

Rationality, conceptual imagination and myth*

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The article addresses the problem of how myth relates to rationality. In the classical formulation, this question appears in the following manner: are mythos and logos opposites? It can be stated that myth has become one of the key themes of philosophy in the 20th century. It has been studied in ethnography and anthropology, cultural studies, art theory, political science and even in the theory of knowledge. Myth is understood not only as a special artistic form, but also a special form of intuition, form of thinking, and form of life. Despite the sometimes cardinal difference in approaches to the analysis of myth, one common feature in its understanding can be identified. Mythical thinking is considered either as irrational or as proto-rational. For example, in Cassirer and Blumenberg, myth appears as an affective rationality, in Vico and Schelling — as a poetic rationality. The reason for this can be seen in the fact that myth is considered as a product of imagination. The latter is indisputable, but does this mean that myth and rationality are incompatible? In order to answer this question, the concept of imagination should be analyzed. Drawing on the theories of Hume, Aristotle, and Kant, the author contends that there is a special type of imagination referred to as “conceptual”, which is a human capacity of spontaneous production of concepts. The conceptual imagination seems to be a distinctive feature of human rationality. However, if this is so, then rationality is a condition of myth and not its counterpart. Myth and discursive thinking thus turn out to be merely different forms of realization of our human rationality, of which discursive imagination is the common basis.

Keywords: myth, conceptual imagination, imagination, rationality, Aristotle, Hume, Kant.

Introduction

One of the remarkable characteristics of intellectual reflection in the 20th century is its concern with the problem of myth, reflected in a multiplicity of approaches: ethnological and anthropological, psychoanalytical, cultural, political, epistemological, etc.¹ Myth was a subject matter of philosophical meta-discourses in regard to the ways of cognition, human rationality, and foundations of culture, and it has been discussed as a special form of intuition, form of thinking, and form of life. These discourses demonstrate a very different understanding of myth, its place in the structure of human mentality, and its functions.

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¹ For a lucid and helpful overview of the leading theories of myth, see Cohen [1], *Stambovsky* [2], Segal [3], Segal [4].

Already from the above, it is clear that looking for a general definition of myth is a hopeless task. It cannot be clearly defined, but rather it can be interpreted in accordance with the principle of “family resemblance” proposed by Ludwig Wittgenstein. What various theories call “myth” has common, but elusive features. The meaning of this word depends on the context of its use and on the theory within which this phenomenon is approached. In other words, theory determines the content of the concept of ‘myth’. Therefore, as a subject matter of the work, the term ‘myth’ is the *terminus ad quem* and it can initially be defined only in general. Myth can be understood as a literary genre like a legend, fable, tale, or utopia; it also can serve as a paradigm of social life. In addition, myth may be analysed from the epistemological point of view as a specific cognitive situation of the human being, and this seems to be the most fundamental function of myth.

Despite the variety of its manifestations, myth reveals a constant quality: it is rooted in and inseparably connected with imagination. In short, myth is mostly seen as a product of imagination. The imagination is usually opposed to rational, formal-logical thinking with the result that myth appears as the opposite of logos. This situation has existed since ancient times and has not shown any significant changes until now. As a rule, the debate on myth is still guided with a dual logic highlighting such oppositions as rational/irrational, reality/fiction, conscious/unconscious, reasonable/affective, episteme/doxa, true/false, etc.

In the history of philosophy there have already been numerous attempts to consider the terms ‘myth’ and ‘logos’ not as the opposites, but to put them in a genetic or a dialectical relationship to one another — one thinks of Vico, Schelling, Cassirer, Levi-Strauss, Blumenberg and many others. One basic assumption remains unchangeable in all these approaches, namely the assumption that myth and logos are based upon two different forms of rationality. In Cassirer and Blumenberg, for example, myth is characterized by an affective rationality, in Vico and Schelling by a poetic rationality, etc. Most theories are in agreement that myth represents an immature, primary or deficient form of rationality, the culmination of which is seen in the discursive, inferential thinking. Hans-Friedemann Richter summarizes this state of affairs as follows: “In contrast to the logos, whose area is fundamentally accessible in a rational manner, the myth signals what people cannot rationally grasp in their limitations or consider unexplainable” [5, p. 25].

Against this background, myth seems to be an ideal candidate to raise the question of the nature of human rationality in general. In turn, the analysis of the rationality can be a promising starting point to call into question the nature and functions of myth once again. In my view, these questions can be answered meaningfully if one illuminates the role of imagination, which produces myth as such, and its relation to the discursive, inferential rationality. That is the purpose of my work and I shall begin this analysis with a brief account of imagination.

