancy. Free fancies are then no longer free of experience, but are kinds of memories, modifications of representations of the factually given, and thus enslaved by experience. This conception is incommensurate with the privileged position of fancy for securing "adequate insight into pure essences," and must be denied so long as Husserl's remark that "fiction" is the life blood of phenomenology is taken seriously.

While examining the "changes of appearance" of evidence, Husserl shows a growing awareness that ease of apprehension is essential for the intuition of essences or absolute data. This ease must have its origins elsewhere than in experience, for it is impossible in experience. Experience is too preoccupied with facts to trouble to apprehend essences. Some other mode of apprehension, able to attend to essences because it implies no strict loyalty to facts, must make itself felt. Initially a "middle-ground" between experience of facts and intuition of essences, the fancying of fictional images is acknowledged. The data it affords are put to simple use, to clearly differentiate facts and essences.

If a distinction between them is not made explicit, essences could be conceived as implicit in facts, as the ground of their being-there. Essences could not in themselves be taken seriously. Objective only insofar as they were "subsumed" by facts, they would be techniques to sustain the meanings of facts, enabling statements about the significance of facts to be made independently of the presence of facts. Essences would be symbolic of the sense of facts, or at the least figures of speech expressive of the self-evidence of facts in experience. Apprehending an essence does no more than attribute "importance" to facts.<sup>7</sup> An essence is a hypostasized fact, the sovereign of experience. This pragmatic interpretation of the "persuasive power" of fact as essence precludes conceiving

<sup>6</sup> *Ideas*, p. 199.

<sup>7</sup> This is what philosophers of experience do. E.g., A. N. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, Cambridge at the University Press, 1956, chap. 1 on "Importance."

essence as in any sense other than an elaborate property of fact. This discounts, as a mischievous illusion, any suggestion of essence-apprehension; consciousness is reduced to a pattern of "clear and distinct ideas" about facts of experience. A quasi-positivistic empiricism, experience of the individual existence of facts, is the exclusive and inclusive mode of apprehension, the only origin of the objective mode of givenness of things.

Husserl's assertion of the intuitive exemplification of pure essences in data of fancy precludes this overpowering of pure essences by experienced facts. Free fancies are not mere elucidations of experienced facts. Fictions are neither impressions of fact nor by-products of perception nor reducible to sensory data. Thus, they inhibit the skepticism that could reduce essence-apprehension to "purification" of fact. To deny that experiencing and fancying can be equated guarantees that reason will not reconceive intuitions of pure essences as especially clear perceptions of facts. Thus, with the use of the conception of fancy Husserl denies the "absoluteness" of the fact-world, denies it not only sovereignty over the essence-world, but the right to trivialize and exploit essences once they have made their appearance.

Fancy is a source of "insight into pure essences in manifold variety".<sup>8</sup> It offers us, by "ideation," i.e., "primordial dator insight into essential being, and even then chiefly of the adequate type,"<sup>9</sup> essences such as "in general," "as such," and "type."<sup>10</sup> It offers these essences through fictions of perception — images. These are not contingent on cases of actual perception.

It is a matter of indifference . . . whether such things (fancies) have ever been given in actual experience or not.<sup>11</sup>

However, this says that we may be as indifferent to experiences of fact as we are interested in apprehensions of images. We must be more specific about the relations between data of experience, data of fancy, and pure essences.

Just as to think a fact or to express it needs the grounding of experience (so far as the *essential relevancy* of such thinking *necessarily* demands it), so thought concerning pure essence — the unmixed thought, not that which connects essence and facts together — needs for its *grounding* and support an insight into the essences of things.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ideas*, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> *Ideas*, p. 56.

<sup>10</sup> *Ideas*, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ideas*, pp. 57-58. Husserl explicitly asserts "the intuitive content" to be "*imaginative or picture-content.*" Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, Halle, Max

Fancy is such insight. It is the grounding and support for “thought concerning pure essence.” Data of fancy, being “insight into the essence of things,” are closer in character to pure essences than data of experience. Perception in itself affords no insight into the essences of things. Things can continue unthinkable in perception. Only the insight of fancying shows things as sufficiently intelligible to be a source of essences. In effect, fictions incarnate insights into things: images convey the consciousness that things have essences. Fancying is a “seeing,” not an experiencing; as such, it implies an abstraction from the course of events. To fancy is not to suffer facts but as it were to stand at a distance from them and “see” their essences.<sup>13</sup> Yet when seeing is sustained the essence is seen as separate from the thing, as pure. (We will show that only the pure Ego — the most sustained seeing — can sustain this separation.) Thus, we first end our submission to experience by seeing the possibility of things having essences. This possibility is given to us in the fiction of the thing. A fiction as it were apotheosizes the absolute necessity of intelligibility for essential knowledge of the thing. Assured, by fancying, of the being-there of intelligibility — not guaranteed by the experience of the course of events — we are able to see in more sophisticated fashion. We are able to see the independence of intelligibility from things, and how essences are responsible for it. Thus fancying is propaedeutic to essence-apprehensions, affording the ease of apprehension which makes clear the independence of essence from things. Fancying is the necessary ground of “higher” apprehension — intuition. No doubt experience precedes insight as insight precedes intuition, but no amount of experience necessarily affords insight, while insight necessarily grounds intuition for insight has half-apprehended the object of intuition, viz., essence.

