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THE ONTOLOGY OF MENTAL IMAGES

In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant presents the imagination as being a special faculty of the mind.[1] The imagination plays an important role in Kant's epistemology, as it is solely through acts of imagination that the synthesis of the objects of intuition and the " categories " is obtained. Kant makes a distinction between two varieties of synthesis : figurative synthesis and intellectual synthesis. Only figurative synthesis will be considered in this essay, as the topic is limited to the ontology of mental images. There is a broader issue : the ontology of imaginary objects in general. Within figurative synthesis there are again two species of imagination : the productive imagination and the reproductive imagination. When visual experience is the result of a spontaneous act of imagination—what we often call ' imagining that we see '—then this is said to be an instance of the productive imagination. To the degree that visual experience is of the more ordinary sort—where the content of the experience is " entirely subject to empirical laws "[2]—then this would be an instance of reproductive imagination. All of which is to say that there are two types of image-producing activity. In the case of reproductive imagination, the mind is more passive to the stimuli of the external world. In the case of the productive imagination, there is a greater degree of independence from the usual causal sequences that partially determine the content of visual experience. In reproductive imagination, it is assumed that there is a causal sequence that originates in the external world. In the case of productive imagination, some of the initial steps

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of the ordinary sequence are lacking. The experience is said to arise spontaneously.

Therefore, Kant's analysis of perception is a classic example of the view that both imaginary visual experience and non–imaginary visual experience are species of the category of imaginary experience in general. Although Gilbert Ryle never mentions Kant's thesis, I understand it to be the kind of thesis he intends to refute in *The Concept of Mind*, especially the chapter on imagination.[3] I am supplying this sketch of Kant's position only as an example of a developed system of thought that does assert a similarity between the experience of the objects of visual imagination and the perception of the objects of our ordinary experience. Ryle neglects to develop a plausible statement of the position he intends to oppose, so I submit the preceding outline as being one plausible alternative to Ryle's thesis, *viz*, that there is no similarity between mental images and the objects of ordinary perception. He also argues that there is no special faculty of the imagination, that instead imaginary experience is a species of usually more demonstrative activities, a genus that includes pretending and play-acting.[4]

The order of the day is then simply setting out the various activities that are relevant to our experience of mental images into their proper station, including the possibility that we have no genuine experience of these images at all Our task would be to discover that imagination is like X because of reasons a and b, and that mental images are like Y for reasons c and d, and likewise to discover and assess the relevant differences In Ryle's terminology, this is to determine the " logical geography " of the concept in question.[5] In this essay, I will examine a few key examples and arguments offered by Ryle in his attempts at the establishment of the logical geography of the concept of imagination. In addition, I will discuss examples offered by Ryle's

commentators, and finally will offer an example and argument of my own. I claim to have demonstrated that Ryle's absolute denial of any ontological status for mental images to be unacceptable. I do not, however, offer any elaborate positive ontological thesis to serve as a replacement.[6]

The question of the ontological status of mental images is part of two different and more general questions; the ontology of the objects of imaginary consciousness in general, and the ontology of the class of conscious states in general. Mental images fit into the first category in that they are the products of the figurative end of imaginary consciousness, as opposed to the intellectual end. Mental images fit into the second category in that they are products of the imagination and the imagination is one often-supposed faculty of the mind. A natural course to be followed in an attack upon the positive ontology of the mental is to take on each of the faculties of the mind in order, and this is done in *The Concept of Mind*. A second strategy would be to attack the often-supposed constituents of mental acts as enjoying any special ontological status, and this course is also in Ryle's book. He offers a line of reasoning that is meant to show that the mind is not a place where mental events, with their mental constituents, occur.

If one intends to argue for the non-existence of some kind of spatial object x, then one course of reasoning would be to show that :

1. everything that exists and has spatial properties of any kind exists as a constituent of a spatial system, and
2. things of kind x have spatial properties of some kind, and
3. there is a unique spatial system Y that defines the natura, world, and

4. nothing of kind x is a constituent of system Y, and therefore.