The concept of imagination

Imagination is involved in a wide variety of human activities, such as understanding, memory, belief, desire, and it has been explored from a wide range of positions. Amongst the most discussed functions of imagination is its role in art, psychology and scientific cognition. Accordingly, different aspects of imagination become visible. For example, in the arts the faculty of imagination is understood, first of all, as a creative ac-

tivity of human being, as a productive fantasy and thinking in and by means of images. Plato's, Hume's and Kant's aesthetics, as well as Collingwood's and Ricœur's aesthetic theories are the important cornerstones, which formed a conceptual foundation for the European tradition in regard to this subject matter. In psychology, the main focus is, usually, on different disorders of imagination. That is, the destructive patterns of cognition and behaviour that have been argued to result from different forms of psychopathology associated with imagination, such as dreaming. The patriarch of this field is Freud who contributed to the question of the imagination's relation to reflective thought and its place in forming neuroses². Finally, philosophers give imagination a central role in the creative endeavour of science. Some of them argue that imagination is a *constitutive aspect* of heuristic by highlighting its role in scientific discovery. Others refer to the thought experiments that are regularly used in scientific theorizing as being founded on imaginative capacities. For many, like Feyerabend, imagination is engaged in the process of constructing our symbolic reality.

The variety of roles ascribed to imagination provides a guide for discussions on the epistemic status of imagination. Here, the central epistemological questions are on the nature of imagination and its place in human cognition. There are two main points of disagreement regarding this issue. First, philosophers disagree about the origin and the sources of imagination and the strength of the connection between imagination and sensuality, on the one hand, and between imagination and understanding, on the other hand. Second, philosophers disagree about the type of imagination involved in creative processes. Is this the same imaginative faculty, which is involved, for example, in a fictional narrative, in musical compositions and in promoting scientific hypotheses?³

Despite immense differences between numerous imagination theories, they may be divided into two large groups, which can be defined as *representational* and *logical*. In the first case, imagination is considered to be supported by input obtained from actual perceptual — visual, auditory, haptic, kinaesthetic, etc. — experiences. This approach is challenged by the theories stating that imagining can occur without imagery. Here, imagination is interpreted as the emergence of meaning, or as meaning-giving. Both traditions have complicated histories, but they can be vividly illustrated by reference to the so-called paradigmatic representatives. They are Hume's theory of imagination and, on the opposite pole, Aristotle's and Kant's conceptions of imaginations. Because of the breadth of the topic, the following analysis is limited to aspects allowing for clarification of the principal differences between these approaches.

A representational theory of imagination: Hume

In Hume's theory of cognition, imagination plays a crucial role in all thought processes and provides the basis for cognition. Before demonstrating this, it is important to remember that, according to him, all knowledge arises from experience and can only be

² A famous proponent of Freudian concepts emphasising the role of imagination in psychoanalysis was Jacques Lacan.

³ Such fundamental studies on imagination as Murray Wright Bundy's history of imagination [6], Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Psychology of the Imagination* [7], Mary Warnock's book *Imagination* [8], Dietmar Kamper's studies on the history of imagination [9], Richard Kearney's work *The Wake of Imagination* [10], Alan White's *The Language of Imagination* [11] and John Cocking's *Imagination: A Study in the History of Ideas* [12] build a basis for fruitful discussions on this issue.

justified by experience. The first part of this proposition is formulated by Hume himself as the “first principle <...> in the science of human nature”: “<E>very simple idea has a simple impression, which resembles it; and every simple impression a correspondent idea” (*Treatise* 1.1.1.5.30–31). The second part can be concluded from his famous argument that “the examination of the impression bestows a clearness on the idea; and the examination of the idea bestows a like clearness on all our reasoning” (*Treatise* 1.3.2.4.32–34). Hume believes that “<t>is impossible for us to carry on our inferences in infinitum; and the only thing, that can stop them, is an impression of the memory or senses, beyond which there is no room for doubt or enquiry” (*Treatise* 1.3.4.1.28–30). In other words, he postulates a kind of the “Myth of the Given” (Sellars), namely that the process of cognition may not exceed beyond the bounds of experience. These two propositions construct the general conceptual framework within which the developing particular notions took place.

