Husserl's struggle with mental images: imaging and imagining reconsidered

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Abstract Husserl's extensive analyses of image consciousness (*Bildbewusstsein*) and of the imagination (*Phantasie*) offer insightful and detailed structural explications. However, despite this careful work, Husserl's discussions fail to overcome the need to rely on a most problematic concept: *mental images*. The epistemological conundrums triggered by the conceptual framework of mental images are well known—we have only to remember the questions regarding knowledge acquisition that plagued British empiricism. Beyond these problems, however, a plethora of important questions arise from claiming that mental images are structural moments of imaging and imagining. Any attempt to clarify the structure and conditions for the possibility of aesthetic experience must first provide an unambiguous account of pictorial depiction—a task unattainable through the mental images discourse. Similarly, exposing the import of the imagination for theoretical scientific inquiries (be they positive or eidetic) requires an initial explication of the structure of this consciousness; this explication, however, must address our ability to imagine non-spatially determined objects—something the conceptual framework of mental images utterly fails to accomplish. In this paper I argue against Husserl's reliance on mental images in his phenomenological analyses of imaging and imagining and propose an alternative structural account for both. This account is free of this reliance and able to steer clear of its insidious implications for epistemology, aesthetics, and methodological reflections. By closely following the development of Husserl's account I suggest alternative descriptions while building on Husserl's important work.

Keywords Mental images · Imagination · Image consciousness · Description · Non-positionality

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Husserl frequently employed comparative methods in his phenomenological studies. In 1898 he begins his inquiry into the structure of imagining consciousness (*Phantasie*) by juxtaposing it to imaging consciousness (*Bildbewusstsein*). Husserl's goal in this inquiry was to uncover the similarities between these two acts. But stark differences soon came to light.[1] Despite this, he sought to show the structural parallelism between *Phantasie* and *Bildbewusstsein*. Not until 1910–1912 does Husserl come to realize the need to completely rethink the terms of the comparison. At times one sees him torn between the initial method that he had opted for and new different approaches; however, comparing imaging and imagining was proving time and time again too tempting to resist. Thus, Husserl cyclically returned to this juxtaposition despite his insight into other ways of thinking about *Phantasie*.[2] While Husserl's analyses revealed much about imaging and imagining, I wish to question his focus on this parallelism as well as his resilient emphasis on the import of mental images in his analyses of these two kinds of consciousness. In what follows I contend that neither imagining nor imaging entail mental images. My intention here is not to challenge his descriptive comparative method as such. As his 1920s accounts of eidetic variation show,[3] universalizing phenomenological inquiry relies on many cognitive abilities, including comparative processes.[4] My interest lies solely in exposing a most troubling claim stemming from one particular implementation of this method, namely, his comparative study of imaging and imagining presentations. This claim—one that fosters numerous problematic consequences—is that imaging and imagining must be structurally explicated through the conceptual framework of mental images.[5]

   The language of mental images invites, in the case of imagining consciousness[6] (*Phantasie*), significant limitations as to what its objects (and powers) may be. One of these limitations is the spatial determination of imagined objects. On this model, imagined objects are experienced through a representational medium that seeks to emulate perceptual experience. A crippling consequence of this claim is that imagined objects cannot exhibit features that surpass the scope of features exhibited by perceptual objects (such as spatial determination). In other words, we cannot imagine something non-spatial. And yet we do. We can imagine a theorem, a proof, an emotion, or any act of consciousness whatsoever. Furthermore, this model also entails a close dependence of imagination on perception. At best, the imagination can function as facilitator of the relationship between sensory and higher order cognitive processes. Interestingly though, Husserl himself—despite what appears to

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[1] One of these differences was the lack of a perceptual founding apprehension in *Phantasie*.

[2] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 86; I refer to all of the *Husserliana* volumes as Hua.

[3] For these accounts, see esp. *Experience and Judgment* §87 cf., Husserl (1948), *Phenomenological Psychology* §9 cf., Hua IX (1962), and *Formal and Transcendental Logic* §98 cf., Hua XVII (1974). For a more detailed discussion of eidetic variation, see Hua XLI (2012).

[4] I am currently in the process of finalizing a monograph that focuses primarily on the structure and conditions for the possibility of Husserl's mature eidetic inquiry. There I discuss the sub-processes upon which this theoretical higher order process is founded.

[5] I would like to thank my anonymous reviewer for their insightful comments. They have triggered much thought and have helped me offer a stronger case for my claim regarding mental images.

[6] I use imagining, imagining consciousness, *Phantasie*, and imagination interchangeably.

be a staunch defense of mental images—refers to the important role played by the imagination at the highest levels of abstract cognition (including his mature eidetic inquiry), whose objects are not spatially determined.[7] How are we then to reconcile our ability to imagine non-spatial objects as well as the reliance of higher order theoretical modes of inquiry on the imagination with the implications of analyzing the structure of this consciousness in terms of mental images? The answer is a simple one: we cannot. We must provide an analysis of the structure of imagining free of the conceptual framework of mental images.

Arguing for a structural account that does not rely on mental images in the case of imaging consciousness (*Bildbewusstsein*)—as I shall do in the second half of this paper—will prove more difficult, but in my opinion, also necessary if we wish to avoid what Sartre aptly referred to in his 1940 *Imaginary* as the 'illusion of immanence.'[8] I will suggest a structural account that not only avoids the problem just mentioned but also follows Husserl's careful work. What I hope to show is that Husserl's attempt to explicate 'seeing something in/through something else' (*hineinschauen*) is a valuable one; that his analyses offer the necessary tools for putting forth an account of imaging that dismisses rather than endorses mental images. Moreover, and most importantly, his extensive research uncovers imaging and imagining as two radically different ways of accessing the irreal. This discovery has, as I shall later stress, significant consequences for any attempt to analyze artificial[9] (*künstlich*) experiences such as theoretical inquiry or aesthetic experience. First, let us take a closer look at his analyses and idealizing descriptions[10] of these two types of consciousness.

1 Imaging and imagining—mental images and accessing the irreal

For three decades Husserl sought to clarify the types and structures of presentation in gradually more detailed terms and through a rigorous classification. As early as 1898[11] he identifies two overarching types of presentation (*Vorstellung*): *anschauliche* (intuitive) and *begriffliche* (conceptual). He comes to map *Bildbewusstein* in light of his analysis of *anschauliche Vorstellung* (intuitive presentation), which he

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[7] If anyone loves a paradox, one can really say, and say with strict truth if one will allow for the ambiguity, that the *element* which *makes up the life of phenomenology as of all eidetic sciences is 'fiction'*, that fiction is the source whence the knowledge of 'eternal truths' draws its sustenance (Hua III/1 1976, §70; translated by Boyce Gibson (1972, p. 184; translation modified).

[8] Translated by Webber (2004, p. 59). The error, widely committed by the British empiricists, consists of importing objective properties (such as those pertaining to 'copies' of objects) into consciousness, the latter thus becoming a receptacle or 'container' for what is fundamentally different from its nature.

[9] I use 'artificial' here in Husserl's sense to distinguish between experiences we naturally have the ability to undergo and experiences we will and craft based on these natural abilities. Various theoretical methods and processes as well as artistic experiences fall in this category.

[10] I use 'idealizing description' here instead of 'eidetic inquiry' since Husserl's work on imaging and imagining predates his clear delineation of the eidetic method (1913 and onward). Nevertheless, as early as the *Investigations*, Husserl was already very much concerned with offering an *a priori* apodictic account of the structure of consciousness.