5. nothing of kind x exists.

It is phenomenologically obvious that mental images do have spatial properties of some kind. If mental images do exist, then they exist in front and in back of one another and stand side-by-side; otherwise they would not be images. Ryle never does justice to the type of argumentation and evidence that would be required to fulfil some closely-reasoned scheme as numbers one through five above. It seems that he assumes the concepts of location and space to be automatically limited to our actual space in our actual world. This assessment of space could include only instances as the top of the table here in the coffee room, or the intersection of the equator of the earth and 0^0 Greenwich. This is not the type of location a mind could ever have, in the strong sense that is needed to justify minds as ontologically distinct, so Ryle concludes that minds do not exist. His programme even includes a proposal to purge sentences that include reference to the mind as a place .. "The phrase 'in the mind', can and should always be dispensed with. Its use habituates its employers to the view that minds are queer 'place', the occupants of which are special-status phantasms." (*The Concept of Mind*, p. 44). In a paper written several years after the publication of *The Concept of Mind*, Ryle reflects on his earlier work, especially the chapter on imagination He remembers that his "chief bother" was the analysis of events where we..." 'see in our mind's eyes' faces, buildings and landscapes ..", and that "It was important for me to discuss these special mental acts of imagining since we are all strongly tempted to think of the human mind as a sort of private chamber, and to think of the things that we visually and auditorially imagine as, somehow, authentic occupants of this private chamber. *Imagining* then becomes misconstrued as a

special brand of witnessing, the objects of which happen to be internal and private to the witness." (*Collected Papers*, p. 139) Ryle's attack on the positive ontology of the mental is then two-fold; he denies the existence of the often-supposed constituents of the mind, and he denies the special ontological status of the mental.

Although to quite different ends, Jean-Paul Sartre[8] and Ryle share this denial of there being a separate theater of the mind. For Sartre, the roots of this belief lie in a misunderstanding of the nature of consciousness in that often... "We pictured consciousness as a place peopled with small likenesses and these likenesses were the images. No doubt but that this misconception arises from the habit of thinking in space and in terms of space. This I shall call: *the illusion of immanence*." (*The Psychology of Imagination*, p. 5) The resemblance between Sartre's view and Ryle's view ends in their common affirmation of the illusion. Sartre believes that the illusion arises from our habit of "thinking in space and in terms of space", but offers no explanation of why we are so inclined.[9] For Ryle, the illusion is a result of sloppy habits in the use of language. Alastair Hannay aptly calls Ryle's version "the linguistic illusion of immanence." (*Mental Images : A Defence*, p. 27)

To fill the conceptual vacuum where we might have once thought to be the idea of the mind as an entity in its own place with its own objects, Ryle supplies the idea that the place of the mind is... "the chessboard, the platform, the scholar's desk, the judge's bench, the lorry-driver's seat, the studio and the football field... These are where people work and play stupidly or intelligently." (*The Concept of Mind*, p. 51) In each of these places, people are engaged in activities, although the football field is a place where our actions are more demonstrative than our sitting at the scholar's desk. For the special case of imagination, Ryle

will argue along the same lines. He attempts to show that imagination is actually a relative of the more overt actions. The attack on the positive ontology of the imagination is but one battle in the larger campaign to so categorize all forms of mental activity.