The most fundamental means of cognition are “simple” impressions and “simple” ideas. An impression first affects the senses and makes people perceive the qualities of things. The mind makes a copy of this impression which remains after the impression ceases. Hume refers to such a copy as an “idea”. There is discussion on the question whether the ideas in his theory of cognition can be interpreted as pictorial images. In fact, *A Treatise of Human Nature* opens by explicitly identifying ideas with images: *ideas* are defined as “the faint images” of sensory impressions in thinking and reasoning (*Treatise* I. 1.1.1.7). This is sometimes understood literally and leads to the conclusion that Hume conceived the ideas picture-like. However, Hume refers also, for example, to the “ideas” of pleasure or pain (*Treatise* I. 1.2.2.8) and this allows us to suggest that the ‘copies’ here are not pictorial images. Rather, it is conceivable that “idea” might mean nothing more than merely ‘replica’, or ‘representation’. The passages just mentioned (and others like them) perhaps imply no more than that Hume thought of simple ideas as emerging from perceptual experiences and that the senses are only the channel through which these representations are conveyed. The concept of the idea as a ‘copy’ or, better, a ‘representation’ of sensual perception serves only to prove the primary position of sensuality in cognition. The further process of cognition occurs by means of thinking which consists of a connection of ideas of things and in a discovery of the relations that things have to one another.

There are possible four types of epistemic situations: 1) *Perception* takes place when all objects of thought are present to the senses along with the relations between them: “we call this perception rather than reasoning; nor is there in this case any exercise of the thought, or any action, properly speaking, but a mere passive admission of the impressions thro’ the organs of sensation” (*Treatise* I. 3.2.2.35–38). 2) *Knowledge* in the strict sense of the word, that is, “certain” knowledge, takes place when the relations depend purely on the ideas (like in arithmetic or algebra) and can be either demonstrated or directly intuited. 3) *Probability* takes place when one infers the idea of an object from an impression: “’Tis therefore necessary, that in all probable reasonings there be something present to the mind, either seen or remember’d; and that from this we infer something connected with it, which is not seen nor remember’d” (*Treatise* I. 3.6.6.6–8). 4) *Belief* takes place when one infers the existence of one object from another. Here, one can speak solely about ‘belief’ because such an inference “can lead us beyond the immediate impressions of our memory and senses” (*Treatise* I. 3.6.7.9–10), on the one hand, and we cannot give reasonable grounds for the connection of one object with another, on the other hand.

One paradigmatic case of the latter type of cognition is causation. Hume states that “the idea of cause and effect is deriv’d from experience, which informs us, that such particular objects, in all past instances, have been constantly conjoin’d with each other (*Treatise* I. 3.6.7.12–14). He defines causality as “constant conjunction” between objects (*Treatise* I. 3.6.8.29) based on “custom” or “habit”. The idea is that if one has seen objects or events constantly conjoined, the mind is then inclined to project a similar regularity into the future, or into the analogous cases. Hume goes on to summarize the conclusion by saying that there are “certain principles, which associate together the ideas of these objects, and unite them in the imagination” (*Treatise* I.3.6.12.33–34). Thus, it is the imagination which is taken to be responsible for connecting the impression or idea of one object to the impression or idea of another object, rather than understanding. The mechanism of imagination is association, not argumentative or inferential reasoning.

In this theoretical architecture, one should distinguish between the imagination dealing with the “complex” and imagination dealing with “simple” ideas. Hume announces or formulates the principle of liberty of imagination (*Treatise* 1.1.3.4.20–21) which is free to transpose, combine, rearrange, produce and change the “complex” — derived or composed — ideas. This creativity is, for example, a characteristic of imagination in the field of phantasy. In contrast, the imagination dealing with “simple” ideas is restrained within the limits of experience and constrained by a relatively small set of permanent principles of imaginative association. Hume identifies three “general” (*Treatise* 1.3.6.13.49) principles of association: resemblance, contiguity in time and place, and causation. Imagination, functioning according to these principles, establishes “natural relations” among our ideas of objects. Hume says that although the associative principles’ “effects are everywhere conspicuous”, their causes “are mostly unknown, and must be resolv’d into original qualities of human nature, which I pretend not to explain” (*Treatise* 1.1.4.6.15–17). He claims that, as a matter of fact, we do associate ideas in these ways, but he does not try to explain why we associate ideas as we do. This gives us a reason to consider his approach *descriptive*.

One remarkable feature of Hume’s theory is that he breaks down traditional distinctions between thinking and imagining. Imagination is understood as a kind of judgement, as a conclusion based on the association of ideas (*Treatise* 1.3.6.15–16). It does not only assist thoughts to move rapidly from one idea to another in compliance with the principle of economy, but it is only so far as imagination produces a relatively stable structure among the ideas and a regular order to our thoughts that we are able to reason upon it, to draw any inference from it, or to make general empirical judgments. Causation, induction, etc., are the spheres of imagination. Thus, Hume endows imagination with cognitive functions. That is why he regards the principles of imagination as possessing equal weight and authority in the process of cognition based upon inferential reasoning.