In a sense, seen from the side of pure essences, fancying makes comprehensible the objective character of essences, their absolute givenness, by re-presenting them “subjectively” in fictions, thus making them accessible to consciousness. Seen from the side of things, fancying makes comprehensible subjective, i.e., merely experienced, things by re-presenting them in “objective” fictions, i.e., images free of experience’s flux.

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Niemeyer, 1922, Vol. I, Part II, p. 82. Hereafter *Logic*. This implies that fancy is “Not mere perception, but adequate, categorially formed perception, completely measuring up to thought . . .” *Logic*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 168. Husserl also remarks, “Every intuitive presentation of something objective represents it according to the mode of phantasy.” Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1964, p. 134. Hereafter *Time*.

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, Lectures 1-2 on “seeing.” Hereafter *Phenomenology*.

Fiction, simultaneously objective and subjective, involves re-presenting things in "essential truth" and pure essences in "visible form." When we fancy our two eyes focus in one insight; we see the essential things, which is a mere image to the cyclopean consciousness of experience. Fancying unites "vision" of things or insight into things with anticipation of pure essences or the visionary's anticipation of purer things than facts. This visionary is the artist in our consciousness, the pure Ego; and it his combination of insight and anticipation that makes possible ease of essence-apprehension. Where, because of the "natural attitude,"<sup>14</sup> there is experience of facts, in fancying there is the presence of phenomena and prescience about essences. Thus fancying first makes visible to us the field of phenomena, as Husserl emphasizes when he ties fiction and phenomenology in a Gordian knot.<sup>15</sup>

In art's fiction we apprehend the essences of things, see things "in general," things "as such," "typical" things. To see typically, in general, as such is to see essentially. Turning from the appearances of things in experience to their appearances in works of art, we are in the "privileged position" of seeing pure essences appear. The fiction is like a stage on which appearance of things are easily apprehended. On this stage, which is at a distance from the spectator's natural experience of appearances, pure essences condescend, like *dei ex machina*, to make an appearance, and decide the destiny of the actors, the appearances of things. For the spectator to come on stage as though it were another street in the fact-world and pure essences more seductive kinds of fact out for a stroll, is to destroy the "illusion" of pure essences. If the spectator treats pure essences as he treats all other appearances, taking them as manifestations of matter-of-fact things — thereby violating and ultimately annihilating the artistic fiction, the artificial appearances of things in art-works — then all essences slowly become unapproachable and disappear. Only facts continue to appear, and are seen though our seeing is half-blind.

For convenience, insight into the essences of things will be called "impure intuition," and intuition of pure essences "pure intuition." An image is an impure intuition. Impure intuition is the condition for pure intuition. It affords crucial ease of apprehension, an ease about the appearances of things impossible in experience. Being "beyond" facts by being "artistic" or fanciful calls into being consciousness' power of penetrating appearances. This aids and abets clarity of consciousness, which in effect is the clarity of the image or the distinctness of the fiction. Such clarity is conceivable only when consciousness effects its

<sup>14</sup> *Phenomenology*, p. 13f.

<sup>15</sup> *Ideas*, pp. 200-201. To be discussed below.

entry into the spacious realms of essential possibility with their infinite horizons of essential knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

The extent of entry into the spacious realms of essential possibility increases in direct proportion to the "distance" from the fact-world fancy puts consciousness. Proliferation and intensity of imagery extends awareness of essential possibilities, thus clarifying consciousness of the appearances of things. No consciousness is unclear insofar as it is an insight trying to achieve essential knowledge, for it always has images to sustain it. In general, all intuition expresses consciousness' aim of achieving essential knowledge. Imagination is a partial achievement of this aim, for it establishes the "reality" of the object of the aim. The pure intuition of the pure Ego completely possesses this object, the essence; has it in absolute purity. Thus, the more essential the knowledge, the clearer the consciousness. Imagination shows that clear consciousness is the ground for essential science. With clear consciousness, we are no longer naive about things, for we understand that they appear, and that there is a logic to their appearances, and we must see the essential possibility of any given appearance. A science of such pure possibilities is possible, and impure intuition affords the first data of this science.