[11] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, Appx.1, §16.

further classifies as *direct* and *indirect*.[12] Direct intuitive presentation occurs in perception (*Wahrnehmung*). It also occurs in *Phantasie* or imagining—a claim that cost Husserl years of toil. Husserl labels indirect intuitive presentation as *bildliche* (picturing).[13] Thus, if a presentation is indirect it must involve picturing (i.e., the occurrence of a mental image).[14] Consequently, *Bildbewusstsein* is placed under the category '*bildliche Vorstellung*', and so is *Phantasie* until 1909–1912.[15] Husserl discusses *Bildbewusstsein* and *Phantasie* as types of *Imagination* or *Einbildung*, which, as the latter term suggests, involves picturing in the process of presentation.[16] The question then is: Does imagining consciousness (*Phantasie*) involve picturing or should we seek to understand its structure as direct presentation in a manner that does not rely on images? This is one of the questions that tormented Husserl the most during two decades of thought on the topic of intuitive presentation and although he gradually moved to a more subtle way of analyzing *Phantasie* as direct modification of perceptual presentation, the thought of images lingered throughout these two decades of intense study.

To answer this question I will explore Husserl's analyses of *Bildbewusstsein* (imaging) and *Phantasie* (imagination) and argue that imagination should be described without the aid of mental images. I will later attempt to show that this is also the case in imaging consciousness. Husserl's initial interest in creating a structural parallel between imaging and imagining haunted his studies of *Phantasie* as late as 1918/1922, a period during which Husserl fully clarifies the simple structure of *Phantasie* by focusing on another structural parallel—the one between imagination and perception. At this point Husserl comes to see that two types of acts or consciousness, such as imagination and perception, may be structurally parallel and yet fundamentally different. That structural parallelism does not entail full overlap.

Image consciousness (*Bildbewusstsein*) has a complex structure. It involves multiple layers of apprehension (*Auffassung*) and appearance (*Erscheinung*). When looking at one of Cézanne's paintings of Mont Sainte-Victoire three objects are given: the physical thing or *Bildding* (the canvass, the paint, and the frame), the depicting image or *Bildobjekt* (Cézanne's portrayal of the mountain), and the subject of the painting or *Bildsujet* (Mont Sainte-Victoire).[17] This would suggest three corresponding apprehensions for each of these objects, but Husserl discusses the structure of *Bildbewusstsein* in terms of two apprehensions: one pertaining to the *Bildding* and the other to the *Bildobjekt-Bildsujet* structural complex.[18] Thus,

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[12] Cf., Hua XI (1966), §17.

[13] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, Appx.1 (1898) and No. 1 (1904/05), pp.17–18, 47–48.

[14] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 16ff. and No. 1, Appx.9 (1905).

[15] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, 1904/05, pp. 17–18, 21–25, 25–34, 63; cf., also Hua XXIII, No.8 (1909), No. 15 h (1912).

[16] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, 1904/05, pp. 17–18, 82.

[17] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 18–20, 29–34; see also, No. 1, Appx.5 (1905), No. 17 (1912), p. 489.

[18] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 17–18, 23–25.

two appearances are identified, each corresponding to one of the two apprehensions.[19]

The *Bildding* is perceptually given. Its apprehension and appearance are those of perception.[20] But the *Bildding* is a physical image that functions as an instigator[21]; it triggers the apprehension of the *Bildobjekt* here understood as mental image.[22] The content of this first apprehension is sensation (the content of perception). The givenness of the *Bildobjekt* is facilitated by the *Bildding* apprehension. Husserl refers to the former as figment (*Fiktum*) relying on perceptual apprehension for its givenness without itself being a perceptual object.[23] Perceived objects are given as real or existent. Figments are, according to him, *irreal* rather than *real*—the issue of their existence or non-existence is suspended. While their apprehension and givenness are real (*reell*)[24] they are not real (*real*).[25] Husserl thus qualifies the *Bildobjekt* as 'mental image' and claims that figments (as mental images) cannot occur without a perceptual instigator; they require the initial perceptual apprehension as their foundation.[26]

Husserl employs the term 'nullity' (*Nichtigkeit*) to refer to the irreality of the *Bildobjekt* and *Bildsujet*.[27] However this term is inherently ambiguous since it also refers to non-being or non-reality. We thus need to strictly distinguish between *irreality* and *non-reality*—between not positing either being or non-being and positing non-being. A more nuanced approach to this ambiguity would be to distinguish between the imagined object *which is intended* and the imagined object *as it is intended*. The object *as it is intended* may be given *non-positionally as irreal* (a possible object that may or may not exist, e.g., my idea of an ideal umbrella), *positionally as real* (the Eiffel Tower while I am away from it), or *positionally as*

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[19] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 25–27, 45. This structure of apprehension is also typical of symbolizing and signifying consciousness. The first apprehension is that of the symbol or the word, the second, that of what is meant by the symbol or the word. But there is a difference between these two latter cases of presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) and physical imaging since its image-object does not function as *analogon* the way symbols and words do. According to Husserl, there is no resemblance (necessarily) between the *analogon* and that which it points to, whereas there is necessarily a resemblance between the image-object and the *sujet* of physical imaging (Hua XXIII 1980, No. 1, 24–25).

[20] If one solely focused on the canvas and the paintbrush traces on it one would experience this object in perceptual consciousness. The object would be given directly as physical and transcendent, as part of the objective world of reality. For an analysis of aesthetic consciousness see Hua XXIII 1980, No. 1, §§17, 19, 25; cf., also, No. 15 h, and Appx. 40, No. 15c–d). For discussions of Husserl's analysis of the relation between physical imaging and aesthetic consciousness see Brough (1992), Haardt (1995), Caeymaex (1996), Sepp (1996), Fernández-Beites (2001), Lotz (2007).

[21] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 17 (1912).

[22] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 19–20.

[23] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 54ff.; cf., also, Hua XXIII (1980), No. 17.

[24] All acts and types of consciousness are present and real in so far as they are part of the internal stream of consciousness. This reality Husserl labels as 'reell'—it is the immanent presence of all *cogitationes* (i.e., intentional experiences, cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 15, p. 330). 'Real' on the other hand refers to reality as transcendent, as external. It is the reality pertaining to physical things as things in the natural and objective world.

[25] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 46.

[26] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 16 (1912), No. 17 (1912), and No. 17, Appx.52.

[27] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1 (1904/05), pp. 46–47, and No. 1, Appx.1, (1898).

non-real (a centaur). However, imagining is fundamentally non-positional, as Husserl repeatedly stresses; the *object which is intended* does not imply a sense of positionality; it is an irreal object, given without any assumptions with respect to its ontic status. Imagining consciousness is doxically neutral with respect to its objects. Another way of thinking about this difference would be in terms of *possibility* and *impossibility*.[28] I may imagine an existing but absent object, a potentially existing object, or a non-existing object, and yet regardless of these ontic connotations the imagined object is always given or appears without my assuming any doxic stance with respect to its ontic status.[29] We could however map these ontic dimensions onto various types of possibilities: the absent object exhibits *real possibility* whereas the non-existing object involves *real impossibility*; the potentially existing object entails *irreal possibility* proper since no ontic status is attached to it. Objects such as round squares are *ideally impossible*.

The dynamic between *Bildobjekt* and *Bildsujet* fascinated Husserl because of the complex nature of the second apprehension of imaging consciousness. The *Bildding* and *Bildobjekt* are given in one apprehension—the former is perceptual, the latter marked by irreality. Physical imaging seems to be given through a paradoxical collaboration between perception and imagination, which Husserl describes in terms of two apprehensions: the first (of the *Bildding*) is perceptual, while the second (of the *sujet* through the *Bildobjekt*) is modifying (i.e., no longer occurring under the auspices of reality).[30] The second apprehension stems from the relation of depiction (*Abbildung*) and exhibiting (*Darstellung*) between the *Bildobjekt* and the *Bildsujet*; this relation is, according to Husserl, the mark of indirect intuitive presentation.[31] The *Bildsujet* is irreal. It is non-present but given 'as if' it were present.[32] Imaging consciousness brings to appearance that which is not perceptually apprehensible. Husserl refers to imaging consciousness as *Veranschaulichung*: the bringing to intuition of that which is not present and hence not directly intuitable in perception. He comes to equate *Veranschaulichung* and *bildliche Vorstellung* as indirect presentations.[33] Unlike perception, in which belief in the existence or non-existence of the object as real lies at the very core of the apprehension, imaging consciousness exhibits doxic neutrality (i.e., there is no posited belief in the existence or non-existence of the depicted *sujet*). The *sujet* is meant or intended as the object of the entire complex of imaging consciousness through the *Bildobjekt* as figment qua mental image. This intending of the *Bildsujet* through the *Bildobjekt* is a 'seeing' of the former 'into' the latter (*hineinschauen*).[34] Indirect intuitive presentation

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[28] Husserl himself seems to suggest this approach in his 1907 *Thing and Space* lectures (Hua XVI 1973, Section I, §9, pp. 23–25).