It is obvious that the Hume’s cognitive imagination has its own logic. However, this logic is not inherent in the very structure of imagination, but, rather, derived from the experience which “informs” the imagination about possible relations between things and events. Since this logic is imposed on the imagination externally, by physics, it is constituted through a *representational mechanism*. For this reason, one can conclude that in the *Treatise* Hume raises the problem of imagination in a radical way, but his solution shows some restrictions caused by his conviction in the heteronomy of imagination, that is, its dependence on sensuality.

Logical theories of imagination: Aristotle and Kant

Aristotle is another key scholar in regard to the problem of imagination since he has sometimes been accredited with the very invention of the concept of *phantasia* [13, p. 100]. It seems in any case fair to say that he developed *the most influential conception of imagination which has been permanently discussed by philosophers with the result that* “<A>fter over two millennia of discussion, scholars still do not agree about crucial aspects of Aristotle’s conception of *phantasia*, and thus about his view of the fundamental nature of imagery” [14]. The main question remains whether Aristotle’s *phantasia*, which is often translated as imagination, can be considered as a faculty that produces images.

Historically, the most widespread point of view is that, according to Aristotle, to imagine is to hold an image of perception in one’s mind, and an image is a mental substitute for a real thing. Imagination resembles, then, perceptual experience, but it occurs in the absence of the appropriate external stimuli. Against the historical orthodoxy, some modern scholars have questioned the interpretation of ‘phantasma’ just as ‘image,’ in part because Aristotle does not always seem to identify phantasma with pictures, and also because he seems to think of them as playing an important role in perception itself [15; 13]. The last argument seems to be crucial and deserves further examination. In what follows, I shall discuss, in this vein, the concept of imagination as it was developed in the third book of *De Anima*.

It is without doubt that there are two uses of this term. The first one, developed in chapter seven, was well-received and can be called conventional. Aristotle writes: “Images belong to the rational soul in the manner of perceptions, and whenever it affirms or denies that something is good or bad, it pursues or avoids. Consequently, the soul never thinks without an image” (*De Anima* iii 7, 431a15). In this quotation, he highlights the role of imaginary for practical reason and practical activity. An image, like perception, “except without matter” (*De Anima* iii 8, 432a5–10), is a representative of an object; and objects build an environment in which individuals live and operate. Because of this, the givenness of objects, both directly through perception and indirectly through imagination, is a necessary condition for the orientation in the world: “one who did not perceive anything would neither learn nor understand anything” (*De Anima* iii 8, 432a5–10). The suggestion is, thus, that *phantasia* is a faculty in humans (and most other animals) which produces pictorial (e. g., objects of appetite or danger) presentations used in a variety of activities, including those which motivate and guide action and cognition.

Along with the conventional, *representational*, account of *phantasia*, this text includes passages allowing for the suggestion that this phenomenon may also have deep, *logical* functions. In the summary of his investigations into the nature of *phantasia*, in chapter eight, Aristotle states: “Consequently, the soul is just as the hand is; for the hand is a tool of tools, and reason is a form of forms, and perception a form of the objects of perception. Since there is nothing beyond perceptible magnitudes, as it seems, nothing separate, the objects of reason are in perceptible forms, both those spoken of in abstraction and all those which are states and affections belonging to the objects of perception” (*De Anima* iii 8, 432a1–10). Here, he seems to consider that there are two types of intelligible forms that underlay external objects and can be reconstructed. They are the concepts (*eide*) of perceived objects and intelligible forms which constitute perception itself. The former, the forms of objects, are conceived by reason (*nous*). In contrast, the latter are very enigmatic;

they can be identified as phantasmen and seem to play a central role in Aristotle's theory of imagination. The arguments proving that Aristotle tends to treat imagination as a kind of rules for perception, which itself is "a form of the objects of perception", can be found in chapter three.

In fact, at the very beginning of this chapter Aristotle criticizes philosophers who suppose that a grasp of an object "is corporeal, just as perceiving is, and that both perceiving and understanding are of like by like" (*De Anima* iii 3, 427a25–427b). In other words, he criticizes empirically oriented scholars who believe that reasoning perception is best thought of using the model of copies or likenesses of external objects. His main objection to the reduction of the image of an object to the sense perception is that perception is mostly true, whereas an image can be false (*De Anima* iii 3, 428a5–16). In his view, the faculty "in virtue of which we say that a particular image comes about for us" (*De Anima* iii 3, 428a1–2) is imagination, not sense perception.