Husserl completes his account of fancy's powers by showing that they exist wherever there is a concern for essential knowledge, in any science.

The geometer when he thinks geometrically operates with imagery vastly more than he does with percepts of figures or models; and this is true also of the "pure" geometer, who dispenses with the methods of algebra. In fancy it is true he must toil to secure clear intuitions, and from the labour the drawing and the model set him free. But in actual drawing and modelling he is restricted; in fancy he has perfect freedom in the arbitrary recasting of the figures he has imagined, in running over continuous series of possible shapes, in the production there of an infinite number of new creations; a freedom which opens up to him for the first time an entry into the spacious realms of essential possibility with their infinite horizons of essential knowledge. The drawings therefore follow normally *after* the constructions of fancy and the pure eidetic thought built upon these as a basis, and serve chiefly to fix stages in the process already previously gone through, thereby making it easier to bring it back to consciousness once again. Even where the thinker "meditates" over the figure, the new processes of thought which link themselves on to it have fancy-processes as their sensory basis, and it is the results of this work of fancy which fix the new lines of the figure.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ideas*, p. 200. Farber, p. 441: "Since the production of phantasy-images is subject to our will to a much greater extent than that of perceptions and positings in general, we are accustomed to relate possibility to phantasy-imagery."

<sup>17</sup> *Ideas*, pp. 199-200. See *Logic*, Vol. I, p. 252f. for more on the distinction between images and models. It is instructive to compare this with another account of a geometer's activity (*Logic*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 65f.). In this account Husserl

The interior monologue of imagery frees the geometer from preconceptions given him by models drawn from experience. These models serve to establish geometry as a science of the experience of geometrical figures. This science would win its certainty from "factual" models; it would be as "logically clear" as its models were "absolute" or categorical. But Husserl suggests models be seen as originating in images not facts. The best models are not matter-of-fact but fanciful. They are static or "mechanical" versions of images. In effect, models are obvious for the purposes of demonstrating essential geometrical knowledge insofar as images of geometrical possibilities are clear. Geometrical images show the geometrical essences of things; the models merely write the images large, so to speak. Ideally, models take their point of departure for demonstration purposes from things seen as images, not things seen matter-of-factly. Insofar as there is essential geometrical knowledge, "geometrical experience" does not precede but is a consequence of geometrical imagery.

We must not be misled by Husserl's assertion that clear images must be toiled for, while the model frees us from this work. This does not mean the model is inherently clear, while the image is originally obscure, and slowly, laboriously made transparent, until its clarity culminates in the model. Models and drawings make a better appearance than images, but only because they are fictions treated as things. They could not be so treated if consciousness had not already worked at images, at seeing possibilities essential to science, and selecting the most essential as working models for science. Husserl's emphasis should be less on the relative amounts of work put into image and model than on the conception of the model as an image taken without reference to the process of fancy that produced it. The model exists not for the consciousness that produced it, but for the consciousness which takes it as "certain" for demonstrating scientific truths. The image no longer seen fancifully appears to be model, i.e., axiomatic, and thus science's validating datum. Using axioms, working from models, the scientist forgets the fanciful origins of his data. They are taken for granted, as matter of fact.

Simply to speak of science's process of fancy shows experience does not guarantee a science or systematic analysis of things. Only the process of fancy shows the possibility of a scientific approach to things, for it shows the intelligibility of things, their essential existence. The image is the elementary form of the intelligible thing. Reason works with this

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deprecates the use of pictures, whereas in the quotation he is obviously giving it great significance.



“model thing,” aiming to apprehend its essential truth, its self-evidence. We can never know the self-evidence of naturally experienced things, for they are never completely intelligible, and thus we can have no essential knowledge of them.

Thus images aid the “freedom of research” essential to any science. They convey the freedom to re-search the thing for its essential evidentness after the natural attitude has searched the thing’s apparent givenness and seen that it could not be sure with what certainty the thing was evident.

... the freedom of research in the region of the essence necessarily demands that one should operate with the help of fancy.<sup>18</sup>

In effect, fancy is a kind of freedom of research, for its images imply consciousness of possibilities essential to thinking easily about things. Fancy researches things for their essences after the natural attitude has naively let them pass by, matter-of-factly experiencing them. Freedom of research in any science is possible only when there is freedom from the flux of the totality of experience. Fancy affords this freedom by offering the image of the things, imaging the thing, isolating it from the totality of experience. Moreover, the image abides while the thing is swept away in the course of experience. Fiction lifts the thing out of the flux, holding it steady so that it need not be looked for throughout all experience. All this establishes the conditions for ease of apprehension.