[29] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), Nos. 12–14.

[30] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No.1, §§24, 32. On this controversial issue and on Husserl's success or lack thereof in analyzing physical imaging (or *Bildbewusstsein*) see Rang (1975), Marbach (1989), Sepp (1996), Volonté, (1997, 1999), Fernández-Beites (2001), and Lotz (2007).

[31] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), Nos. 16–17.

[32] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 49.

[33] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 51, and Hua XI, §18.

[34] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 35; cf., also No. 1, Appx.4 (1904/05).

involves, according to Husserl, the grasping of the meant object by mediation through mental image. But this grasping is fundamentally marked by conflict (*Widerstreit*).

The first conflict that comes to the fore in Husserl's analyses of image consciousness is the conflict between the *Bildding* or physical image and the *Bildobjekt* as figment and mental image.[35] The former is perceptual; it is present and real (*real*) because it appears through a perceptual apprehension of sensations.[36] It also functions as instigator for the appearance of the figment. As we have already seen a perceptual foundation belongs essentially to figments, which are not real. They require the input of perception but go beyond presence and bring forth the non-present or the irreal.[37] While the physical image is given perceptually and is engaged as located spatially and temporally in the real world, the mental image as figment appears with the aid of perception but plays a different role. It opens up an irreal and non-present dimension at the very core of reality.[38] There is therefore a basic conflict between the *Bildding* and the *Bildobjekt* given the former's appurtenance to reality and the latter's being located outside of it. The paradox at the core of their relation lies in the ineluctable gap that sets them apart despite the fact that the mental image cannot appear without the physical image.[39]

The second conflict has to do with the fact that imaging as indirect presentation relies on the consciousness of difference between mental image or *Bildobjekt* and the *sujet* or intended object.[40] The depicting image may show the *sujet* from a certain angle or perspective (*Abschattung*), in smaller proportions, with distorted colors, etc.; however, as long as there is a sufficient amount of similarity between the image and the *sujet*, depiction understood as mediation occurs and the *sujet* is meant through the image.[41] The image is thus different from the original. Fulfillment (i.e., the givenness or intuition of the object) in the case of *Bildbewusstsein* is conditioned by this similarity. The depicted object is presented through the image object, but it is meant beyond the limited characteristics brought forth by the latter. The transition toward the intended *sujet* through the image object occurs seamlessly, unless the difference between them is significant enough to disrupt this intentional process. But the fact that image consciousness essentially involves the consciousness of difference between image and *sujet* implies that if one were to actively decide to focus on the *Bildobjekt*, one could. Aesthetic consciousness is, in Husserl's view, possible in light of this very ability. I shall

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[35] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 25–27, 43ff, 51ff, 54ff; cf., also Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, Appx.2, 7, 9, 12, 13; Hua XXIII (1980), No. 4 (1908), No. 15 g, No. 15, Appx.40, Nos. 16–17.

[36] Husserl employs the term *Perzeption* to refer to the perceptual moment or foundational apprehension at work in image consciousness. He distinguishes between *Perzeption* and *Wahrnehmung*—the latter refers to the act of perception, which has its own content (sensation) and simple/singular apprehension (cf., Hua XXIII 1980, No. 16, 1912).

[37] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No.4.

[38] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, Appx.9, pp. 151–152.

[39] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 47–48.

[40] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 25–27, 32, 54–63, 82–83.

[41] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 26; cf., also No. 1, Appx.7, and No. 17.

say more about this when I question the structure of mental image in *Bildbewusstsein*.[42]

The consciousness of difference between image and *sujet* suggests their conflict. There might be fluctuation involved in the appearance of the image object, which would not influence the constancy of the *sujet* and of its being meant or intended. Extreme cases of fluctuation in the appearance of the image object can affect the intuition of the *sujet*; an intention meaning a new object can thus occur because of image object fluctuation.[43] The limited or distorted characteristics of the image object are not obstacles for intending the *sujet* in a coherent and richer fashion. I may see a picture of the Chenonceau castle, which is a miniature depiction of the really existing structure on the valley of Loire, but the size, faded colors, and specific perspectival nature of the image object cannot prevent me from intending the depicted object in a fuller fashion, even without my ever seeing it in person. Furthermore, unlike the foundational apprehension of the *Bildding* through which the appearance of the image object is facilitated, the apprehension of the image object as that through which the *sujet* is presented is a modifying apprehension.[44] What is given ceases to have any links to the reality of the *Bildding* and its environment. The *sujet* is given as *irreal* through and through. Unlike the image object, which in the context of the first apprehension is irreal yet intimately linked to reality through perception, the *sujet* has no ties to reality. Its existence or non-existence is not posited; there is thus no doxic modality marking this apprehension. And unlike the first foundational perceptual apprehension, which has sensation as its content, the second, modifying apprehension of image consciousness has *phantasma* as content. *Phantasmata,* according to Husserl, are the contents of apprehensions that bring forth non-presence as *irreality*.

The conflict between the image and the *sujet* stems from the latter's irreality and non-presence. This is the paradox of image consciousness: it brings forth the *irreally absent* through the *really present*.[45] The real world of present experience is torn open and an *other* world comes to the fore. The *sujet* along with the world it belongs to are nullity (*Nichtigkeit*) understood as irreality.[46] The object may presently exist elsewhere and thus be absent, it may be a thing of the past, it may simply not exist at all; regardless of these ontic scenarios what they all share in common is the manner in which the *sujet* is intended and intuited. In my looking at Cézanne's Mont Sainte-Victoire its existence is not posited; the intended object reveals itself as *non-present presence*. One might think this is an ontic contradiction and the paradox is merely the result of simultaneously positing both being and non-being. However, the paradox does not occur within the boundaries of ontic positings. The paradox at the core of image consciousness consists in the simultaneous conflict and cooperation of *reality* and *irreality*.

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[42] For a discussion of the relationship between imaging and aesthetic experience, see de Warren 2010.

[43] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 33.

[44] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 39–41.

[45] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 47–48.

[46] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 51.

The modifying apprehension of image consciousness stretches open the world as real and brings forth the irreal at the very core of the real.[47] I am looking at Cézanne's painting exhibited on a museum wall. The wall, room, and the museum are real objects located in the real world given through perception. The painting, which I experience through perception, is the contested locus of tension where the *other* world of irreality arises. The frames are the delimiting borders—the very edges where the real and irreal almost yet never meet.[48] As I experience the museum room and the physical painting on the wall as real things in the world, imaging consciousness relocates me into the irreal.[49] The present and that which is perceptually given as real vanish and I immerse myself in *the otherwise*. This experience of the irreal occurs at the very heart of reality and presence and yet it is completely divorced from them. Two worlds overlap and yet have nothing in common.[50] As Husserl brilliantly shows, the conflict between reality and irreality essentially marks image consciousness. This cannot be so in the case of *Phantasie* as imagining consciousness. While both imaging and imagining are experiences of the irreal, their access to irreality occurs in two radically different ways.