In a brief discussion dedicated to imagination, Aristotle is, for the most part, concerned about distinguishing imagination from perception and reasoning. He distinguishes it from perception on a host of grounds, but his major argument seems to include the following aspects: because perception is due to single sense organs and always directed to special qualities of objects, it is never in error or admits the least possible amount of falsehood. However, "perception is of something's being an attribute of something; and already here it is possible to be mistaken. For one is not mistaken that there is white; but if one says that this or that other thing is what is white, one is mistaken" (*De Anima* iii 3, 428b20–25). From this passage, it follows that the errors that can occur in perception testify to the fact that the entire object is also co-perceived when individual single qualities are perceived. The emergence of an image is, hence, not restricted to the separate sensible qualities, but it always implies their association to the whole and their attribution to an object. Moreover, perception is also directed to the "universal", not only to the special, qualities of the 'attached' objects. There are, for instance, motion and magnitude, concerning which, as Aristotle claims, the greatest amount of deception is possible. From this, it results that the emergence of an image also implies attribution to the 'co-perceived' objects of such characteristics which are not necessary explicitly conceived in an actual act of perception.

At first glance, the impression can arise that the imagination is introduced here just to explain the possibility of error but, in fact, this argumentation has a positive end result. It follows that imagination does not occur without sense perception and is not reducible to it. Imagination differs from perception in that perception receives separate sensual data, whereas imagination generates a coherent appearance. Imagination seems to realise a conceptual design of perception in accordance with such "universal" characteristics (phantasmen) as motion, magnitude, number, etc. As a unifying instance, imagination is necessary for perceiving something as a total appearance against the variety of separate sense data. However, as further examination will show, imagination is not the same as belief (*De Anima* iii 3, 428a16–b10), knowledge, and reason (*De Anima* iii 3, 429a10–431a), since, in general, all these cognitive acts are connected with discursive reasoning and conceiving.

From the above discussion a provisional conclusion can be drawn that imagination mediates between perception and thinking. This art of cognitive imagination can be interpreted as a faculty to constitute appearances of objects by means of phantasmen. Here, phantasmen are not pictorial mental images that accompany thinking. Rather, they may be interpreted as certain forms of consciousness, as conceptual capacities which are ac-

tualized in our perceptual experience. Phantasma appears to be a *logical act of forming object*, not an image of an object.

This line of thought taken by Aristotle was not developed in philosophy until the publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) (compare [3, p.81]). Kant considers the transcendental imagination as a necessary condition of knowledge and defines it as "a synthesis in general" (A78/B103). This "productive" synthesis transfigures the rhapsody of sense material into a certain form, which must be somehow available to discursive thinking and allow for cognition. Kant believes that it is the function of understanding to bring this pure synthesis of imagination "to concepts" (*auf* Begriffe) (A78/B103), that is, to give intuitions a conceptual character. Transcendental logic is supposed to explain how this comes about.

Kant's strategy is based on the following model: understanding thinks by combining concepts in a judgment. The objects to which these concepts refer are given in intuitions. It can be that either a perceived thing forms an intuition (like in Hume's theory) or, conversely, an intuition forms how things are perceived. If the latter is accepted, it means that the intuitions themselves should have a conceptual character. In connection with this point, there is an ongoing vehement debate between the conceptualist and non-conceptualist interpretations of Kant's notion of intuition and the final solution to this puzzle has not been found yet⁴. In my view, Kant's approach can be considered conceptual, but it does not mean that the primary concepts are already discursive and semantically specified. On the contrary, *to be a concept* in this original sense means nothing other than *to be given as an object*. All intuitions have in common — and this is their original *general* quality — that they are *objects* for a consciousness. In Kant's words, their conceptual character consists in that they have the form of an "object in general". This is precisely what the productive transcendental imagination does.

Three steps seem to determine this process. First, Kant's idea appears to be that that the representation having the form of an object can only arise in correlation to self-consciousness. He claims that the synthetic unity of apperception is the necessary condition for the possibility of knowledge, because it "is a condition under which every intuition must stand in order to become an object for me" (B138). This thesis has the status of the "supreme principle" of all use of understanding (B136). In accordance to it, in order to be able to say that something *is* in one way or another, this something must exist as an object.

