

## THE TEMPORALITY OF IMAGINATION AND PHANTASY

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*According to Sartre, unreal objects, such as centaur, appear to consciousness without any temporal determination. Husserl also speaks about quasi-time, but this quasi, even when it constitutes unreality, remains bound to the general time of consciousness which is one of the fundamental synthesising moments within the structure of consciousness. Only inner temporality guarantees the unity of human consciousness. The acts of fantasy also belong to the general synthesis of consciousness. Time is a continuous synthesis constituting consciousness itself and offering a common basis for all experiences. Transcendental structures, according to Kant and Heidegger, are testimony to this – the radical temporality of imagination makes the opening of the horizons of reality possible. The link between fantasy, imagination and time is more fundamental than the link between them and perception because the former, irreducible and irreversible, constitutes the latter.*

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Husserl approaches the problem of time by recognising the specific presentness of fantasy: “The present ‘appears’ in memories, but it ‘appears’ in a completely different sense than the present of perception. This present is not perceived, which means it is not given as itself, but is presentified. It represents the present that is not given. Thus, the flow of melody in memory represents ‘what has just passed’, but what is not. In fantasy alone, every individual object also has a certain temporal protention; it has its own now, its own before and after, but these now, before and after are only imagined as a single object in its totality” (Husserl 1966a: 45). By emphasising the insufficiency of a fantasizing or remembering consciousness Husserl,

however, applies temporal characteristics. Independently of its status, an object appearing to the consciousness must endure. The actuality of protention, retention and the present exists together with fantasy: it could not be otherwise, if we consider the fact that time is a fundamental element in the constitution of consciousness. Furthermore, we can hardly call this duration of fantasy illusory. Presentification means suspense of the spatial dimension, nevertheless, temporal categories remain valid under the same conditions as in normal perception. In fact, the continuum of experience goes through certain polyphony here. The presence of fantasy constantly refers to the presence of perception allowing the time of imagination to appear

in an apparently fictive form: “Fantasy is consciousness characterised as presentification (reproduction). Although it is only a presentified time, it constantly points us towards a primordially given, not fantasized, but present time. Presentification is the opposite of a primordially given act; no representation can find its source in it. This means that fantasy is not a consciousness that can present the given of objectivity or a characteristic of an essential and possible objectivity. Not to give itself per se is the essence of fantasy” (Husserl 1966a: 45). Husserl’s terms in this quotation are hardly precise. There is no such a thing as a fantasized time. It is possible to consider situations when we can reduce spatiality from imagination and understand phantasma as a formation, which does not have its own, visual, form in reality; for example, as a sound that ‘has just passed’, which is nothing else than a memory of a certain duration. However, we will never be able to suspend the temporality of fantasy. Thus, a fantasized time is *contradictio in adiecto*. Back to Husserl’s terms, we have to say that fantasy coincides with the primordial given of time. We cannot extrapolate the temporality of the second degree consciousness to which the flows of memory and imagination would belong. It is due to the unity of the flow of synthetic consciousness that time is a single entity. And, on the contrary, the original temporality of fantasy follows from this unity of consciousness. Husserl discusses this subject more extensively in his *Erfahrung und Urteil*, in which he analyses broadly problems related to the unity of consciousness. “Fantasized things are always temporal. For example, every

meaningful fantasy fantasizes a meaningful object, and an intentional temporality belongs to it as a solely intentional object. The object of fantasy is perceived as temporal and temporally defined, with duration in time, but its time is quasi-time” (Husserl 1972: 196).