In image consciousness there is a consciousness of difference between reality and irreality.[51] If this consciousness were lacking imaging could not occur. Image consciousness is fundamentally self-reflective[52]: I am not lost in irreality; I co-perceive the museum wall and though I may let myself be engulfed by the irreal world, I am never completely lost within it.[53] This irreality does not trick me. It must give itself in stark contrast to the reality of perception, which subtly recedes to the background. The situation is radically different in *Phantasie*.

Husserl also labels direct and indirect intuitive presentations (*anschauliche Vorstellung*) as genuine/authentic and non-genuine/inauthentic (*eigentlich* and *uneigentlich*).[54] This distinction too relies on the mediated apprehension of the intended object in imaging consciousness. More importantly, Husserl refers to this same distinction in terms of presentation (*Präsentation* or *Gegenwärtigung*) and representation (*Repräsentation*) or presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*). In direct perceptual presentation (*Vorstellung* proper) the object is given *in propria persona* as real, present, and actually existent. In representation or presentification, a non-present object is brought forth. Image consciousness is a type of presentification that makes present a non-present, irreal object. Not all presentifications have irreal objects. Memory and expectation are presentifying acts—they let the non-present appear; however, in their case the non-present has the ontic character of non-being

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[47] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 49; cf., also No. 1, Appx.2.

[48] I say 'almost' because the real and the irreal cannot be simultaneously intuited. They can at most be simultaneously intended but never fully given at once.

[49] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 45–46, No. 1, Appx.1, 9, and Nos. 17–18.

[50] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 16, Appx.51, p. 482.

[51] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 82–83, and Nos. 16–17.

[52] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 40–41, No. 16, Appx, 51, No. 17, p. 490.

[53] If I were, image consciousness would cease and I would be convinced it all occurred in perceptual consciousness.

[54] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 47–48.

(i.e., the *no longer* and the *not yet*). It is important to note that *Bildbewusstsein* is a type of *Vergegenwärtigung* whose appearing object is an irreal non-presence. *Phantasie* shares this feature with image consciousness, but, as we shall soon see, the appearance of irreality in *Phantasie* is different from the one pertaining to *Bildbewusstsein*. It is also worth emphasizing that not every presentification is an indirect intuitive presentation. *Phantasie* as *Vergegenwärtigung* is a type of (modified) direct intuitive presentation, structured like perception and yet radically different from it.

Reproduction is yet another way in which Husserl approaches the mediated apprehension of *Bildbewusstsein*. There are two types of reproduction: one that is directly dependent upon perceptual apprehension and sensation, the other independent of perception. Image consciousness belongs to the former category, *Phantasie* to the latter. The reproductive presentation of image consciousness is perceptually bound—it cannot occur without the founding perceptual apprehension of the *Bildding* as instigator[55] of the second modifying apprehension in which the givenness of the *Bildobjekt* functions as pathway toward the appearance and presentation of the *Bildsujet*. Thus, 'reproduction' in the context of *Bildbewusstsein* refers to the perceptual character of the founding apprehension[56] and to the mediating and modifying character of the second. In *Phantasie*, 'reproduction' does not signify indirectness as mediacy; here it refers to immediate imagining modification (*Phantasiemodifikation*), which results in the direct givenness of irreality.[57] It is important to note here that for Husserl, 'reproduction' is broadly equated with 'presentification.' The latter entails a modification, a shift away from direct simple presentation. Thus, memory as presentification gives objects positionally as past, expectation positionally as future, and imagination and image consciousness non-positionally as irreally absent. To say that *Phantasie* is 'reproductive' is thus not, on Husserl's part, to reduce it to a mere copying act, fully determined by the initial information-dator act (in this case perception). Each presentification gives access to objects in different ways. Memory, expectation, imagination, and imaging appearances thus entail radically different kinds of intuitions. As such, they are 'productive' in their own right, not mere re-productions as copies of perceptual appearances. By dismissing mental images as structural elements of imagination we will be in an even better position to unravel the productivity of the imagination. More about this momentarily…

Image consciousness and *Phantasie* bring forth the irreal, but they do so in two distinctly different ways. They share in common the 'hovering before' (*vorschweben*)[58] of the intended object as *non-present presence*. The difference between them, 'distinct' as it may be, is not easily uncovered. We see Husserl struggle in gradually distancing himself from collapsing the two and merely emphasizing some inessential (though remarkable differences) (1898-1904/05), to uncovering some

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[55] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 17 (1912).

[56] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 44ff.

[57] For a very interesting discussion of *Phantasie* and *Bildbewusstsein* in the context of time-consciousness see de Warren ch.4 (2009).

[58] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 3–4, 42, and No. 15a (1912).

essential differences but still clinging onto their structural parallelism (1904/
05–1908/09), to eventually seeing the core differences in their structures—one
complex and indirect, the other simple and direct—and yet still letting the old
juxtaposition occasionally take over through concepts such as 'mental image'
(1909/1912), to finally recognizing in detail the uniqueness of their structures and
being able to stress similarities between them without the danger of structural super-
posing (1918–1925). I would like to suggest a different way of approaching the
structures of imaging and imagining—one in terms of *appearance* and *givenness*
rather than *mental images*. Husserl himself leads us in this direction from 1918
onward. Let me first emphasize Husserl's later discoveries regarding *Phantasie*,
which he reached in his parallel study of imagining and perception.

2 Imagining without mental images—the import of Husserl's study of perception

Perception is the simplest and most basic *cogitatio*. It is the intentional experience
that gives us direct access to the world as real. The object of perception is given as
real and actual, but it is also given as presently existent. Reality and presence are
what perception brings to the fore. We have already seen that these two notions have
two dimensions or meanings in Husserl's structural analysis of presentations: the
object is given as real (*real*) and present or located in the external natural and
physical world, while the act, along with its apprehension, content, and appearance
as givenness of the object are real (*reell*) as structural moments of consciousness
and present insofar as they are occurring in the *now* of internal time consciousness.
The subjective pole of reference as correlate of the transcendent (external) object
and its world is the empirical ego, located in the natural physical world through the
body.[59] This claim represents the core of Husserl's realism.

Perception also stands as the grounding structure in the context of his
phenomenological analysis of intuitive presentations. He considers perception to
be the primary type of direct intuition. While there were questions and doubts from
the beginning regarding the parallelism between *Phantasie* and *Bildbewusstsein*,
Husserl's inquiry into the structure of perception was steady and secure.[60] From the
1890s onward his analyses of *Wahrnehmung* gradually attained higher levels of
clarity; his distinctions grew subtler and the insights he brought forth became at
once rich and supple. They also led him back to the main course of inquiry
whenever he strayed away following more or less fruitful tangents. One such side-
path was the comparative study of imaging and imagining consciousness, which
exerted an intoxicating appeal during the first decade of his work on *Phantasie*. His
study of perception eventually guided him away from overemphasizing this
juxtaposition and suggested another, better approach for analyzing the elusive act of

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[59] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 2, Appx.14.

[60] His position with respect to this act and type of consciousness did not fluctuate much throughout his
extensive work on presentation. For an interesting discussion of Husserl's image theory, see Brough
(2011).

Phantasie. Unlike *Bildbewusstsein* and *Wahrnehmung*, which he approaches in an unmediated and direct fashion, his analysis of *Phantasie* employs aids such as comparison and analogy. These approaches are not altogether misleading; in fact, they can be quite illuminating when the terms of the comparison can clarify each other. Around 1912 Husserl himself came to realize the problematic consequences of comparing and forcing a structural parallelism between imaging and imagining.[61]

Perception gives direct access to the world as real as present and actually existing (i.e., *in propria persona*).[62] Through perception reality and presence are brought to the fore.[63] Unlike image consciousness, which has a complex structure and mediating apprehension, perception has a simple structure. There is one apprehension whose content is sensation.[64] This apprehension interprets the non-intentional content and renders possible the meaning or intending of the object. There is also only one appearance:[65] the direct givenness of the object as present and actual. There is no mediating image at work, be it physical or mental.[66] There is no distinction to be made between an image and the original; there is only the direct, unmediated appearance of the object. Appearance and image are one, or better yet, *there is no image in perception*. This is why Husserl viewed perception as the primary type of direct intuitive presentation. For him, directness of appearance is the main characteristic of authentic or genuine intuitive presentation. The lack of image or picturing, along with the singularity of apprehension and appearance, and the direct givenness of reality are the key structural features of perception that must guide our juxtaposition of perception and *Phantasie*.