This argument is, however, not illuminating and a subject of lively debate in recent works on Kant's epistemology⁵. In my view, Kant's explanation is based on the analogy between formal-logical and *a priori* judgment. In formal logic, the act of judging consists in generalisation, i. e., in the subordination of things *under* the already-given concepts. In this case, a concept represents things by means of a common quality. It is obvious that transcendental logic is founded upon the same procedure: the primary act of synthetic judgment *a priori* consists in the subordination of intuitions *under* the transcendental unity of apperception, i.e., *under* the unity of consciousness. In this process, the object maintains its primary definiteness not due to its belonging to the discursive "space of

⁴ This is an extensive bibliography of continental and analytical philosophy of this discussion that cannot be listed here. Two collections of papers edited by Dietmar Heidemann [16] and Dennis Schulting [17] are representative of it.

⁵ One of the recent publications on this topic, edited by Giuseppe Motta and Udo Thiel [18], provides an overview of the discussed problems.

reasons”, as it is often assumed, but solely as a result of its being subject to the transcendental unity of consciousness. In other words, its specification proceeds not by virtue of explicit or implicit classification à la Aristotle, but structurally-topologically. To be an object means merely to be an *identical unity* for a subject and to have a clear location on that subject’s mental map⁶.

Second, these formal procedures must be applied to the sense data. Kant claims that the manifold of sensual data must be given in “*one empirical intuition*” (B143). This means that images are perceived as already organized and structured. For this, the manifold of intuitions must be brought to a “consciousness in general”, or, to a single mind. The categories fulfil this function. Kant considers the categories “functions” of pure understanding, and this presupposes, in turn, that understanding is originally a unity (B131). One example can be instructive for demonstrating how this model works: if I make the empirical intuition of a house, argues Kant, its synthetic unity “has its seat in the understanding, and is the category of the synthesis of the homogeneous in an intuition in general, i. e., the category of **quantity**, with which that synthesis of apprehension, i. e., the perception, must therefore be in thoroughgoing agreement” (B162). The empirical synthesis of apprehension presupposes, hence, the transcendental synthesis. Kant attributes “a faculty for determining the sensuality *a priori* and its synthesis of intuitions in accordance with the categories” to the “productive” imagination (B152). It is the “transcendental synthesis of the imagination, which is an effect of the understanding on sensibility;” that provides the prior structuring of our perceptions and configures intuitions. For this reason, Kant calls it “figurative”.

However — and this is the third step of bringing imagination “*to concepts*” — categories, Kant states, cannot be applied directly to intuitions, since they are incommensurable. Therefore, a mediator is needed which is partly intelligible and, at the same time, partly material. Kant proposes that a transcendental schema mediates between sensuality and understanding. This part of Kant’s theory of cognition is, probably, the most puzzling and can hardly be explained in a few words⁷. But one basic point of it should be quite clear: the schema is not a picture and it “can never be brought to an image at all” (B 181), but rather a *rule* of pure synthesis, expressed by a category. The schema represents the “sensible concept of an object” (B186), the basis of which is time determinations. For instance, the generation of time in the apprehension of perception due to the successive addition of one homogeneous unit to another is the schema of magnitude; the filling of time is the scheme of reality; the persistence of the real in time is the scheme of substance; the succession of the manifold according to a certain rule is the scheme of causality (A143/B182, A145/B184). Thus, categories and intuitions share time as a common feature. The mechanism of realising categories through the schemata of sensuality consists in the transmission of outer sense into an inner sense, whereby the schema in itself is “always only a product of the imagination” (A140/B179). It is clear that Kant’s transcendental imagination is restricted, similar to Hume’s imagination, but, in contrast to Hume, this limitation is imposed not by objects themselves, but by human cognitive capacities. It is the schemata of sensibility that limit the categories “to conditions that lie outside the understanding” (B186).

⁶ For more information, see Soboleva [19].

⁷ There are many publications on this topic. Since it is not relevant to enter into a discussion on this subject matter, it is sufficient to mention the fundamental and promising research of Matthias Wunsch [20] and Gerhard Schwarz & Matthias Wunsch [21].

These three moments outline the basis for Kant's transcendental-logical theory of "productive" imagination. It is remarkable that Kant paraphrases Hume by saying that he cannot explain more about the imagination, which remains "a blind though indispensable function of the soul without which we would have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom even conscious" (A78/B103).

