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The Dark Source of Knowledge

To Krzysztof

Kant once wrote in his notebook: “Avoid bad dreams”.¹ Goya, vainly yearning for light and harmony, placed the following inscription on his etching: “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos”. Wordsworth described the imagination as “reason in her most exalted mood”. Yet the two preceding statements also refer to the imagination. They also refer us to an issue that is situated in that sphere of the most contentious and complex matters, on the interpretation of which depends the entire historical image, perception and assessment of the eighteenth century.

If we could fully develop this matter on the basis of only these three statements, we would attempt to demonstrate that the attitude towards the imagination as represented by Goya is the closest to the seventeenth-century one, oscillating between condescension, contempt and fear. This is because the “sleep of reason” does not produce monsters, but permits the imagination, a demonic faculty which produces nightmares, to hold sway.² Further on we would attempt to show that Kant’s sentence, seemingly very similar to Goya’s, signifies a different meaning – here the chaos of everything that is corporeal “awakens” during sleep, and then only the imagination is able to maintain order or even to prevent the “total extinction of life”.

However, we must limit ourselves here to a brief presentation of arguments in support of the view that Wordsworth’s metaphor is Kantian in its essence; that the Romantic apotheosis of imagination as the tool of the fullest cognition is rooted in the writings of Kant, who maintained that cognition is altogether impossible without the imagination. Let us therefore limit ourselves to the role of the imagination in Kant’s epistemology – an issue that has been reflected on many times and is burdened with substantial literature,

1 The current essay first appeared in W. Juszcak, *Fakty i wyobrażenia* [Facts and Imagination], Warsaw, 1979, pp. 106–116.

2 An excellent interpretation of this etching is found in an article by G. Levitine, “Literary Sources of Goya’s *Capricho 43*”, *Art Bulletin*, 1965, vol. XXXVII, pp. 56–59.

and yet is being re-considered again and again and is still current; an issue whose summary is, I think, worth recalling here.³

As late as in Hume – that is after the breakthrough in the process of “pardoning” the imagination which was spurred by the texts of Joseph Addison or Christian Wolff – the imagination demonstrated the entire ambiguity of its nature and action. Its aesthetic and epistemological functions appeared in a nebulous amalgamation, impossible to divide, and the “freedom” of the imagination was likewise impossible to limit – this freedom which was desirable in actions included in the first sphere, but which created havoc in the logical order that ought to be maintained in the second sphere. It proved impossible to subordinate, when needed, to the laws of reason, to the laws of the “higher” cognitive faculties, to use the phraseology preferred by Vico or Wolff. In this context, an especially important issue – an issue underlined so strongly by none other than Kant – seems to be chiefly the amalgamation of what was before, in various interpretations of the imagination, shown separately as its always mutually exclusive qualities, i.e. its entirely anarchic features, emphasised by, for instance, Hume, and its entirely logical features, on which Baumgarten, for example, preferred to focus. To Kant, these were only two sides of the same cognitive tool, dependent only on the use to which this tool was being put – on the arrangement of external circumstances or needs which necessitated this or that usage of this tool, but did not determine its character internally.

One of the more recent works devoted to the role of the imagination in Kant’s aesthetics contains an attempt to define this faculty’s possible relation to understanding (*Verstand*) as the “faculty of concepts”.⁴ As it turns out, this analysis requires us to re-examine the way in which the imagination functions in the process of cognition, and to underline the differences between the types of activity that are proper to it in these two spheres. Conversely, however, in order to fully present its far more complex cognitive operation it is all the more important to recall, even briefly, its activities as described from the point of view of aesthetics.

In its poetic, artistically creative operation, which leads to the emergence of “aesthetic ideas”, the imagination “is very powerful in creating another nature, as it were, out of the material that actual nature gives it”.⁵ It is therefore

3 This essay develops a section of my work entitled: *O wyobraźni historycznej* [On the Historical Imagination].

4 H. Blocker, “Kant’s Theory of the Relation of Imagination and Understanding in Aesthetic Judgment of Taste”, *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1965, no. 1, pp. 37–45. Blocker refers to observations made by R. Daval, *La Métaphysique de Kant*, Paris, 1950, pp. 258–259.