Despite his early initial claim that *Phantasie* was an indirect and thus non-genuine presentation, Husserl comes to see that *Phantasie* too is direct and genuine. This insight gained as early as 1904/05[67] suggests the lack of images in imagining consciousness; however, Husserl claims the direct and genuine character of *Phantasie* as presentation while also discussing its structure in terms of mental images.[68] This contradictory position is the result of Husserl's being torn between following perception as a guide in his analysis of *Phantasie* and clinging onto his early approach that sought an exact structural parallelism between *Phantasie* and *Bildbewusstsein*. Husserl's shift to seeing the structural simplicity of *Phantasie* as direct intuitive presentation[69] was facilitated by this comparative study, whose success stems from a paradox: only by unraveling the stark differences between perception and imagination

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[61] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), Nos. 15–18. For further discussions of the *Phantasie*-perception juxtaposition, see Fernández-Beites (2000), Elliott (2002), and Jansen (2005).

[62] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 16–18.

[63] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 3–4, 12, 16–18, 67–69, 82ff., 102–103, and No. 1, Appx. 1, 10, 13.

[64] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 5–7, 24, 34, 47–48, 80–81; cf., also, No. 1, Appx. 8, 12, 13.

[65] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 3–4, 5–6, 47–48, 29–30.

[66] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 64–71, and No. 1, Appx.10.

[67] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, Appx.10.

[68] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 64–71, and Nos. 16–17 (1912).

[69] *Phantasie*, like perception, does not exhibit the double apprehension structure of physical imaging and of sign consciousness. For discussions of image and sign consciousness, see Volonté (1999), Jansen (2005), and Wiesing (2005).

can we illuminate the ways in which they structurally mirror each other. This paradox questions Husserl's initial presupposition: namely, that structural similarity implies the dissolving of radical differences. Husserl knew from the beginning that perception and imagining were fundamentally different acts, but this led him to suppose that the two must also have strikingly different structures. However, two acts can mirror each other structurally and yet stand worlds apart.

Phantasie is a type of direct intuitive presentation.[70] It has a simple structure: one apprehension and its content (*phantasma*) and one appearance (of the intended object).[71] *Phantasma* essentially demands a doxically neutral interpretation,[72] whereas sensation is apprehended in a doxically charged fashion.[73][74] *Phantasmata* are suggestive of the irreal, but despite this they are *reell* present moments of consciousness, and so is the act of imagining.[75] *Phantasie* has a radically different content and apprehension than perception as realizing consciousness.[76] They are qualitatively distinct acts with parallel structures.[77] Thus, in *Phantasie*, as in perception,[78] there is no consciousness of difference between an image and the object. Nevertheless we must distinguish (in the context of imagining direct givenness) between *the appearance of the object* and *the object itself*. I imagine a centaur. In one apprehension it appears from its profile and the lighting is dim; I cannot quite tell what it is doing. In a subsequent apprehension it appears from the front and the lighting is different: the sun is now permeating the thick ceiling of the primeval forest in which I 'see' this creature; it is holding a broken arrow and weeping. Two apprehensions, two intentional rays, aiming at the same object presented in two ways but nevertheless the same. I am conscious of the difference between any of these two appearances and the intended object. This, however, is not the consciousness of difference Husserl claims to exist between mental image and object in *Bildbewusstsein*. Any transcendent, spatially-determined perceived or imagined object is given in a perspectival fashion (*Abschattung*).[79]

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[70] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, §§5, 38, No. 1, Appx.9.

[71] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 4 (1908).

[72] No claim is made about the object's ontic status.

[73] The object is given as existent and certain. This initial doxic stance, i.e., the *protodoxa*, can always be challenged along with the object's positive ontic stance—the latter may become 'being-questionable', 'being-probable', and even 'non-being'.

[74] For Husserl in 1904/05, sensation and *phantasma* as contents lack an intentional character; they gain it through apprehension, i.e., through their being interpreted (cf., Hua XXIII 1980, No. 1, §§5, 39).

[75] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, §§37, 51–52, No. 5 (1909).

[76] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, §§5, 7, 35.

[77] The difference between them stems from what Husserl refers to as *Phantasiemodifikation*.

[78] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, §32.

[79] Husserl mentions a type of picturing (*Ausmalung*) in the context of realizing vacillation and expectation – different options are being considered or engaged in this picturing (Hua XI 1966, 79–82, p. 211ff.). However *reine Phantasie*, or imagination proper, is not the vehicle of such picturing; it is radically divorced from the real and the realizing attitude while *Ausmalung* is positional (Hua XI 1966, p. 97). I would suggest that any fulfillment of perception that appears to occur through imagining consciousness is actually a type of *Ausmalung* in so far as it is drastically bound by the parameters of perceptual contents, expectation and memory, and the motivation of perceptual consciousness. This does not imply that *Phantasie* cannot cooperate with the positional-realizing attitude.

Irreality is a world of its own—self-standing and coherent, exhibiting structure and an order that mirrors reality.[80] And yet irreality is essentially incompatible with reality.[81] The structure of *Bildbewusstsein* is paradoxical because it involves both of them. It is both perceptual and imagining and its irreal *sujet* is both within and without reality. What Husserl came to realize is that *Bildbewusstsein* and *Phantasie* are two radically distinct ways of accessing irreality and that *Phantasie*, or imagining consciousness, is the most direct path toward the irreal—just like perception is the primary venue for the givenness of the real.[82] Like perception, imagining does not rely on mental images for the successful intuition of irreality. However, while structurally parallel, the simple appearances pertaining to perception and imagination are radically different in terms of *how they give the object.* Meaning constitution in each case entails fundamentally distinct ontic and modal connotations.

In short: the imagined object appears in an unmediated fashion. In *Phantasie*, there is no mental image as *Bildobjekt*[83] 'into' which we 'see' (*hineinschauen*) the intended object (i.e., *sujet*).[84] *Phantasie* presentation is a simple[85] and genuine (*eigentlich*) presentation. We see here the radical structural difference between *Bildbewusstsein* and *Phantasie*. What seems to be a mental image in *Phantasie* is simply confused with the appearance of the object.

3 Imaging—mediation, conflict, and structural complexity without mental images

In what follows—guided by the claim that the appearance or givenness of the intended irreal object should not be unwarrantedly confused with a mental image—I

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[80] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, Appx.8–9.

[81] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 16 (1912).

[82] Irreality is not 'quasi-actuality' just as much as it not the negation of reality. The language of the 'quasi-' permeates Husserl's account of physical imaging (cf., Hua XXIII 1980, No. 1, Hua XXXI, §3); he utilizes it in analyses (early or late) to also refer to the non-positionality of *Phantasie* (cf., *Erfahrung und Urteil*, §14). Whether the usage of the 'quasi-' in the context of *Bildbewusstsein* is legitimate or not, is one question (cf., Jansen (2005); Lotz (2007)) in so far as the image object is given through perception yet it points toward the irreal. However, the employment of 'quasi-' as way of expressing the non-positionality and irreality of *Phantasie* is definitely problematic in so far as *Phantasie*, along with its irreality and non-positionality, is radically distinct from perception. If conceived as reproduction (cf., Hua XI 1966, §§26, 40–41; Hua XXXI, §3)—it is a different kind of reproduction than memory or expectation. If we refer to *Phantasie* irreality in terms relative to perception we miss the radical dichotomy that Husserl ultimately seeks to bring forth between *Phantasie* and *Wahrnehmung*. The language of 'quasi-' is most suitable for positional presentifications such as memory and expectation because their link to reality and actuality and to the motivational structure of perception is significant (cf., Hua XI 1966, Appx. 22 to §35, 423–424).