One popular manuever that is employed in attempts to deal with philosophical problems is what I call a 'comeback'. Consider the question, 'Where do the things and happenings exist which people imagine existing ?'. Ryle's comeback is, "They do not exist anywhere, though they are imagined as existing," (*The Concept of Mind*, p. 245) His comeback is given because he believes there to be no proper answer to the straightforward sense of the question, and so the question is twisted to the form believed to be that of the most similar answerable questions. In this case, the similar question would be, 'Where are the things and happenings imagined to exist when people are so imagining them ?', and to this the only proper reply would be the location of the imaginary scene, if it is given as part of the imaginary event...for example, 'Lilliput'. There is little satisfaction in the comeback answer because it turns our attention away from the original intent of the original questions. If I am imagining a scene as occurring in Lilliput, then the comeback is not too objectionable, although still not very helpful. The problem intensifies when I am imagining a scene in the case where it is not part of the imaginary consciousness that the scene has a particular location. In this case, there is no apparent answer to the comeback form of the question, *but* there is a very apparent similarity between it and the type of imaginary consciousness in which the location of the imaginary scene is given. I can imagine a scene where a troop of little men are tying Gulliver to the ground and include this as occurring in Lilliput; or only imagine the scene, but not including the consciousness of a specific

location. These two imaginary events are very much a like. For the former, the answer to the comeback form of the question of location is ' Lilliput ', but the answer for the latter would be ' nowhere ', or ' no location '. It is clear enough that the comeback form of the question captures a different concept than the original. All but the very naive understand that the reply to the question, ' Where do the things and happenings exist which people imagine as existing ?', is not to be answered by citing an ordinary street address, or some coordinates on a map. As it stands, the question is a curious one, but to answer it really involves a set of questions of which Ryle believes to be worthy of a straightforward answer The questions would include...

1 What is the relation between imaginary events and their non–imaginary counterparts ?, and

2, How are these events alike, and how do they differ ? ' and ultimately,

3. What is the ontological status of imaginary events and things ?

Ryle believes that these questions have answers, namely...

1 There is no relation, and

2. They are different in every way and

3. They have no ontological status.

If these three questions are legitimate, although deserving a false answer in Ryle's view, then qustions about the location of imaginary events would seem to deserve a similar treatment. The comeback is at best only a way of saying, ' as you have put the question, I have no answer. ' Whether or not it turns out that we will say that mental images exist in the end, Ryle's comeback seems to be evidence far short of any cause to deny the reality of

the mind, and eventually in due course, the denying of the reality of mental images.

The author of *The Concept of Mind* does not devote all of his energy to the task of elimination of the mental. Besides the destructive work, there is still the task of establishing the logical geography of whatever concepts remain relatively unscathed and intact. This is still part of the old concept of mind, but with the amendment that the mind and its objects are no longer to be considered as special-class entities. As such, the remaining mental concepts would need to be redefined in behaviouristic or meterialistic terms. Early on in the text of *The Concept of Mind*, Ryle claims this logical geography will .." reveal the logic of the propositions in which they are wielded, that is to say, to show with what other propositions they are consistent and inconsistent, what propositions follow from them and from what propositions they follow." (*The Concept of Mind*, p. 8) Instead of geography, this task would have better been described as logical taxonomy. The question that is actually more often dealt with is the less precise problem of the establishment of genus–species relationships. Ryle finds the answer to be that there is a genus, " seeming to perceive ", and two species of this genus, " seeming to see" where there is a copy of the actual scene (or person, etc.) present before us, and " seeming to see " where there is no such copy before us. (*The Concept of Mind*, p. 254) The essential point is that the similarity between the two species is strictly limited to a similarity on the part of the relevant act and condition of the person who is doing the " seeing. " Where we are so often mistaken, according to Ryle, is to also suppose that there is a real object that is a counterpart within the " seeing " act of the second species. If we are so tempted, then we might be led to assume that there exists a mental image that is the counterpart of the copy (a physical object, e. g., a photograph) that

induces the " seeming to see " state. This is the first step towards a positive ontology of mental images, and to adopt this view would demand all kinds of messy amendments to an otherwise neat-and-tidy materialism. According to Ryle's thesis, whenever we " seem to see " an image of the golden mountain the similarity between this act and our looking at a picture of Pike's Peak consists solely in the similarity in our own material stetes. There can be no corresponding similarity between the picture and a mental image, after all the mental image is claimed by the materialist not to exist. It might be claimed that the mental image looks very much like the picture ..it seems to have colours and shapes. This would not be possible for Ryle as there is simply no image to have these qualities, and so there is no possibility of a similarity obtaining.