5 I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, translated by J. H. Bernard, Macmillan & Co., London, 1914, p. 198 (193). The numbers in the parentheses refer to the page of the third original edition: *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Berlin, 1799. Further on the original pagination is given after the quotations. The same concerns *Critique of Pure Reason*, quoted here in the translation by Norman Kemp Smith, Macmillan & Co. London, 1929, with the

rendered independent, at least to a considerable extent, from experience and from both its chief “conditions” or “sources”, of which the first is receptiveness to impressions and acceptance of representations in the same way our senses are stimulated by objects, while the other is the spontaneous ability to create concepts, i.e. the faculty which enables us to think about an object articulated in a sensuous representation. Thus, the imagination becomes relatively independent from sensibility and from understanding, of which the first (*Sinnlichkeit*) provides us with intuition (*Anschauung*) and the second provides us with concepts. The imagination, usually defined by Kant as the “faculty of intuition” or the “faculty of comprehension in an intuition”, realises here its potential for decomposing, freely and when needed, the images obtained through empirical cognition and for re-forming new wholes from the elements according to rules that are analogous to the rules of understanding, but essentially different from them. Thus the imagination can grant an illusion of experiencing things which, strictly speaking, cannot be a subject of “experience”, a subject of cognition proper.

We entertain ourselves with it when experience proves too commonplace [...]. Thus we feel our freedom from the law of association (which attaches to the empirical employment of Imagination), so that the material which we borrow from nature in accordance with this law can be worked up into something different which surpasses nature (193).

Thus we create those peculiar representations which neither belong to cognition nor can ever “become a cognition” of an object, since they entail a distortion of the correctness, the necessary order of the cognitive process: what the imagination does present to us in this case exceeds the capabilities of comprehension proper to understanding, the capabilities of conceptual comprehension; understanding is unable to bring these representations to the form of concepts.⁶

Such an aesthetical idea “cannot become a cognition, because it is an *intuition* (of the imagination) for which an adequate concept can never be found”, just as its counterpart, a rational idea, “can never become a cognition, because it involves a concept (of the supersensible), corresponding to which an intuition can never be given” (240). If, therefore, we are analysing the imagination in its aesthetic functions, in its freedom, “in its free play”, this means, according to Kant, that “it is in the first place not regarded as reproductive, as it is subject to the laws of association, but as productive and spontaneous

note that the “A” pagination refers to the first edition: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Riga, 1781, and the “B” pagination to the second edition, Riga, 1787. According to the established custom, passages which appear in both editions are provided with both page numbers.

6 “To bring this synthesis [of all that is manifold in an intuition] to *concepts* is a function which belongs to the understanding, and it is through this function of the understanding that we first obtain knowledge properly so called” (A 78).

(as the author of arbitrary forms of possible intuition)” (69).⁷ And although, as it is correctly emphasised, some influence of understanding on the imagination can be detected even here – for instance that the form of its free creations is just as regular and consistent as the form of those of its representations which become objects of cognition⁸ – it nevertheless has the ability to influence understanding; it arouses understanding by showing it some unapproachable goal, and thus it stimulates its activity.

The above few remarks suffice to derive some general descriptive terms for the actions of the imagination as a faculty that operates in all of our cognition. These actions will be in keeping with understanding, will be subordinate to it, subject to the laws of association; the imagination itself will be called reproductive, with the proviso that in *Critique of Pure Reason* the meaning of this word seems to diverge considerably from its generally accepted sense. But the above list does not yet include the most important point: according to Kant, the imagination is the factor that mediates between two mutually alien worlds, between two spheres which otherwise would forever remain strangers to each other, never to be in touch. These two spheres are the *mundus sensibilis* and the *mundus intelligibilis*. The contact between them, relying on subordination of the elements of one sphere to the elements of the other, is cognition itself. Here, all depends on the presence of a mysterious, well-nigh concealed instrument; the clearness of knowledge springs from a dark source. Everything depends on the imagination, “a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious” (A 78, B 103).

Due to the way it operates, the imagination lies so close to understanding that it is sometimes deemed to be its function. The character of its products, in turn, is similar to that of sensuous representations. These operations are called syntheses, the products are images. Regrettably, even the simplest presentation of these concepts requires severe simplifications.⁹

7 The entire range of its activity is described by V. Basch (“Du rôle de l’imagination dans la théorie Kantienne de la connaissance”, *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 1904, vol. XII, p. 428): the imagination can “ressusciter en nous le monde des intuitions, affaibles, il est vrai, et décolorées, mais, en revanche, si malléables, si souples, si plastiques que nous ne sommes pas tenus de les reproduire servilement dans la structure primitive de leur coexistence ou dans l’ordre originaire de leur succession, mais que nous pouvons le combiner à notre gré, les associer et les dessocier”.