Conceptual imagination

What do we learn from these theories of imagination? Probably, the most informative lesson is that to imagine is not only to represent something as a picture in the absence of any corresponding perception but that imagination can also be interpreted as absolute and original, one that produces images for the first time. In this primordial sense, imagination can be interpreted as a *mechanism of awareness* of the world. In this case, "to imagining something" is equivalent to "being aware of something". As appears from the short philosophical-historical overview in the previous chapter, there can be different strategies of this type of argument: in Hume, imagination connects the ideas of objects in a "natural" way and also allows for exceeding the frame of experience and converting experience into a new (hypothetical) knowledge. In Aristotle, who argued that phantasia is at work even in a normal sensory experience like seeing, and in Kant, who claimed that the imagination acts "immediately upon perceptions" (A120), imagination enables experience as such and, hence, the phenomena themselves come into existence for the first time due to imagination.

Imagination, as can be concluded by referring to Aristotle's and Kant's theory, creates the specifically human image of the world, that is, the image of the world in conformity with the conceptual structure of the human mind. It takes raw materials and produces outputs that transcend concepts possessed by human understanding. Here, under the concepts one should understand neither an abstraction of features that belong to things nor any other discursive contents. They are just the functions of a being-conscious-of-something *via* perceiving something as *something*. In this case, imagination means a *conceptual imagination*, which is the imagination of form and order, without necessarily becoming separated from logical operations on the one hand. On the other hand, since this kind of imaginative activity is non-propositional and non-linguistic it cannot be identified with reasoning which provides the perceptual experience with a definitive semantic content.

With this result, one is certainly at the limit of what can be implicitly inferred from the analysed texts. Nevertheless, it would not be sufficient to say that conceptual imagination is only confined to an application of logical rules to sensual data. Aristotle, Hume and Kant characterize the human mind also as the ability to *spontaneously* generate concepts and thoughts. This ability is taken by these philosophers for granted and not thematised. Their primary concern is, rather, to restrain the thinking within the framework of experience in order to avoid unfounded speculations and achieve verifiable knowledge. However, from this 'negative' strategy, it can be concluded that there is also a mind activity that can be interpreted as one more variant of conceptual imagination consisting in the production of concepts (ideas, etc.) and discourses⁸. Taken together, these two aspects — the non-discursive and the discursive — seem to be fundamental for the conceptual imagination.

⁸ It is, particularly, hermeneutics that analyses the knowledge as 'knowing one thing as something of a certain kind through productive articulation'. This approach can be found in Plato and was developed

To conclude, these classical theories of imagination propose the general view that our human imagination is basically conceptual. The conceptual imagination belongs to our cognitive capacities and, in this role, enables a primary constitutive interpretation of the world. However, the term 'interpretation' does not mean a theoretical or reflective representation. On the contrary, this term is to be understood as a spontaneous differentiation of things⁹ as well as spontaneously giving them a meaning, and spontaneous, enactive producing meaningful relationships. It points to the process of distinguishing and identifying something as 'this-such' due to which the world takes on a tangible contour and universal, 'natural' image, which is a starting point for reflections and cognition.

Conceptual imagination, rationality and myth

The notion 'conceptual imagination' seems to be a promising resource for rethinking both the concept of human rationality and theory of myth, and giving them a new view. If it is accepted that the faculty of spontaneous production of concepts without the ontological support of images or external objects is an anthropological characteristic of the human being, principal and equally controversial questions about the nature of the human rationality cannot be posed any more exclusively in terms of discursivity, propositionalism, inference and expediency¹⁰. In fact, a theory of rationality that restricted itself to formal-logical, deductive and referential procedures would be radically incomplete, since it would exclude the factor of productive interpretative activity of human beings. For this reason, it is impossible to isolate imagination from the other cognitive capacities of humans and consider them either mutually exclusive or in competition with each other. On the contrary, the original productive conceptual imagination should be recognised as a genuine creative part of human mind, the very foundation and, most probably, the *differentia specifica* of human rationality.

The difference between conceptual and imaginative thinking is, then, based on the difference in the forms of articulation and presentation of the issue in question. However, both types of thought stem from the same productive faculty, the primary conceptual imagination, which is constitutive for our basic experience since it generates the unified sensory appearance of the world and provides the prior structuring of our perceptions at the most basic level of meaning-making. There can, finally, be only one and the same reason having different applications and realisations. The uniform human reason, the source of which is conceptual imagination, underlies scientific thinking as well as the mythical and artistic fantasy.

On this theoretical basis, the question of myth as the opposite of rationality can be finally be resolved. In contrast to the traditional opposition which is still preserved in the majority of modern theories of myth, myth can be interpreted as a form of rationality provided that the latter is not reduced to its positivist, inferential-discursive, formula. Indeed, if human reason is inevitably imaginative, it is no longer reasonable to set apart myth from rationality by giving emphasis to the criterion of being a product of imagination¹¹.

by Dilthey, Heidegger, Misch, and Koenig who challenged the traditional theory of knowledge which was oriented to propositional thinking.