It looks as if the ‘quasi’ element of duration – the specific experience of the temporality of fantasy – becomes also the reason for Sartre’s discussion of the irreal time. In some places of *The Imaginary*, the text is stunningly incoherent: “There are irreal objects that appear to consciousness without any temporal determination. If, for example, I represent a centaur to myself, this irreal object belongs neither to the present, nor to the past, nor to the future. Moreover, it does not endure in front of the consciousness that flows, it remains invariable. I who represent the centaur to myself submit to external invitations, I maintain the irreal object before me with more or less effort: but, from one second to another of my time, the centaur has not varied, has not aged, has not ‘taken’ a second more: it is timeless. One can be tempted to give it my present <...> but we shall soon find out that this would be to commit the same error. Certainly the consciousness to which this centaur appears is present. But the centaur is not: it does not have any temporal determination” (Sartre 2005: 130). To us this seems completely the opposite: it would be a great mistake to agree with Sartre’s position. Let us read this again: “it has not aged, has not ‘taken’ a second more” sounds like an abstraction through which the image of the centaur does not appear to us. Atemporality does not give itself in

the experience of the time of fantasy. The extra-temporal condition of the centaur is rather a logical deduction, but not an actual modus of the phenomenon's appearance to consciousness. I know that a centaur as a mythological creature is extra-temporal. This knowledge participates in my visual experience. However, experience treats it exactly like other noemata that have duration: it is intentionally constituted anew every time, and this constitution is temporal sui generis. The centaur ripples, flutters, forms and disappears. Besides, Sartre himself will admit this after several pages once more. It seems to us that the thesis: "I change, and the centaur remains the same" sounds like something on the same league as "the subject changes, and the object remains the same"; it does not observe the principle of the unity of consciousness to which the correlative relationship between the noema and noesis have a fundamental significance.

Let us repeat this once more: "the mythological, unchanging, time of the centaur" is not a given of the intentional time of consciousness, but a logical projection of time realised by knowledge acting in my imagination. The fact that the centaur does not belong to the intra-worldly time is a noetic attitude or, speaking in Kantian terms, judgement is attributed to the centaur. I believe in the atemporality of the centaur; I think it is this way, but I can not experience this in any way. Even more so, to capture such a modality as a constitutive element of transcendental consciousness in a phenomenological description. The only empirical component, which differentiates the imagination of the centaur

from perceptual experiences and which, perhaps, gives a foundation to Sartre's position, is what Husserl calls the 'non-actuality of fantasy'. However, we should understand non-actuality here as a certain way to present the phenomenon, a manner of its apodictic evidence, the unreal character, which cannot be attributed to some other kind of time. The centaur symbolises (in the Sartrean sense of the word) its own non-actuality: this means it is "not present with regard to the happening world". Yet this "non-presentness" belongs to a different terminology and to a different level of consideration.

The temporality of intentionality is always continuous and heterogeneous with regard to itself; it can neither be atemporal nor chronological, differently from what we shall see in the quotation that follows: Sartre says: "At the extreme opposite, we find objects that flow more quickly than consciousness. It is well known that most of our dreams are extremely short. Nevertheless the dreamed drama can occupy several hours, several days. It is impossible to make this drama that is spread through a whole day coincide with the rapid flow of the consciousness that dreams it" (ibid: 130). What point of view allows recording the "the rapid flow of the consciousness that dreams it"? Only an abstract scientific point of view or the daily common sense (*sensus communis*). In general, any experience from the transcendental perspective does not yield easily to be measured by 'clock-work mechanisms'. Not only dreams, but also the daily empirics of alert conditions do not last hours or days or weeks; only the regimes of protracted and contracted time

exist, which last briefly or long, which consciousness experiences as the same or different. We find such a description of the soul's flow of time already in the 11<sup>th</sup> book of St. Augustine's *Confessions*. On the other hand, this and not chronological, but kairotic (from gr. *kairos*), time is meant in the aforementioned Husserl's discussion of the phenomenology of inner time. There is only one time of consciousness, ceaselessly constituting the unity of transcendental consciousness. With regard to it, chronology opens as an objectified non-experiential time bound to natural processes and astrological rhythms – this is the time that functions according to the logic of space and its rules. Apparently, Sartre, who was constantly reading and interpreting texts resulting from psychological studies, concedes to the position of common sense with its illusory concept of chronology as a natural experience.