8 Blocker, op. cit., p. 45. Blocker asserts that in an aesthetic experience the imagination is freed from the subservient relation to understanding, which characterises the cognitive use of the imagination. Thus, in an aesthetic experience the imagination may be both partially dependent on the intellect and independent from it, and the intellect may similarly be dependent on the imagination or independent from it.

9 One of these simplifications is the fact that we shall not enter here into the discussion as to how the very manner in which the imagination exists should be interpreted, i.e. whether it should be perceived as the “third” (besides sensuality and intellect) independently existing and operating faculty of the mind, as some passages in the first

In the interpretations of Kant's work, special emphasis is put on the point owing to which a decisive turn in the methodology of the study of cognition could occur. This turn consisted in calling the opinion that "the senses not only provide us with perceptions, but also conjoin them and produce the images of objects" into question and asserting that "we cannot represent anything as conjoined in the object without having previously conjoined it ourselves" (A 120, footnote; B 130). Hence, emphasis is put on the introduction of a distinction between passive acceptance of sensual impulses (which constitutes the primeval, purely sensual symptom, a sensation that is only "the matter of perception") and the active, conscious interpretation of that matter in an intuition, producing phenomena and objects of perception, and thus the act of perceiving, forming and cognising sensations.¹⁰ A "synthesis" is an introductory, so to speak, review and categorisation of various, initially chaotic perceptions, "that combination of the manifold in an empirical intuition, whereby perception, that is, empirical consciousness of the intuition (as appearance), is possible" (B 160). This introduction to cognition does not yet require an analysis; at this phase cognition is "crude and confused"; but still "the synthesis is that which gathers the elements for knowledge, and unites them to [form] a certain content" (A 77, B 103).

This action of the imagination occurs in two stages: first, the perceptions are ordered and arranged in groups ("the synthesis of apprehension"), and then associated according to particular rules, owing to which the mind is led from one representation to another "even in the absence of the object" ("the synthesis of reproduction") (A 100–101). The passage from sensibility to understanding – from intuitions to concepts – would be impossible without this twofold synthesis. It is true that "[b]efore we can analyse our representations, the representations must themselves be given, and therefore as regards content no concepts can first arise by way of analysis" (A 77, B 103); but, nevertheless, no synthesis is conceivable without the fundamental condition, which is contained in understanding and which is provided by understanding, thus enabling not only all cognition, but also experience itself, which can only be conscious, and only understanding is able to provide conditions for this consciousness. This fundamental condition is the transcendental apperception, in relation to which the imagination is a kind of "executive power" functioning in the sphere of intuitive data. The mediation of imagination is indispensable, because

edition of *Critique of Pure Reason* seem to suggest, or whether it should be perceived as no more than a function of the intellect, a manner in which the intellect "communicates" with the only other autonomously operating faculty, i.e. with sensuality. Most arguments seem to support the first approach. Cf. E. M. Wolff, *Etude du rôle de l'imagination dans la connaissance chez Kant*, Carcassonne, 1943, p. 9.

10 Cf. e.g. E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, translated by R. Manheim, vol. 3, New Haven, 1957, p. 193.

the understanding in us men is not a faculty of intuitions, and cannot, even if intuitions be given in sensibility, take them up *into itself* in such manner as to combine them as the manifold of its *own* intuition. Its synthesis, therefore, if the synthesis be viewed by itself alone, is nothing but the unity of the act, of which, as an act, it is conscious to itself, even without [the aid of] sensibility, but through which it is yet able to determine the sensibility. The understanding, that is to say, in respect of the manifold which may be given to it in accordance with the form of sensible intuition, is able to determine sensibility inwardly (B 153).

The understanding is thus able to determine sensibility by means of a sort of projection of its synthetic abilities onto sensibility, again with the mediation of imagination. Hence, “imagination is dependent for the unity of its intellectual synthesis upon the understanding, and for the manifoldness of its apprehension upon sensibility” (B 164).

In addition, as demonstrated by an analysis of the concept of *schemata* (the second term for the cognitive actions of the imagination), the imagination is, in essence, the medium providing understanding with intuitions and sensibility with the laws of intellectual synthesis (i.e. it carries those laws from the understanding into the sphere of sensibility), due to which the raw material of perceptions is constituted in phenomena, i.e. in the images of objects as such that we are able to experience empirically, thus, individual objects. The imagination is a kind of “intellectual intuition”, if we may be permitted to use such a phrase; it is a manner of bringing images (i.e. individual intuitive representations) close to concepts, at which closes that complex process of fusing the manifold of what is sensuous into the ultimate unity of what is intellectual.