In a sense, the process of fancy is a limbo between naive experience and essential knowledge. But it is limbo only from the standpoints of experience and knowledge, which are self-seeking and would like to use images for their own ends. Yet the process of fancy conveys something more than either experience or knowledge. It conveys the constant involvement of consciousness with the appearances of things, the constant effort of consciousness to make things clear to itself. The process of fancy is essentially the effort of consciousness to make clear to itself whatever crosses its path. As such, the process of fancy is the archetype of all consciousness.

... the procedure of *making clear to oneself* consists here in *two* inter-connected sets of procedures: *rendering intuitable*, and *enhancing the clearness of what is already intuitable*.<sup>19</sup>

In the course of making things clear to itself consciousness produces

<sup>18</sup> *Ideas*, p. 200. Cf. the discussion of “mere imagination” in *Phenomenology*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>19</sup> *Ideas*, p. 196. Cf. *Phenomenology*, p. 28f., 40, on “seeing”.

images to “capture” the clarity in the appearances of things it has made clear to itself. Also, consciousness must first render itself intuitible, make itself clear to itself; this clarity it captures in the supremest fiction, the image of the pure Ego. Husserl asserts that every making clear to oneself posits the pure Ego, for only the essential Ego can have essential knowledge. Fictions are things consciousness has made clear to itself; consciousness makes clear to itself a self that can make essences clear to itself, a self that can come close to the things consciousness has made clear to itself and have essential knowledge of them. In effect, self-sufficient fictions are pure worlds — self-sufficiency and purity are correlate<sup>20</sup> — so to speak “miraculous” worlds, i.e., worlds neither experiencible nor shaped by the flux of experience. Only by seeing such essential worlds can the pure Ego have essential knowledge. A more naive consciousness, i.e., one less clear to itself, more selfless (not clear enough to itself to know it is an ego), has impure knowledge, knowledge of experienced facts. Thus, when Husserl remarks

... we need to scrutinize our illustrative instances more closely or to contrive others that are better suited, in which the pertinent single features left confused and obscure stand out and can then be transformed into data of the clearest kind,<sup>21</sup>

he implies examples are closer to experiences than essences, and so are obscure, unessential. The “illustrative instances” are images. The “data of the clearest kind” are pure essences. When an image’s features are “confused and obscure” it is because the image is not sufficiently fictional. It seems like the experienced fact, rather than a possible appearance of the essential thing. The thing’s features “stand out” only in the complete fiction of a possible appearance.

Every making clear of a thing to oneself involves an immanent “glancing-towards” the object, a directedness which from another side springs forth from the “Ego,” which can therefore never be absent.<sup>22</sup>

This “glancing-towards” is the ground of the process of fancy, its most elementary form. At the same time, it is the elementary form of the pure Ego, the first appearance of the fiction of the pure Ego. The glance at things is a kind of first fancifulness about them, in sharp contrast to our naive involvement with things, our natural experience of them. The glance is the ancestor of epoché, a kind of *Ursprung* of suspending-bracketing, a kind of *Urform* of “detachment” from the thing. The

<sup>20</sup> Husserl on what he means by “pure,” *Logic*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 83.

<sup>21</sup> *Ideas*, p. 197. In *Logic*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 132, Husserl speaks of example as “*rohes Analogon*” of “*das anschaulich Einzelne*.”

<sup>22</sup> *Ideas*, p. 121.

glance is the seed from which a healthy process of fancy will grow. It is the core of making clear things to oneself. Epoché, the fruit of the glance, is the condition for realizing the essential seeing implicit in the glance. Thus, through phases of development from the glance through the process of fancy to intuition, “apprehension” perfects itself. Correspondingly, the “appearance of the thing” grows in clarity, can be spoken of with more certainty, finally seems self-evident. First the thing is given matter of factly, then as an example of some experience(s). The example is too much like a fact to show the essential truth of the thing. We purify the example — already achieved by a primitive process of fancy — reconceiving it as an image. The objectivity of the apparent thing in the image is abstracted, i.e., seen as self-sufficient, in no need of the image, its seeming origin, to “exist.” This objectivity, the essence of the thing, asserts nothing about the individual existence of the thing. Thus the essence is seen to be pure, independent of any particular thing.