⁹ Here, 'thing' is what we mean by the word 'something'.

¹⁰ Rationality was a subject matter of lively debates in the seventies of the twentieth century in Germany due to Habermas and Appel. However, since that time it has not become the focus of philosophical interest.

¹¹ Compare to the opinion of Kieran Egan's who believes that "seeing the imagination as something that plays a constant role in perception makes it a potential contributor to rational thought" [22].

The contrast between discursive reasoning and myth is merely that the latter is a practical and poetic mode of realisation of the capacity of conceptual imagination. This premise can be a starting point for developing a systematic conceptual frame for the myth and the so-called mythical thinking.

Specifically in reference to myth, the problem of mental imagery and the possible roles that imagination might play can be approached from a new perspective. Even for myth, imagination should not be considered by its sensible aspect, but rather by its logical aspect given that the latter is the condition of the former. Thus, we first have to understand (grasp) something before we create an image of it. In other words, before becoming a sensual representation, the 'image' is an emerging meaning. Any mythical image is an expression of a meaning (idea) and exists as long as this meaning is valid, not *vice versa*. Mythical images are the poetical language of conceptual imagination¹². The idea (meaning, concept) is primary: that is the point. Human being's faculty of productive 'this-such-thinking' can be conceived as an anthropological condition of the possibility of myth.

Myth sets out the key aspects of conceptual imagination: seeing as, non-discursiveness, and non-inferential creativity which is not limited by any 'natural' rules. The specificity of myth is that it is precisely the kind of assessment of the world that denies the distinction between representation and sense. In myth, to think in and through images is, at the same time, to think in and through meanings (ideas, concepts). It operates with imaginary concepts, or, conversely, with conceptualised images. This means that it operates with symbols, as Ernst Cassirer famously put it.

One of the most important properties of mythical symbols is their ability to generate new symbols that can express the meaning of the primary symbol. Correspondently, the logic of myth can be characterised as the self-developing logic of a sense. This kind of logic neither reflects the structures of the external reality in itself, nor is it a product of an inferential calculus. It is, rather, the logic of conceptual imagination in its creative proceeding to knowledge and sense on the way of explicating meaningful relations.

Of course, this analysis of myth is very schematic and not complete. Therefore, it is worth reiterating that the present aim is only to draft a framework within which myth could be construed not as an *alter ego* of rationality, but as its specific integral part. This framework is, I claim, the conceptual imagination.

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¹² In his *Scienza nuova* (*New Science concerning the Common Nature of the Nations*), first published in 1725, Giambattista Vico develops a sort of historical phenomenology of human spirit, which has its origin in myth. His understanding of myth as "poetical wisdom" and "poetical logic" indicates clearly that he regarded myth as a primitive stage of cognition which has its roots in imagination.

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Рациональность, понятийное воображение и миф*

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Проблема, на решение которой нацелена данная статья, состоит в том, как соотносятся мифическое мышление и рациональность. В классической постановке вопроса: являются ли миф и логос противоположностями? Можно сказать, что миф стал одной из ключевых тем философии XX в. Он изучался в этнографии и антропологии, культурологии, теории искусства, политологии и даже в теории познания. Под мифом понимают не только особую художественную форму, но и форму созерцания, форму познания и форму жизни. Несмотря на порой кардинальную разницу в подходах к анализу мифа, можно указать на одну общую черту в его понимании. Мифическое мышление рассматривают или как иррациональное, или как проторациональное. Например, у Кассирера и Блюменберга миф выступает как аффективная рациональность, у Вико

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и Шеллинга — как рациональность поэтическая. Причину этого можно видеть в том, что миф представляют как продукт воображения. Последнее бесспорно, но означает ли это, что миф и рациональность несовместимы? Для того, чтобы ответить на этот вопрос, следует рассмотреть само понятие воображения. Опираясь на теории Юма, Аристотеля и Канта автор показывает, что есть особый тип воображения, который она называет понятийным. Это способность человека к спонтанному производству понятий. Понятийное воображение автор интерпретирует как отличительную черту рациональности человека. Но если это так, то и миф стоит рассматривать только при условии того, что человек всегда уже мыслит рационально. Миф и дискурсивное мышление оказываются, таким образом, различными формами реализации нашей рациональности, основанием которой является дискурсивное воображение.

Ключевые слова: миф, понятийное воображение, воображение, рациональность, Аристотель, Юм, Кант.

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