[83] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, §§26–27, 42, 49–50; cf., also No. 1, Appx.7, 10, 13; No.2f, No.2, Appx.22, No.17 (1912).

[84] "Die Phantasieerscheinung, die schlichte, mit keiner daraufgebauten Bildlichkeit beschwerte, bezieht sich ebenso einfältig auf den Gegenstand wie die Wahrnehmung" (Hua XXIII 1980, No. 1 (1904/05)), §42, p. 85. "The phantasy appearance, the simple phantasy appearance unencumbered by any imaging built on it, relates to its object just as straightforwardly as perception does" Brough (2005, p. 92).

[85] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 8 (1909).

propose an alternative structural account of imaging consciousness (*Bildbewusst-sein*). This account is free of the conceptual framework of mental images. To accomplish this I will go back to Husserl's initial comparison of imaging and imagining. While unsuccessful and entailing most problematic implications, I think this comparative endeavor offers, interestingly enough, the antidote to its own pernicious lure: it shows that once we dismiss mental images as structural moments of imagining consciousness by re-explicating the intuition or givenness of irreality as *the appearance of the object*, we can apply a similar strategy in unpacking the structure of this givenness in the case of imaging, too. To be clear, I think Husserl's claim that imaging is an indirect, mediated kind of presentification is correct. My claim that we should steer clear of mental images in analyzing imaging does not dissolve the mediated structure of the latter. What matters here is *how* we unpack this mediation itself. My contention is that mediation—the core of any *hineins-chauen* be it pictorial (i.e., reliant on the initial perceptual apprehension of a physical image), symbolic or signitive (i.e., reliant on the initial perceptual apprehension of a physical symbol or sign)—can and should be explicated through our experience of the conflicting relationship between the first apprehension of the real and present and the second apprehension of the irreal and absent, and not in terms of mental images or figments as facilitators of this mediation. Thus, as far as the dismissal of mental images is concerned, the sole difference between imagining and imaging is that in the case of the former (as direct presentation) we are left with the *direct appearance or givenness of the intended object* whereas in the case of the latter (as indirect, mediated presentation) we focus instead on *the experienced relationship between the two apprehensions* as that which facilitates the givenness of the intended object.

Husserl's claims about the image object of *Bildbewusstein* are ambiguous at best. His description of the figment (i.e., reliant on a perceptual instigator) as mental image is unclear and leaves many questions unanswered. As previously discussed in the first section of this paper, we are told the image object is irreal yet without an apprehension of its own; it is somehow able to bridge the gap between the two dimensionality of the physical image and the three dimensionality of the intended *sujet* while itself exhibiting three dimensionality as one of its objective properties.[86] By equating the image object with a mental image, Husserl inevitably grants it *reell* status—so the illusion of immanence here looms large. Even if we ignore the problem Sartre keenly identifies, the image object understood as mental image qua figment does little to clarify the conditions for the possibility of successful *hineinschauen*. And yet, much hinges upon clarifying these conditions. If we are to uncover the structure of pictorial depiction broadly construed and of visual aesthetic experience more specifically, we need to offer a less controversial account of 'seeing something in/through something else'. Let us briefly return to Husserl's initial comparison in order to set it aside once and for all.

The main danger of Husserl's initial comparative project proved to be structural super-posing; once Husserl established and described image consciousness his search focused on finding the same structural elements or moments in *Phantasie*. In

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[86] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, §9, pp. 19–20.

1898 he claims that there is the equivalent of an image object in imagining consciousness.[87] If there is a mental image in imagining consciousness, there must also be the equivalent modifying apprehension we see in *Bildbewusstsein*. First, we witness a doubling of apprehension in *Phantasie*: one apprehension leading to the presentation of the mental image and the other to the representation of the imagined object. Second, a consciousness of difference between this image and the intended imagined object is also posited here. These are the two most potent claims stemming from the initial (1898) juxtaposition of imaging and imagining. They are interconnected and hence need to be overcome as a whole. Dismissing one but holding the other in the case of *Phantasie* is a contradictory endeavor—one that Husserl found himself engaged in 1904/05 during the time of his first lengthy study and lecture course. Let me point out some of the key claims Husserl made in this early study.

In 1904 Husserl holds as true all of the claims made in 1898. But he soon comes to realize that a full structural parallelism is out of the question because there are no equivalent structural moments in *Phantasie* for the image object (*Bildding*) and its perceptual instigation.[88] Nevertheless, he still claims that there are two apprehensions at work in imagination: one giving access to the mental image or '*Phantasie* image' and the other bringing forth the intended imagined object.[89] For Husserl, positing two apprehensions is directly linked to positing mental images, and both are the basis for the claim that *Phantasie* is an indirect intuitive presentation.[90] Yet, as we shall soon see, two apprehensions and a mediated structure of a presentation need not entail mental images at all.

In Husserl's early view there is a consciousness of difference between the image and the intended object in both imagining and imaging.[91] The claim that there is a consciousness of difference in *Bildbewusstsein* is fairly easy to make in light of the 'picture' given through the perceptual apprehension as instigator. One could, according to him, aesthetically and phenomenologically focus on the *Bildobjekt*. But how could one establish the occurrence of such a consciousness in the structure of *Phantasie*? Could one distinguish between image and imagined object? Initially Husserl unwarrantedly claims the possibility of such a distinction. As we saw, what misled him into making this claim besides his interest in the structural parallel between imaging and imagining is the fact that he confused the various *appearances* of the same imagined object with *mental images*.

Another distinction between *Phantasie* and *Bildbewusstsein* is the way in which they give access to irreality. Imagining a centaur does not happen through an initial perceptual moment and the irreal horizon within which the centaur is given is not in direct tension with the real world. There is no structural conflict between reality and irreality in *Phantasie*.[92] There is here a consciousness of difference between the real and the irreal, as in the case of imaging, but this is because both imaging and

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[87] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No.1, Appx.1.

[88] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 18–20.

[89] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 21–23.

[90] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 23–25.

[91] Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 25–27.

[92] Hua XXIII (1980) No. 1, pp. 49, 54–63, No. 1, Appx.8–9.

imagining are self-reflective.[93] *Phantasie* brings forth the irreal apart from any direct dependence on perception. This insight Husserl had in 1904/05 should have planted the seed of doubt in the validity of his initial comparative project. His analytic instincts were not fully overwhelmed; given that *Phantasie* irreality does not appear with the aid of perception he asks himself: "[h]ow does it [imagined object] appear, then? Does it actually appear in the manner of an image? Does an image object through which an image subject is intuited actually become constituted in phantasy? I must confess that again and again I was seized by serious doubts here."[94] These doubts, however, did not materialize in a definite case against mental images in *Phantasie* or in general.

Whether we could have mental images other than figments founded on perceptual apprehensions is a question worth asking. Husserl himself did not directly engage this question but his insistence upon claiming the occurrence of mental images in *Phantasie* indicates that he assumed this position; as a consequence, he also insisted on the difference between figment and *Phantasie* mental image: "In the case of physical imagination, a physical object that exercises the function of awakening a 'mental image' is presupposed; in phantasy presentation in the ordinary sense, a mental image is there without being tied to such a physical excitant. In both cases, however, the mental image is precisely an image; it represents a subject."[95] We thus have two kinds of mental images according to this early account: mental images as figments and *Phantasie* mental images.