The image is consciousness at play with possibilities and so ready to be “scientific” about appearances. In the process of fancy consciousness glances towards things to see the possibility of knowing them. Consciousness tests the possibility by showing it in an image, a kind of elementary knowledge of the thing. This implies essential knowledge or it is discarded. The glance shows the possibility of cognition, but what the glance conveys may not be essential knowledge. A glance at the glance and the images it produces must be made to show the possibility of essential knowledge.

The pure Ego’s sustained glance at pure essences is preceded by art’s intense glance at things, more sustained than experience’s casual, naive glance at facts. In a sense, art softens up the hard facts; it strips them of their matter-of-factness, revealing their essential character. No longer hard facts naked things show objective essences. The thing’s features stand out with fictitious clarity, because the thing’s factuality — obscuring insight into it — has been taken from it. In the image of the thing the thing’s essential features, its intelligibility, are no longer so unclear as they are in the factual thing. Thus with art’s glance at things goes science’s hope for complete certainty about things. Art’s glance at things is thus more intense and poignant than the pure Ego’s glance at pure essences. Art’s glance is more difficult, requires more effort, for it must disentangle things from matter-of-fact events by reaching into fast-moving experience. In contrast, the pure Ego has things on “dry ground.” Unable to swim away in the course of experience, because art has captured them, things are easily seen. Art, not the pure Ego, struggles with things, tames them, makes them approachable pets rather than

monsters rising out of the stream of experience to threaten us then disappearing as though they had never existed.

Consciousness invents art to free itself of experience, so that it can glance at what is not obviously given in experience, viz., pure essences. Like the pure essence, the image asserts nothing about individual existence, as Husserl shows while differentiating thing and image.

I am at present meditating; a whistle from the street distracts me momentarily from my thema (in this case a thought-thema). A moment in which I am turned towards the sound, but forthwith a return to the old thema. The apprehension of the sound is not blotted out, we are still conscious of the whistle in a modified way, but we no longer hold it in our mental grasp. It does not belong to the thema, not even to a parallel thema. We notice . . . this possibility of simultaneous themata and *thematic syntheses which may cut across and "disturb" each other* . . .<sup>23</sup>

Insofar as the whistle is a theme of my consciousness it is an image. The whistle comes to my consciousness when I try to make it clear to myself. Otherwise, it is something experienced or unexperienced, if I am deaf. Experiencing the whistle, I endure its hard factuality. In my consciousness of it I can neither approach nor withdraw from it; but I can withdraw from my consciousness of it, my image of it. One cannot at will turn from one experience to another; the world is in the way. But one can play with themes of thought, with images, as with toys, possible things. In experience, things are not so much in my power as they are in images. In a sense, consciousness "intends" images, to control its experience of things. However, it does not intend them, for images are merely the means consciousness uses to work its way towards essences. This ambiguous attitude of consciousness towards its own products, images, accounts for the changing status of fancy in Husserl's thought. The value of fancy changes according to consciousness' self-consciousness. In *The Idea of Phenomenology*, where this is of little account, fancy is "mere imagination," a minor matter in contrast to perception.<sup>24</sup> In *Ideas* fancy is given a privileged position. This has less to do with paradox than emphasis: on pure essences as the ultimate concern of the seeing consciousness is, or on the immediate, spontaneous imagining

<sup>23</sup> *Ideas*, p. 344.

<sup>24</sup> One of the reasons Husserl initially relegates fancy to an inferior status is that he was consciously attacking two "psychological" conceptions of fancy. One was the view that a fantasy picture was essential to understanding an expression, a view which tended to obscure all differences between *imaginatio* and *intellectio* (*Logic*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 61). The other was the view, attributed to "medieval nominalism," which took ideas as "*Kunstgriffe*," dexterous, tricky ways of handling things (*Logic*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 166). In both cases fancy is no more than a poor middleman between things and ideas.

of experience by consciousness. Consciousness' immediate experience is illogical but imaginative. The images thereby produced consciousness takes as mediate insofar as they serve its logic, viz., its perseverance towards pure essences.

Husserl makes explicit the contingency of phenomenology on fiction.

It is naturally important . . . (once again as in geometry, which has recently and not idly been attaching great value to collections of models and the like), to make rich use of fancy in that service of perfect clearness which we are here demanding, to use it in the free transformation of the data of fancy, but previously also to fructify it through the richest and best observations possible in primordial intuition; noting, of course, that this fructifying does not imply that experience as such can be ground of validity. We can draw extraordinary profit from what history has to offer us, and in still richer measure from the gifts of art and particularly of poetry. These are indeed fruits of imagination, but in respect of the originality of the new formations, of the abundance of detailed features, and the systematic continuity of the motive forces involved, they greatly excel the performances of our own fancy, and moreover, given the understanding grasp, pass through the suggestive power of the media of artistic presentation with quite special ease into perfectly clear fancies.