When Sartre says that “<...> one cannot make explicit and count the moments of an unreal action. It is rather a case of a vague consciousness of flow and a coefficient of duration projected onto the object as an absolute property” (Sartre 2005: 131), he is quite precise in his descriptive insights, which, by the way, should be attributed to all intensified modes of the experience of inner time. Yet by not recognising the primordial link between imagination and time, Sartre, we venture to argue, makes incorrect conclusions: “Thus the time of unreal objects is itself unreal. It has none of the characteristics of the time of perception: it does not flow (in the way that the duration of this piece of sugar that is dissolving does), it can be extended or contracted at

will and remain the same, it is not irreversible. It is a shadow of time, which accords well with this shadow of an object, with its shadow of space. Nothing separates the unreal object from me more surely: the imaginary world is entirely isolated, I can enter it only by unrealizing myself” (Sartre 2005: 132). By referring to Bergson's legendary example of melting sugar Sartre transports the attributes of spatial flow and the determinations of the objectified time to the domain of consciousness. Melting sugar is a material change, in other words, a constantly new spatial version of form recorded by perception, which we attribute to things. Yet the external transformation of a material thing represents the change of time as much as sunset or sunrise. Doesn't Sartre want to say here that if the time of fantasy ‘does not flow’, this does not mean that it ‘does not have a spatial form that would change’? In this sense, the melting of sugar as a physical and natural change obeys the chronological regime. One identity is abandoned for the sake of another: a spatial trace of time.

We are sure, however, that if we listen to Bergson's original words (*je dois attendre que le sucre fonde* – “I must, willy-nilly, wait until the sugar melts”), or if we live into the process of melting sugar, we can experience the intuition of pure duration or, speaking in Saint Augustine's words, to experience the flow of ‘the time of the soul’. Let us remember what the intuitionist himself says on this question: “For here the time I have to wait is not that mathematical time which would apply equally well to the entire history of the material world, even if that history were spread

out instantaneously in space. It coincides with my impatience, that is to say, with a certain portion of my duration, which I cannot protract or contract as I like. It is no longer something thought, it is something lived. It is no longer a relation, it is an absolute. What else can this mean than that the glass of water, the sugar, and the process of the sugar's melting in the water are abstractions, and that the Whole within which they have been cut out by my senses and understanding progresses, it may be in the manner of a consciousness?" (Bergson 2004: 10). On the other hand, phenomenologically speaking, doesn't this mean that by observing formations of fantasy I experience condensates of pure duration spread in space where my own temporal flow acquires shapes moulded into forms. Sartre is right in saying that the time of irreality is of the same non-mathematical modus as waiting in front of a melting piece of sugar. This is not a straight line divided into equal parts, but a protension and contraction of experience acquiring different intensiveness and ignoring the rules of the res extensa world. Here we count not hours, minutes and seconds, but pure change, an uncontrolled becoming in its most horrible form in which time plays with space and, simultaneously, with us – we are durations of impatience, but also of fear, pleasure, boredom, desire, anger and ecstasy. The affective features of the situation, imagination and time, as Heidegger would say, are linked by an "essential bond".

Deleuze has also commented on this experience of the Bergsonian duration devaluing space: "Take a lump of sugar. It has a spatial configuration. But if we ap-

proach it from that angle, all we will ever grasp are the differences in degree between that sugar and any other thing. But it also has a duration, a rhythm of duration, a way of being in time that is at least partially revealed in the process of dissolving, and that shows how this sugar differs in kind not only from other things, but first and foremost from itself. This alteration, which is one with the essence or the substance of a thing, is what we grasp when we conceive it in terms of Duration. In this respect, Bergson's famous formulation, "I must wait until the sugar dissolves" has still a broader meaning than is given to it by its context. It signifies that my own duration, such as I live it in the impatience of waiting, for example, serves to reveal other durations that beat to other rhythms, that differ in kind from mine. Duration is always the location and environment of differences in kind; it is even their totality and multiplicity. There are no differences in kind except in duration – while space is nothing other than the location, the environment, the totality of differences in degree" (Deleuze 1991: 31). Let us look once again at the essential dependency, which is essentially a variation on the Kantian position. The intuition of time (whatever modality of experience this would mean) does not give itself otherwise than in 'external' spatial configurations. Time always hides behind space, thus even when we close our eyes and try to distance ourselves from it, the figurative does not stop following us. This is what imagination is: pure flow melted in extra-objective simulacra. We constantly fool ourselves when we treat the consciousness of fantasy in spatial cat-