This ultimate unity is guaranteed by “the thoroughgoing identity of the self in all possible representations”, i.e. the pure, or transcendental, apperception (A 116). It is the highest point to which all indirect ways of combining, or synthesising, representations aspire, and which is at the same time a source of the unity of principles of all the successive combinations – it is “this unitary consciousness” which “combines the manifold, successively intuited, and thereupon also reproduced, into one representation” (A 103). According to Kant, pure apperception, the elementary proposition: “I think” is thus, in addition to the *a priori* forms of sensibility (i.e. those of space and time), another condition for all possible experience; a condition which is indispensable and superior to the other two. It is its pure form, the basis for the constant and synthetic unity of representations, and therefore is independent from experience.

A pure imagination, which conditions all *a priori* knowledge, is thus one of the fundamental faculties of the human soul. By its means we bring the manifold of intuition on the one side, into connection with the condition of the necessary unity of pure apperception on the other. The two extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must stand in necessary connection with each other through the mediation of this transcendental function of imagination, because otherwise the former, though indeed yielding appearances, would supply no objects of empirical knowledge, and consequently no experience (A 124).

All of its hitherto mentioned functions, or rather types of the same ability to synthesise, reveal the imagination as a “spontaneous” faculty, i.e. one which in its simplest and “lowest” operations (i.e. apprehension itself) may be used subconsciously,¹¹ but even then it is governed not by sensibility but by understanding. Even though at some point in *Critique of Judgement* we read:

[...] when used with reference to a representation by which an object is given, [the faculty of Judgement] requires the accordance of two representative powers: viz. Imagination (for the intuition and comprehension of the manifold) and Understanding (for the concept as a representation of the unity of this comprehension) (65),

it is obvious that only the arousal of the imagination, and not the entire course of its action, depends on an object; that the entire process of its action is “spontaneous” and, in essence, the reverse (if we consider the laws and results of this action and not its variable causes or reasons for it): this action is spontaneous, so: independent from sensibility, it is spontaneous, so: independent from any current object that is being experienced. On the contrary, it is a projection of the consciousness of my own “I”, the transcendental consciousness which precedes all detailed experience and is a condition for it. It is a projection of primary or pure apperception – apperception which is sometimes called (when it is in its epistemological role) a function of understanding due to its superior relation to the imagination.

On the highest level of synthesis, at the point where the manifoldness of an image transforms into the absolute, the indivisible unity of a concept, the “imagination” and “understanding” become simply two terms naming two aspects of a synthesising factor or element which (at this last stage) is one and the same. Being essentially different from understanding in the sphere of actions referring to intuitions themselves, the imagination reveals its organic connection with it even at this stage. At the last stage of the conversion of images into concepts, this connection – which is revealed by the imagination’s inherent capability to form syntheses (i.e. its capability for “spontaneous” action) – cannot be presented otherwise than by identifying these two faculties, as the imagination’s peculiar return to its own source. At this point, the “transcendental synthesis of the imagination” is essentially the same thing as “intellectual synthesis”, so that no differentiation can be made any longer. This is probably how the following passage, a frequent source of debates on the interpretation, should be understood: “the synthesis of apprehension, which is empirical, must necessarily be in conformity with the synthesis of apperception, which is intellectual and is contained in the category completely a priori. It is one and the same spontaneity, which in the one case, under the title of imagination, and in the other case, under the

11 From Kant’s own argumentation it does not directly follow that some actions of the imagination can indeed be called subconscious. This problem is sometimes posed by the commentators, however. Cf. E. M. Wolf, *Etude du rôle de l’imagination*, pp. 28–30.

title of understanding, brings combination into the manifold of intuition” (B163, footnote).¹²

By saying that a concept is arrived at through synthesis achieved by the imagination, we mean that a concept always corresponds to some intuition which, being sensuous, is manifold and hence needs synthesising. Since, according to Kant, a concept is a result of the spontaneity of our thinking, it is (this is how it should be understood) a non-sensuous representation. It is an altogether homogeneous intellectual representation, which shows no trace of the intuitive manifoldness either of the “pure forms” or of perceptions. Yet the law of all cognition requires not only that intuitive data find their counterparts in concepts; it also requires that intuitive contents correspond to given concepts:

Our nature is so constituted that our *intuition* can never be other than sensible; that is, it contains only the mode in which we are affected by objects. The faculty, on the other hand, which enables us to *think* the object of sensible intuition is the understanding. To neither of these powers may a preference be given over the other. Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts. These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise (A 51, B 75–76).