Hence, if anyone loves a paradox, he can readily say, and say with strict truth if he will allow for the ambiguity, that the *element which makes up the life of phenomenology as of all eidetical science is "fiction,"* that fiction is the source whence the knowledge of "eternal truths" draws its sustenance.<sup>25</sup>

This quotation is important for what it tells us of the existence of a limitless, continuous process of fancy, in effect the essence of consciousness. For consciousness to know the possibility of knowledge it must first itself be possible as a process of fancy. Consciousness as a process of fancy is confident in itself, for it has an identity that shows it to itself as independent of experience. Art reveals that things not only have unexpected essences, but that consciousness is an unexpected activity, a process of fancy. Consciousness is no mere shadow of experience; within it is an artist, the pure Ego, imagining a science of pure possibilities. In effect, science is a fanciful way of glancing at things. It is the art of arts, as much art as logic, as much at work with intuitions as with formulas. Thus fiction, because of the extraordinary clarity it affords in contrast to experience, gives consciousness a clarity which makes it essential. Without a grounding in clear consciousness, science cannot be essential. If the process of fancy did not make consciousness clear, it would be a passive wax imprinted by impressions of fact, and art would be the apotheosis of this mimicry of facts, a meaningless imitation of apparent things.

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<sup>25</sup> *Ideas*, pp. 200-201, section 70.

## II

Husserl's conception of "*the process of fancy in general*" as

*the neutrality-modification of the "positing" act of representation, and therefore of remembering in the widest conceivable sense of the term*<sup>26</sup>

is erroneous. It contradicts fancy's privileged position with respect to essential knowledge. Tying fancy to memory, Husserl points fancy back towards experience, for memory is the case in point of imitation of experience, however awkward and unintelligible the pantomime of memory may be. Memory as such cannot aid in the apprehension of essences, for it is only a little less difficult to discover essences in memories than in experiences. Memory may be halfway between experience and art, but memory emphasizes less the distance between them than their closeness and resemblance. In effect, memory asserts just that essential dependence of art on experience we deny. To insist on this dependence is to deny that the process of fancy is the core of the "*purely aesthetic attitude*"<sup>27</sup> seeing the thing as purely given.

without imparting to it the stamp of Being or non-Being, of possible Being or probable Being and the like.<sup>28</sup>

Husserl contradicts himself. Images are "instruments" for apprehending pure essences or neutralized memories, but not both. The self-contradiction can be unknotted by noting that when Husserl conceived epoché in its full power he was compelled to regard fancying as remembering. The pure Ego's intuitive powers had to be emphasized, for they were the most able apprehension. All other kinds of apprehension were played down, and an exact distinction was established between actual perception and essence-apprehension. In terms of this absolute distinction fancying seemed ambiguous; Husserl could not run the risk of upholding the privileges of its power, for sometimes it seemed to make assertions about individual existence. Epoché seemed to draw sharper boundaries between experience and essence-apprehension than fancying. However, Husserl does not realize that he could never have conceived epoché unless in the first place he saw the fact-world with fictional clarity. Epoché completes the fictionalization of the fact-world by making it into a world where pure essences are apparent. The process of fancy is Husserl's original source (*Quelle*) of the objectivity of essences; epoché is the final source. The final source is so significant that the

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<sup>26</sup> *Ideas*, p. 309.

<sup>27</sup> *Ideas*, p. 311.

<sup>28</sup> *Ideas*, p. 312.

steps on the way to arriving at it seem to fall away once it is assured.

For Husserl, the process of fancy in and of itself was never sufficient to serve as the sole source for pure essences because he could not differentiate between the productive powers of imagination and the associative powers of memory. In general, the process of fancy or imagination is explicitly intentional, while memory is, at the most, only implicitly so. An image is produced for an end, the intuition of pure essences; a memory is not so much "intended" as it is a consequence or by-product of certain natural habits of association in experience (cf. Hume), nor is the association explicitly for the sake of any cognitive end. Husserl tended to confuse association and imagination because both seemed intimations of experience. The conception of art as an imitation of things in another "medium of expression" than experience originates when association and imagination are assumed to be the same. But if they are, Husserl's remarks on the geometer are erroneous. Husserl's geometer does not associate memories of geometrical experiences, constructing the geometrical thing. Rather, the geometer spontaneously imagines possible geometrical essences. On the whole, Husserl will let mathematicians intuit pure essences without turning into pillars of salt by looking back at experience. But Husserl does not explicitly acknowledge that artists also may turn from experience and be in headlong pursuit of pure essences. Husserl does not think anyone but mathematicians and philosophers can truly take leave of experience. This provincialism perhaps originates in Husserl's unfamiliarity with artists, and consequently conservative, academic taste. Husserl takes a classic, a Dürer print, as an example of a work of art, never thinking to use the work of a contemporary, perhaps of a member of the German Blue Rider group, active during the formative days of phenomenology. In any case, Husserl's phenomenology never loses its bias for the "logical"; because it is always concerned to be definitive and axiomatic, it treats imagination inadequately. The core of consciousness, imagination is too spontaneous to be categorized and reified. Nonetheless, Husserl knew art had something to do with the intuition of pure essences, although his concern to be rigorous about pure essences obviated a corresponding treatment of art.