egories while looking for differences not within it, but “between sugar and other things”, i.e. by juxtaposing changes as if taking place in one line or in several analogous straight lines. Yet its own essence is the pure course of difference, the ‘modification only’ mentioned already by Husserl, whose process requires to project illusory locations and environments, degrees and changes, totality and multitude. This mode of uniting time with space is the purest and irreducible experience of humanity.

Sartre seems to ‘forget’ – or perhaps he does not take it into account – that the principle of intentionality means implicitly that the formation of fantasy is a temporal process. Image, he says, does not preserve objective qualities. But this means that Sartrean analysis trusts the illusion of substantial chronology leaving the phenomenological attitude aside. Husserl also speaks about quasi-time, but this quasi, even when it constitutes irreality, remains bound to the general time of consciousness which is one of the fundamental synthesising moments within the structure of consciousness. Only inner temporality guarantees the unity of human consciousness. Thus every encounter with the visible totality of things or with each of them specifically is subordinated to the sense of time. By seeing I homogeneously experience time. We could say that depending on what I see, the character of my experience of time changes and vice versa: the status of the visual field in my consciousness depends on the character of the experience of time. We have to repeat again and again, however, that acts of fantasy also belong to the general synthesis of consciousness.

Yet Sartre suggests a schism: “the imaginary world is entirely isolated, I can enter it only by irrealizing myself”. Complete isolation means a rupture of consciousness, which is irreconcilable with the principles of transcendental analysis based on the given of experience. It is possible only when we treat consciousness itself deductively, speculatively, in other words, substantially. Do we have to think about two rivers of time which consciousness jumps into, thus experiencing perceptual and visionary contents? Is flow real in reality, but not in fantasy? But from the phenomenological perspective, such isolation is impossible. Time is a continuous synthesis constituting consciousness itself and offering a common basis for all experiences. In fact, contractions and protentions that can be interpreted as intensifications or flagging of the same constantly experienced inner time, however, are characteristic to it.

It is not worth demanding an otherworldly chronological temporality from images when they offer their own temporality – primordial and fundamental. It is far more important to listen to it because images, even if autonomously, have their own distorted defective protentions and retentions. Sartre notices this, although he does not make adequate conclusions: “As soon as we fix our look on one of them, we find ourselves confronted by strange beings that escape the laws of the world. They are always given as indivisible totalities, absolutes. Ambiguous, poor and dry at the same time, appearing and disappearing in jerks, they are given as a perpetual ‘elsewhere’, as a perpetual evasion” (Sartre 2005: 136). The protention of images

is the expectation of metamorphosis; the retention of images is a delay of metamorphosis. Their present is pure metamorphosis, 'change and only change'. It is a paradox, but there is a certain self and identity in this maximal instability. The logic of transformation preserves inverted temporal definitions. Nobody can deny that both the past and the future are given in them: I remember and wait for my own fantasies, even if no continuous and solid 'fantasy world' exists on which I could base my experiences of fantasy and help to delay the constant pulsation of consciousness. The very submersion in the flow becomes a possibility of the present amalgamation with the flow. While describing various experiences of sequences of imagination, contemporary phenomenologist Casey observes that in them "There was also a sense that I, as the imaginer of the unfolding events, was caught up in the same imperfectly rhythmical time-sense; yet, as in the parallel case of imagined space, I felt for the most part that I was viewing things from a somewhat removed temporal position, thereby creating a sense of slight *décalage vis-à-vis* the temporality of those things that I was witnessing" (Casey 1976: 53). The remark on the fact that there is some doubling of temporal regimes does not mean, however, that the time of fantasy becomes 'irreal'. Rather on the contrary, this discrepancy, this *décalage*, conveys the possibility of a radical temporality of imagination, in which there are no natural, physiological and objectified points of reference or subordinating rhythms, which is simultaneously also a temptation. I amalgamate with change and thus allow