It remains for us to ask how the passage from concepts to intuitions – the “downward path” – is possible; how does one recognise this content of intuitive data which would adequately fill the otherwise empty concepts.

In connection with the above remarks, it seems obvious that also in this process of “moving downwards” the decisive role falls, again, to the imagination as the mediating faculty, because no direct contact between understanding and sensibility is conceivable at this point either. This pertains equally to concepts obtained by experience, empirical concepts and pure intellectual concepts, i.e. categories.

A simple commentary on this manner is provided by Blocker in the already quoted study, which states that, according to Kant, every concept assumes,

12 Cf. also B 152, where it is said that the transcendental synthesis of the imagination is “an action of the understanding on the sensibility; and is its first application – and thereby the ground of all its other applications – to the objects of our possible intuition”. With regard to this, the following passage from R. G. Collingwood (*The Principles of Art*, London, 1938, p. 215) is worth comparing: “Regarded as names for a certain kind or level. of experience, the words consciousness and imagination are synonymous: they stand for the same thing, namely, the level of experience at which this conversion occurs. But within a single experience of this kind there is a distinction between that which effects the conversion and that which has undergone it. Consciousness is the first of these, imagination the second. Imagination is thus the new form which feeling takes when transformed by the activity of consciousness”.

signifies or remains in a “direct relation” with some rule, known as a schema, which is not an image in itself but constitutes a set of directives, so to speak, which allow a suitable type of images to be constructed.¹³ This theory of “schematism” was developed in *Critique of Pure Reason* with special attention to the particularly complex problem of the so-called objective validity of the categories, i.e. its applicability to all that is sensuous. This fundamental condition of its cognitive function is here called the “transcendental schema” and, as such, is distinguished from a “phenomenon”, which fulfils the same role in relation to empirical concepts as the transcendental schema does in relation to categories. This is mentioned here only to point out that now we must limit ourselves to using the term “schema” exclusively in the second meaning (which, in fact, is the more frequent one), i.e. “phenomenon”.

Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View contains an important passage in which Kant asserts that the imagination can be described in three ways depending on the precisely defined areas of its activity. It can thus be called *imaginatio plastica* when we are interested in the fact that it encompasses the spatial features of phenomena, their continuity and their mutual relation in coexistence; or *imaginatio associans*, when it orders perceptions, intuitions and phenomena in time, associates their courses and identifies their duration; or *imaginatio affinitas*, when it pertains to affinities between phenomena having a common origin.¹⁴ The last appellation refers precisely to the capability of the cognitive imagination for schematisation. Let us add that, in contrast to perceiving objects through intuition (*Anschauung*) – objects which in this case are always individual and concretely “given” – concepts always pertain to objects indirectly, “by means of a feature which several things may have in common” (A 320, B 377). This brings us close, albeit from a different side, to the correct definition of schematism.

As we read in *Critique of Judgement*, the imagination can not only evoke the image of an object or recall the “signs for concepts”, but, above all, as *affinitas* it “can, in all probability, [...] let one image glide into another, and thus by the concurrence of several of the same kind come by an average, which serves as the common measure of all” (57). This “common measure” or “intervening image” is precisely the schema of the imagination. It is a “schema”, that is to say, it differs from an “image”. This is how Kant explains this difference:

If five points be set alongside one another, thus,, I have an image of the number five. But if, on the other hand, I think only a number in general, whether it be five

13 Blocker, op. cit., p. 41. The observation that schemata develop along a path that constitutes a reverse (or a “mirror image”) of the path along which develop the images of imagination is found in Wolff’s study (*Etude du rôle de l’imagination*, pp. 94–135).