In a sense, Husserl came to speak of "intentions" and a "life world" to overcome the old separation of subjective fancy and objective axioms. In the life-world art's glance and the self-evident can coexist; both are "intended." "Intention" is a balance of the lively and the logical. Nonetheless, Husserl does not adequately examine the intentionality of imagination. At the most, he imports the aesthetic attitude — the source of the liveliness of the logical — into the pure Ego. The pure Ego is conceived as a set of attitudes rather than a collection of sensory data. This

cancels the conception of imagination as the association of impressions of fact, but does not emphasize imagination's decisiveness in cancelling experience. It is by no means clear whether Husserl means the pure Ego's aesthetic attitude to include volitional powers, or to be no more than a superior form of *tabula rasa*.

Fancying cannot merely be the "neutrality-modification of the positing representation (memory in the widest sense)," because memory does not cancel experience and its representations of the given, while fancying cancels experiences, offering in their stead images.<sup>29</sup> Images conceived as representations are only shadows of facts, or memories of experience; while images conceived as free fancies are not mere depictions, such as memories are, but figurative expressions, so to speak, of possibilities of essential knowledge. Remembering does nothing to change intentionally the naive impressions of experience; fancying implies an effort to destroy experience's naive consciousness, that a more sophisticated consciousness, essence-apprehension, arise. In a sense, memory is the exercise of an old consciousness, while fancy is the baby steps of a new consciousness. This comes clear in the use of Husserl's example of an image against his own thought.

We can satisfy ourselves with the help of an illustration that the *neutrality-modification of the normal perception* which posits its object unmodified certainty is the *neutral consciousness of the picture-object*, which we find as a component in our ordinary observation of a depicted situation perceptively presented. Let us try to make this clear, and let us suppose that we are observing Dürer's engraving, "The Knight, Death, and the Devil."

We distinguish here in the first place the normal perception of which the correlate is the "*engraved print*" as a *thing*, this print in the portfolio.

We distinguish in the second place the perceptive consciousness within which in the black lines of the picture there appear to us the small colorless figures, "knight on horseback," "death," and "devil." In aesthetic observation we do not consider these as the objects (*Objekten*); we have our attention fixed on what is portrayed "*in the picture*," more precisely, on the "*depicted*" realities, the knight of flesh and blood, etc.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See Ludwig Landgrebe's index to *Ideas*. Cf. *Ideas*, p. 306.

<sup>30</sup> *Ideas*, p. 311, section 111. Here we must note Husserl's lack of distinction between fancy and imagination, which would spare him self-contradiction. Husserl comes to such a distinction in believing that "the image as such is constituted in a peculiar intentional consciousness" (*Farber*, p. 335). But he short-circuits any account of this intentionality by in effect regarding the image as the "*copied object*" (*Farber*, p. 355), i.e., the represented or depicted object, as in the case of Dürer's print. Such images are produced by the primary imagination, not the secondary imagination (fancy). "The primary imagination is the organ of common perception, the faculty by which we have experience of an actual world of phenomena. The secondary imagination is the same power in the heightened degree, which enables its possessor to see the world of our common experience in



Carefully attended to, Husserl's approach to the picture-object is seen to be inadequate. Husserl concentrates on the perception the picturing neutralizes. He does not note that the picture-object is an image, a novel thing. Moreover, what perception has Dürer neutralized? Husserl does not truly venture an answer. Dürer may have perceived a knight, but did he perceive death and the devil? Did Dürer neutralize a natural experience of them? They are possibilities pictured rather than experiences encountered and remembered by means of the picture. Had Husserl stayed with the picture to see it, rather than commented on its superficial character to convey a conception of it as a memory, Husserl might have wondered at the normalcy of Dürer's perception.