There are two alternative views to Husserl's early account—the second being significantly stronger: Either, (1) *all mental images are figments* and as such, they are directly (or indirectly) reliant upon a foundational perceptual apprehension of sensory information. As a result, there could not be any mental images in structurally simple acts (such as perception and *Phantasie*). This is the view that Husserl gradually came to hold, though we see traces of mental images language even in his late, 1918–1924 studies of the imagination. Or, (2) *there are no mental images in either imaging or imagining*. Even claiming that mental images qua figments are structural elements of imaging consciousness is a redundant and problematic position—one that could easily be reinterpreted in light of focusing on appearance (*Erscheinung*) and the givenness of the object. Irreal imaged objects are successfully intuited through the experienced relationship between two conflicting apprehensions and their respective correlates, not an elusive image object. Instead of analyzing the structure of *Bildbewusstsein* in terms of both appearances and mental images, the former (in their relationship) can be shown to replace the latter.[96]

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[93] Cf., Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 58–59.

[94] Brough (2005, p. 60); "[w]ie erscheint es also? Erscheint es wirklich in der Weise eines Bildes? Konstituiert sich wirklich in der Phantasie ein Bildobjekt, durch das hindurch ein Bildsujet angeschaut wird? Ich muss gestehen, das ich hier immer wieder von ernstem Zweifel ergriffen wurde" (Hua XXIII 1980, No. 1, p. 55).

[95] Brough (2005, pp. 22–23) and Hua XXIII (1980, No. 1, p. 21). Cf. also, Hua XXIII (1980), No. 17, pp. 489–490, and No. 17, Appx.50.

[96] In 1904/05 at the time of his first extensive study of *Phantasie* Husserl is adamant about distinguishing between mental image and appearance in *Bildbewusstsein* and emphasizes the same distinction in the structural context of *Phantasie* also (Hua XXIII 1980, No. 1, p. 68).

A more supple account of the structure of imaging—one free of the specter of the illusion of immanence—is here already at hand. If anything, comparing imaging and imagining can reveal the concept of 'mental image' as eliminable in our analyses of both. The solution to all of the questions regarding the obscure image object had been available as early as 1904/05: "What does actually exist there, apart from the 'painting' as a physical thing, the piece of canvas with its determinate distribution of color pigments, is *a certain complex of sensations that the spectator contemplating the painting experiences in himself, as well as the apprehension and meaning that he bases on this complex* so that the consciousness of the image occurs for him."[97] Husserl's meaning-constitution framework unpacked here in terms of apprehensions interpreting sensory data is the foundation upon which a new account of the structure of *Bildbewusstsein* could be offered. Furthermore, Husserl's insights regarding the import of resemblance in successful pictorial depiction are not to be overlooked.[98] If we focus on the relation between the two interpreting apprehensions of imaging and stress resemblance as 'experienced' resemblance between the physical object given in the first apprehension and the irreal *sujet* given in the second, we can begin to explicate the very *hineinschauen* of the latter through the former that rightly fascinated Husserl. The conflict between the features of the physical object and the *sujet* and the conflict between reality and irreality that Husserl identifies at the structural core of imaging are also important guides here— the claim regarding the self-reflexive character of imaging stands.

For Husserl, a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for the possibility of visual aesthetic experience is our very ability to focus on the image object (i.e., figment as mental image). In rejecting mental images as structural moments of image consciousness, we are not dismissing the possibility of visual aesthetic consciousness. The mediation and structural complexity that define imaging remain untouched by my account. By rethinking the nature of this mediation we identify the experienced relationship between the two apprehensions as the condition in question. I stress 'experienced' here because I believe Husserl was right in pointing out the self-reflective nature of imaging. We are aware of the conflict between the two apprehensions and their respective correlates. What seems to be a conflict between an image object qua mental image and the *sujet* is actually the lived tension stemming from the experienced paradoxical relationship between the two imaging apprehensions. This relation is the proper locus of the consciousness of difference pertaining to imaging. The latter's natural, self-reflective awareness of this tension plays a crucial role in aesthetic experience as artificial. We are most definitely not losing meaning if we eliminate mental images.[99] We could easily map Husserl's distinction between *object as* and *object which* on our suggested distinction between

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[97] Brough (2005, p.23; emphasis mine). Also Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, p. 22.

[98] These insights are even able to assuage the main worries surrounding resemblance accounts of depiction voiced by Goodman (1976) in his *Languages of Art*. For Goodman, resemblance cannot be the condition for possibility of depiction since resemblance is multifarious (there are many respects in which a thing resembles another), ubiquitous (pictures resemble other pictures more than they resemble their subjects), reflexive, and symmetric—none of which are features of depiction (see esp. Chapter 1).

[99] For a discussion of meaning in aesthetic experience, see Fink (1966).

meaning stemming from the dynamic relation between the two imaging apprehensions on the one hand and *intended sujet* on the other.

Thus, we could rethink the structure of both *Phantasie* and *Bildbewusstsein* apart from the 'mental image' conceptual framework. This position is one Husserl himself was tempted to adopt given his avid critique of the reification of images as somehow existing 'in' consciousness.[100] We see him recognize the importance of explicating how *hineinschauen* occurs: "Nothing further than the trifling matter of how the mind, provided that something like an image exists in it, manages to present the subject to itself, hence something different from the image."[101] We also see him strongly rejecting the immanence of images view: "If I put a picture in a drawer, does the drawer represent something? But the naïve view errs above all in that it conceives of the mental image as an object really inhabiting the mind. It conceives of the image as there in the mind just as a physical thing is there in reality."[102] However, he did not take this path to fruition. Instead of rejecting the existence of images 'in' consciousness but nevertheless finding a way of reclaiming their relevance as structural elements of imaging and imagining consciousness, Husserl could have dismissed them altogether. This point is at once conceptual and linguistic. It is important to clearly delineate the conceptual framework stemming from the phenomenological analysis. It is likewise important to employ terms able to communicate the results of this inquiry with little or no ambiguity. The view I propose aims to accomplish both of these goals. It seeks to provide a new way of thinking and communicating about irreal presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) while relying on the tools Husserl himself provided through years of research.

4 Conclusion

Worries regarding the completeness of my structural account of imaging consciousness (*Bildbewusstsein*) are justified. It is not my intention here to offer such a complete account. My goal here is to propose a different path for further phenomenological analyses of imaging that would steer clear of the problems stemming from an unwarranted commitment to mental images. Beyond meaning constitution and resemblance, Husserl's later genetic-synthetic work presents us with additional tools we could use in the attempt to better understand pictorial depiction. For instance, his work on passive and active syntheses reveals the

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[100] Cf., Hua XIX/1, LU II, and Hua XXIII (1980), No. 1, pp. 22–23. At the time when Sartre wrote his *Imaginary* he had had access to Husserl *Ideas I* and his *Logical Investigations*, but not the material subsequently published in Hua XXIII (1980). Sartre's accusation that Husserl falls prey to the 'illusion of immanence' (cf., Webber (2004, p. 59) is not however justified despite his lack of access to this material. There is plenty of evidence in both *Ideas I* (cf., Hua III/1 1976, §90) and in the *Logical Investigations* (cf., Hua XIX/1, 436ff.) that Husserl dismissed the position that claimed the inclusion of mental images in consciousness; for Husserl consciousness is not a box or a container and the above mentioned texts, available to Sartre during the 1930 s, make that perfectly clear. There is further evidence for this in Hua II (1950) (11, 29–39). For an elaboration of immanence and transcendence in Hua II (1950), see Brough (2008). For discussions of the imagination in Husserl and Sartre, see Wiesing (1996), and Flynn (2006).

[101] Brough (2005, pp. 22–23) and Hua XXIII (1980, No. 1, p. 21).