14 I. Kant, *Die Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, 3rd ed., Königsberg, 1820, par. 28: “Das bildende der Anschauung im Raum, *imaginatio plastica*, das beigesellende der Anschauung in der Zeit, *imaginatio associans*, und das der Verwandtschaft aus der gemeinschaftlichen Abstammung der Vorstellungen von einander, *affinitas*”.

or a hundred, this thought is rather the representation of a method whereby a multiplicity, for instance a thousand, may be represented in an image in conformity with a certain concept, than the image itself. For with such a number as a thousand the image can hardly be surveyed and compared with the concept. This representation of a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept, I entitle the schema of this concept. Indeed it is schemata, not images of objects, which underlie our pure sensible concepts. [...] This schematism of our understanding, in its application to appearances and their mere form, is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze. This much only we can assert: the image is a product of the empirical faculty of reproductive imagination; the schema of sensible concepts, such as of figures in space, is a product and, as it were, a monogram, of pure a priori imagination, through which, and in accordance with which, images themselves first become possible. These images can be connected with the concept only by means of the schema to which they belong. In themselves they are never completely congruent with the concept" (A 140–142, B 179–181).

Hence all schemata, even though in themselves they are all products of the imagination, must activate another ability of the imagination (apart from schematism), i.e. the ability for reproduction, owing to which the function of the schema is finally realised; and it is realised in diverse ways. Essentially, a schema serves to arouse and govern "the reproductive imagination that calls up and assembles the objects of experience", without which concepts would be devoid of all strictly cognitive values (A 156, B 195).¹⁵

The above examples and quotations demonstrate that the contact between understanding and sensibility, which is made possible by the imagination, may acquire various forms and achieve varying degrees of rapport. And although this has not been directly stated, images constructed according to the schematic directives may be divided into two, or at least two, groups of a different nature. They either only minimally exceed the framework of a "general outline" as constituted by the schema or they fully imbue it with details, thus limiting the concept's range of applicability to a few or ultimately to just one object presented *in concreto*.

This process of moving from sensuous data to concepts, and from concepts to relevant intuitive phenomena – the process of objectifying originally subjective things and the potential of moving back along an already completed path which is inherent in this process – can be presented in various ways. It can, for instance, be presented from the point of view of differences between meaning and the understanding of meaning, which is subject to individual deviations despite its connection with the same, relatively invariable and supra-individual

15 Related to the "schematic manner of intuition" is the "symbolic manner", which is analysed by Kant elsewhere (*Critique of Judgement*, p. 255): "This concerns only Ideas of the Reason, which, although no adequate presentation is possible for them, by this inadequacy that admits of sensible presentation, are aroused and summoned into the mind".

basis. In considering the relation of the objective to the subjective, Ernst Cassirer explains this issue from a standpoint which is close to Kant's:

When we characterize a sensuous impression, that is given us here and now in a definite nuance, as "red" or "green", even this primitive act of judgment is directed from variables to constants, as is essential to all knowledge. Even here the content of the sensation is separated from its momentary experiencing (*Erlebnis*) and is opposed as independent; the content appears, over against the particular temporal act, as a permanent moment, that can be retained as an identical determination. [...] This fixity and continuity is never fully realized in any sensuously perceptible object; so in order to reach it, thought is led to a hypothetical substructure of empirical being, which however has no other function than to represent the permanent order of this being itself. Thus there is an unbroken development from the first stages of objectification to its completed scientific form.¹⁶

According to Kant, therefore, we attain all levels of that "ordering of the very being" due to the presence of the "blind but indispensable function of the soul". All paths of cognition lead through this mysterious centre, to which the words: "concealed in the depths of the human soul" can rightly be applied. No wonder Heidegger perceived the imagination and the manner of presenting its epistemological functions to be the axis of Kant's entire system.¹⁷ But this is a different issue, yet another aspect of the questions considered herein. By attempting to describe only the chief types which in this system have been ascribed to this faculty, and also by persistently pointing to its mysterious, spontaneous, well-nigh irrational nature, which is consistently highlighted in the *Critiques*, we wished to increase the band of scholars who in their recent research have endeavoured to dim the bright radiance of the Enlightenment. We wished to underline these features of this period which are insufficiently known or not acknowledged – features which were not at all concealed, but uncovered for all to see, not battled in the name of "rationalism" (a term which, when used in reference to this period, is quite illegitimate) but accepted by the most outstanding minds of that era, trend or culture. We have chosen Kant as our example, because he throws a vast and wondrous shadow on that era; because he not only extolled the dark and mysterious imagination, but submitted to its power and thus created an inspired work.

(Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz)

16 E. Cassirer, *Substance and Function, and Einstein's Theory of Relativity*, translated by W. C. Swabey and M. C. Swabey, Chicago–London, 1923, pp. 276–277.

17 M. Heidegger, *Kant et le problème de la métaphysique*, translated by A. de Waelhens and W. Biemel, Paris, 1953. Cf. esp. section III A, pp. 185–196.