To give neutrality-modification priority over the process of fancy, and to emphasize the perception recalled by the picture rather than the inherent character of the image apprehended, is to attend to the finished fiction as the symbol of actual perception rather than as consciousness' means for essential knowledge. Husserl sees the work of art as a spectator rather than as an artist. He had little appreciation of the artist's problems in producing images, a strange lapse when one thinks of Husserl's preoccupation with the geometer's "creative process." The spectator takes the image for granted; this is what Husserl does when he lists its "parts." The artist cannot begin to do this, for he would regress to naive consciousness. He cannot see the picture as a neutralized normal perception; this would be to deny his intention in producing it. It would mean that his art is only a qualification of his experience, a control on the natural decay of perceptions into memory-pictures, quasi-immortal experiences. His art is then less a quest for essential knowledge of things than a concern to capture experiences in lasting myths.

If the picture is a neutralized perception the image is accidental, no longer a "high-ranking *thing*." Neutralized, the perception is irrelevant to spontaneous consciousness — to philosophical consciousness. It is merely another psychological state of mind. Moreover, the memory-image is only momentarily evident, then swept away in the course of

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its real significance. And the creations of art are the embodiment of this vision. Cp. the opening words of Schelling's Introduction to his *Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* (1799): "Intelligence is productive in twofold wise, either blindly and unconsciously, or with freedom and consciousness; unconsciously productive in the perception of the universe, consciously in the creation of an ideal world." S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1958, Vol. I, p. 272. Coleridge quotes (p. 227) W. Taylor's *British Synonymes Discriminated* (1813): "The imagination is formed by patient observation: the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind."

events; we move on to the next experience and picture it briefly. If we are artists, we try to preserve the picture, make it self-evident; but this can never be fully done, for the memory-image will never give itself absolutely. But memory is not an image, it is a decayed experience, a lame and seemingly immature experience. As such, it is useless for essence-apprehension, and not the concern of art.

In a sense, philosophy is not needed until art has fed its full on things, reincarnating them in images. Typically, Husserl is more concerned with philosophy in itself than in its conditions, origins, and place in the life-world. He presupposes philosophy knows its purpose and so is unconcerned with its credentials and origin. He presupposes philosophy is more essential than the universal process of fancy. He cannot conceive that fancy itself is "philosophical." At the most, fancy can serve philosophy. Like most philosophers, Husserl cannot believe that logic might lack confidence without imagination to sustain it: that philosophy must be encouraged by art. Without intending it, Husserl shows the philosopher's pure Ego to be a sublime version of the artist's aesthetic attitude, "sublime" because the philosopher can fully "rationalize" his apprehensions. Thus philosophy is the ultimate art, instituted to complete the artist's achievement of essence-apprehension.

The image is a "thing-in-itself," not the analogue for the thing, as the memory is.<sup>31</sup> Neither fact nor essence intends that the image exist, but neither would have their objectivity without it. In a sense, consciousness produces images to save itself from facts and essences. Not exclusively absorbed in one, it can function in both. "Abstraction" becomes fancy's name when consciousness glances towards pure essences. "Remembering" becomes its name when consciousness glances towards experienced facts.

Only as images do the knight, death, and the devil exist. Not of experience, they can be seen clearly. Husserl describes "where" they are. But such description does not do them justice, for though symbolic, they do not represent individual existents.<sup>32</sup> Neither of the fact-world nor the realm of pure essences, they inhabit their fictitious world more fully than we inhabit any of the three worlds. Thus, they are clearer in themselves than we are to each other.

The clarity of images is a sign they are not of experience. Clarity cancels flux. The clear image is the only "concreteness" known, for concretions of flowing experience have slippery content and sly form, while essences are known absolutely but not as concretions. Thus, the

<sup>31</sup> See *Time*, p. 83 for an account of memory as reproduction.

<sup>32</sup> *Ideas*, p. 136.

concreteness of the image makes it more definite than the hardness of the fact makes the fact. Even such images as are offered by the art of philosophy, e.g., Humean sense impressions and Lucretian atoms, are rightly taken to be more definite than any naturally perceived thing. Art supplies the *prima materia* of science. And science forgets its indebtedness to art, except when its supply of "substance" is exhausted and it again needs imagination.

Thus art does not depict experience. It produces images. Phenomenology takes advantage of images to apprehend pure essences. Perhaps the best phenomenologist is one who treats the world in itself as a fiction, perhaps a production of God, the purest of egos. In any case, to treat the fiction as a depiction ignores the process of fancy that produced it. Such ignorance can replace freedom of research with mimicking obedience to the naively given world. Not only would this make knowledge impossible, ultimately it would destroy consciousness, and make man a thing, for unless consciousness is fanciful at its core men are merely objects aping objects.

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