[102] Ibid.

pervasive character of experienced relations such as association, similarity, and their import for habitual and willed recognition. These relations are the backbone of passive habituation, which in its turn (as Husserl shows in his discussions of sedimentation in the *Crisis*) affects our every theoretical and non-theoretical motivated endeavor—depiction (aesthetic or not) included. Unfortunately, Husserl himself did not engage the questions surrounding image consciousness in the context of his work on synthesis. This, however, should not dissuade us from pursuing such a research program ourselves. The powerful claims about passive synthesis enable a dynamic account of recognition, which, if employed in a genetic analysis of imaging, would only reinforce the case against mental images. It would also be helpful to engage contemporary theories of depiction focusing especially on resemblance and recognition theories such as those put forth by Robert Hopkins[103] and Dominic Lopes.[104] These accounts explore the very possibility of *hineinschauen* as Husserl understood it,[105] but unlike Husserl, they do not rely on image objects understood as mental images. Instead, they stress the importance of understanding the relationship between our experiences of physical images and of their depicted objects. As already mentioned, a clear analysis of imaging and pictorial depiction is necessary for any comprehensive attempt to analyze the structure and conditions for the possibility of aesthetic experience. The latter is an artificial experience—a willed experience requiring a certain expertise; as such, it necessarily relies on natural abilities manifested through various kinds of acts or consciousness and their respective modes of appearance/givenness and intuition.

To address one of the worries I referred to at the beginning of my paper, namely limiting the scope of irreal imagined or *Phantasie* objects to spatially-determined ones, we can now say—in light of our discussion of the direct givenness/appearance of the imagined object, that *Phantasie* objects may be spatially determined and perspectively given, as in our centaur case, but need not be so. Irreality, as Husserl himself emphasizes in his lectures courses on *Phantasie* in 1918 and onward, is to be broadly understood as any object non-positionally intended and intuited. These objects are to be understood as *free, ontically neutral irreal possibilities*—possibilities that may or may not exhibit spatial determinations.[106] I can thus imagine a judgment or an emotion, as irreal instantiations of these acts—here engaged in a non-positional manner. The givenness of these irreal possibilities (including in the context of theoretical variations, such as phenomenological eidetic variation) cannot be described in terms of mental images. It is interesting to note that Husserl's analyses of the imagination lay the foundation for a much more powerful account of the relationship between various kinds of acts (simple or founded) than those offered by faculty psychology models. The latter would find it

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[103] Cf., Hopkins (1998).

[104] Cf., Lopes (1996).

[105] There is a substantial history of trying to unpack the structure and conditions for the possibility of seeing something in something else (i.e., 'seeing-in') in the Analytic tradition. For earlier discussions of depiction and seeing-in, see Wollheim (1980, 1987), Walton (1990).

[106] Much remains to be said about the freedom and neutrality of irreal possibilities as the correlates of imagination. This discussion is also important for any attempt to analyze the status of post-phenomenomenological reductions residua as well as the status of the variants of ideation.

difficult indeed to analyze experiences such as actively imagining judgments or imagining memories, for instance. There may very well be multiple consciousness levels understood as horizons within which various simple and founded acts can unfold. This nexic-horizonal structure of consciousness is, however, a topic for a different research project—one I am currently finalizing.

Freeing imagination of the constraints stemming from the mental images discourse has substantial and most important implications for any attempt to understand Husserl's cursory claim in *Ideas I*, namely that the imagination is the engine driving all eidetic and universalizing inquiry. In other projects,[107] I focus specifically on this issue and seek to show the large extent to which Husserl's own mature eidetic transcendental method (i.e., the reductions and eidetic variation) relies on the imagination. Projects such as these—be they interested in clarifying phenomenological eidetics or mathematical idealization—would be rendered futile by the unfounded but luring commitment to the conceptual framework of mental images. If imagination is bound by the same parameters as perception is, if it is a mere representational faculty, then there is little hope of showing its import for higher order theoretical processes whose objects are not spatially determined. Some have noted the importance of recognizing the importance of productive imagination in phenomenological inquiry.[108] This is indeed a project I am most sympathetic toward. However, to secure the eventual success of such a project, Husserl's claims regarding mental images needed to be revisited and thoroughly questioned.

Furthermore, we also need to examine imagining consciousness on a nexic-horizonal model, following a careful consideration of Husserl's notions of founding (*Fundierung*) and qualitative modification (*qualitative Modifikation*) if we wish to clarify what he means by reductions and eidetic variations. Husserl's later analyses of *Phantasie* often make reference to its ability to freely vary its objects (understood as free possibilities). In his discussions of eidetic variation of the 1920s mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the language of free variation and free variants is quite pervasive. It is natural to wonder to what extent what Husserl refers to as 'eidetic variation' is sustained by the free variation of imagining consciousness. Such a complex investigation deserves to be addressed in an extensive project. Here, too, it will be important to stress the fact that free variation is a *natural ability* of imagining acts while eidetic variation is an *artificial method* grounded on natural abilities. The relationship between Husserl's micro-phenomenological investigations—such as those we have concerned ourselves with here—and his macro reflections on the nature of various methods employed in phenomenological inquiry is a dynamic one. Just as it is adamant to relocate his analyses of presentification in the context of his reflections on method (especially the genetic-historical method of the late 1920s and early 1930s), so must we carefully explicate the structure and conditions for the possibility of the phenomenological method in light of Husserl's and our own micro-phenomenological discoveries. We will most definitely have to

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[107] A monograph and several articles on this issue are in preparation.

[108] Cf., Elliott (2005, pp. 57, 115f.). I would like to thank my anonymous reviewer for pointing out the necessity of mentioning the import of productive imagination and for this particular reference. Given the scope and goals of this paper, this notion cannot be fully explored here.

revisit the case of mental images once we have undergone a substantial study of the eidetic method.

In this paper I have offered an argument that deals primarily with claims stemming from specific micro-phenomenological studies. My choice to focus exclusively on these claims without engaging the questions regarding method stems from multiple reasons: first, I view the problem of mental images as important enough to deserve its own thorough treatment—I hope that by now the wide implications of the view have become clear; second, the scope of this paper would not permit an extensive discussion of methodological concerns; and third, my work on mental images is a necessary propaedeutic stage in a much larger project that focuses exclusively on the relationship between imagination and Husserl's method. Here I have discussed *Phantasie* as act or kind of consciousness (i.e., as direct presentification), this being sufficient for the purpose of arguing against the discourse of mental images. However, imagination can also be understood as entire nexic-horizonal level of consciousness, whose simplest and most direct mode of accessing objects is *Phantasie* as presentification. This level is able to sustain all acts (simple or founded) apart from perception and simple eidetic presentations; these latter ones are the core simple presentations pertaining to two other levels— the existential positional and essential positional respectively.[109] All objects intended and intuited at the imagining level are non-positionally engaged. These objects may be the objects of memories, expectations, judgments, emotions, etc. Thus, the 'productive' powers of the imagination can be exponentially illuminated and relocated from the natural context of abilities we posses to the artificial context of any theoretical inquiry and method—including the phenomenological eidetic one.

As we acknowledge the convoluted nature of Husserl's journey toward clarifying *Phantasie* as direct imageless presentation, we should emphasize the key points that came to light or were facilitated through this work. First, there are no mental images in *Phantasie* and *Bildbewusstsein*. Second, although both image consciousness and imagination are non-positional presentifications understood as 'reproductions,' they have radically different relations to perception. And third, imaging and imagining grant access to the irreal in distinct ways. The former does so through a structural conflict with reality while the latter accomplishes this directly and without entailing such a conflict. What I hope to have shown here is that Husserl's analyses of intuitive presentation offer all of the necessary tools to leave the discourse of mental images behind in the case of both imaging and imagining and to replace it with a new structural account that relies primarily on *appearances* (in the case of imagining) and *experienced relations of appearances* (in the case of imaging). The structural difference between imaging as indirect presentation and imagining as direct presentation, and the different ways in which they give access to irreality should not prevent us from describing them *both* without the aid of mental images.

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[109] At the existential-positional level objects are intended and intuited as real (present, past, or future); the objects of the essential-positional level are non-positionally engaged with respect to their reality or existence and positionally intended and intuited qua essences or universals. This is the level of eidetic inquiry—be it subjective phenomenological or objective (mathematical, logical, etc.)

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