the flow to realise itself within me again and again. Images escape in order to return always differently. I know: they are; they were; they will be. They are always in me. I understand clearly that only death can cease this dynamics. I cannot refuse imagination: it is a fatal definition of my anthropological temporariness. Without us asking for it, consciousness produces images. Nothing will give us a more immediate brush with time.

Transcendental structures are testimony to this – the radical temporality of imagination makes the opening of the horizons of reality possible. In other words, the link between fantasy, imagination and time is more fundamental than the link between them and perception because the former, irreducible and irreversible, constitutes the latter. It is in this temporal form that imagination always participates in any perception and guarantees it as a bouquet of opening horizons. This is an insight, which we owe to Heideggerian readings of Kant: "If, as transcendental deduction has shown pure intuition (time) is in an essential bond with pure synthesis, then pure imagination performs the creation of a horizontal gaze" (Heidegger 1991: 90). The horizontal gaze is a realisation of perception in time. Such an observation with the past as its source and with the expectation of the future makes the experience of presence meaningful. And the constitution of meaning takes place thanks to the temporal imagination. The gaze opening horizons, however, can be realized only when it is revealed what transcendental possibilities guarantee 'observation in general'. Pure observation or pure intuition, which Kant

calls *die reine Anschauung*, would not exist without an imaginative revelation. Heidegger says: “In their essence, the pure intuitions themselves are ‘original’, i.e. presentations of what is intuitable which allow (something) to spring forth: exhibition originaria. In this presenting, however, lies the essence of the pure power of imagination. Pure intuition can only be original because in its essence it is itself pure imagination, which gives the gaze (image) in an imagining way out of itself” (Heidegger 1997: 99). Heidegger’s reading reveals a fundamental bond between the ‘gaze’ and the ‘image,’ which is, in its own turn, analogous to ‘look’ and ‘see’. If imagination really provides opportunities to ‘see’, then these opportunities have to be valid with regard to both existing, in other words, real, and imagined objects. It is not the eyes as physiological gates of cognition that provide images to me. The sense of vision itself does not see anything. Only the power of consciousness that a priori establishes unity, i. e. guarantees vision as such, can see. We can also remember the fact that people with vision impairment do not stop seeing images appearing on the dark screen of their consciousness not as a proof of this, but rather as a certain extreme experience. This means that this vision must be transcendently rooted and a priori continuous. Pure intuition as a possibility to see is already nothing less than pure imagination.

And this is precisely why – thanks to the vision’s ability to see and guarantee – imagination reveals its original temporality again and again. Pure intuition is nothing other than time. “Time as pure intui-

tion means neither just what is intuited in pure intuition nor just the intuiting which lacks the ‘object’. Time as pure intuition is an observation imagining its own observed object into one. And only this way the full meaning of time gives itself” (Heidegger 1997: 123). Therefore, time paired with fantasy cannot be thought of as a combination of two objects, as a subordination of one thing with regard to the other. The non-spatial topography of these concepts reveals their procedural entanglement. If the foundations of the time of the soul grow out of the constant ‘now’, then everything has to be happening in it together: time as pure imagination as pure intuition gives itself in one act. This unity makes Heidegger turn towards the power that creates unity and establishes all bonds, i. e. synthesis. If inner temporality is characteristic to imagination as pure intuition, temporal synthesis has also to unfold imaginarily. There are three types of such synthesis: the apprehension of observation, a reproduction reproduced in imagination and the recognition of the concept. Analogous temporal phases correspond to these three syntheses: the present, the past and the future. And although imagination is attributed only to one of listed syntheses, “transcendental deduction, for which the ground has to be laid through triple analysis, shows that imagination presents itself not as one of possibilities but as a middle mediating between them” (Heidegger 1997: 177). What do we still mean, however, when we say ‘synthesis of something’? Does this mean that apprehension, reproduction and recognition are subjected to synthesis? Or, perhaps, they realise synthesis? Neither

one nor the other. This means that “synthesis as such has the character of apprehension or reproduction or recognition” (ibid: 178). Synthesis as such is a more fundamental structure and it is in the light of this deeper bond that we should find unifying links among the three modes of apprehension, reproduction and recognition. Not only Heidegger’s interpretation, but also the text of *The Critique of Pure Reason* confirms this insight: “There is thus an active faculty of the synthesis of this manifold in us, which we call imagination, and whose action exercised immediately upon perceptions I call apprehension” (Kant 1998: A120). It is the common origin of apprehension and imagination that allow Heidegger to make a conclusion: “a purely apprehending synthesis has to be treated as a modus of pure transcendental imagination” and imagination itself, as “having a purely temporal character (reinen Zeitcharakter)” (Heidegger 1991: 180). But the search for unity should not stop here. A constant ‘no longer now’ modus participates in the present; in other words, the present concentrates retentions of experiences in itself, thus “the synthesis of apprehension is incessantly bound to the synthesis of reproduction” (Kant 1974: A120). And, as “pure reproduction creates a possibility of re-production, so in a corresponding manner, pure recognition has to create a possibility of identification” (Heidegger

1991: 186). Future grows in the present out of the past: we have already discussed this transcendental concept of the flow of time, which partially corresponds to the rule of protensions and retentions, by referring to Husserl’s *Phenomenology of Inner Time Consciousness*. Now we find an analogous confirmation also in Heidegger-Kant’s line. And precisely with the help of this temporal logic mutually resulting from each other Heidegger makes a fundamental conclusion which finally defines the status of pure transcendental imagination: “If transcendental imagination as a purely imagining ability imagines time in itself (in sich die Zeit bildet), i. e. allows it to appear, then there are no longer any objections to the previously pronounced thesis – transcendental imagination is time a priori” (Heidegger 1991: 187). Therefore, now our discussion has acquired a solid foundation on the basis of which we shall try to return the lost value to the imagination. If, as Heidegger emphasises, imagination reveals the intuition of pure time, and only this intuition of pure time gives meanings to the categories of understanding with the help of schemes born out of imagination, then the study of imagination becomes central to a philosophy with an a priori orientation. Only when thinking imaginarily and from the perspective of imagination we can at all understand the meaning of transcendentality.

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## VAIZDUOTĖS IR FANTAZIJOS LAIKIŠKUMAS

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#### S a n t r a u k a

Anot Sarte'o, esama nerealių objektų – tokių kaip kentauras, kurie sąmonėje pasirodo be jokios laikinės apibrėžties. Husserlis taip pat kalba apie kvazi-laiką, bet šis „kvazi“, net ir konstituodamas nerealumą, išlieka susaistytas su bendruoju sąmonės laiku, kuris yra vienas iš kertinių sintetinančių sąmonės struktūros momentų. Tik vidinis laikiškumas užtikrina žmogaus sąmonės vienybę. Tačiau bendrajai sąmonės sintezei priklauso ir fantazijos aktai. Kanto

ir Heideggerio požiūriu, tai patvirtina ir transcendentalinės struktūros – radikalus išsivaizdavimo laikiškumas įgalina tikrovės horizontų atsivėrimą. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad fantazijos, vaizduotės ir laiko sąsaja yra fundamentalesnė nei laiko ir percepcijos sąsaja todėl, kad pirmoji, neredukuojama ir nepanaikinama, konstituoja antrąją.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** fantazija, vaizduotė, laikiškumas, laikas, tikrovė.

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