The most common variation on this theme in *The Concept of Mind* is the distinction between seeing (proper) and ' seeing '. The first sense is meant to capture the meaning of our everyday reports of the form ' I see x ', where to make this report presupposes that there is an event or object external to ourselves that is x. So when I claim ' I see the chair in the coffee room ', it is supposed that independent of my reporting there is a chair out there to be seen. This is to be contrasted with ' seeing ', where in this second sense there is no accompanying existential claim about the object of the verb. ' Seeing ' is in a way similar to seeing (proper), it feels a little like seeing, but that is the end of the resemblance... or so it is claimed.[10] What Ryle intends to do is to drive a wedge between seeing (proper) and ' seeing '. He claims that " when a person says that he ' sees ' something which he is not seeing, he knows that what he is doing is something that is totally different in kind from seeing. " *The Concept of Mind*, p. 246) That which is " totally different " is not to be determined phenomenologically, even though that is what the

quote suggests. The difference is in a grammatical function; the kinds of adjectives applicable to seeing (proper) are conceptually different from the adjectives applicable to 'seeing'. Adjectives like 'vivid', 'faithful', and 'lifelike, are argued as being suit able to 'seeing', but not suitable to seeing (proper). When we are standing together, looking into the coffee room, it would make no sense to turn and say, 'Isn't this a lifelike rendition of the coffee room ?, or to say, 'Why, look at the faithful reproduction of my coffee cup, it even has the brown stains along the inside walls and the little puddle of coffee at the bottom left over from yesterday.' Ryle certainly has a point here. Talk about images and 'seeing' them does involve a different kind of grammar. That could be granted by almost anyone, including the 'Imagist' as one who holds to the positive ontology of memtal images is sometimes named.[11] Ryle's argument travels rather quickly from the obvious grammatical fact to the dubitable implication of there being something genuine about seeing (proper) that is lacking in 'seeing', and that this lack of authenticity counts against the ontology of mental images.[12]

A grammatical fact is only philosophically significant if it cannot be equally well dealt with by either party of the disagreement. There is an explanation of the grammatical fact that adjectives of comparison like 'vivid', 'faithful', and 'lifelike' do not seem to apply to ordinary visual experience, although they do apply to imaginary visual experience, The Imagist could well grant that there is a primacy of a certain class of images over others, and to the images of the first class there would be no sense in the application of these comparative adjectives. The obvious candidate for this class would be those images that are present to consciousness whenever we are engaged in normal acts of seeing everyday events and objects as seen through these first-class images. The image family (as Sartre calls it[13]) of my coffee

cup includes those images that occur in their most clear and distinct fashion in my ordinary experience of the coffee cup. In the image family, these sharpest and most familiar images could be considered of a first order and after images, mental images, physical images and any other image so lacking in clarity would be considered ' vivid ', ' faithful ', and ' lifelike ' to the degree that they resemble the first order images. For the Imagist, it is all a matter of images. For the images of the first order there would be no sense in applying these comparitive adjectives, if there is no ' super-image ' over and above the image family to serve as the object of comparison.

A Platonist (but not necessarily Plato himself) might have some recourse here. In some very naive form of Realism it might be claimed that in the ordinary act of observation the image I hold of the coffee cup stands in a comparitive relationship to the universal ' form ' of coffee-cup. This is not what Ryle claims his opponent to necessarily be holding as a position, I am sketching out this line of reasoning to demonstrate the variety of possible ontological alternative where one class of objects stand in some secondary relationship to the objects of some primary order. In this case, neither kind of image enjoys full ontological status, as this is reserved for the form in which both kinds of images stand in an inferior relationship. For this view, full ontological status is reserved for the form, the images are all dependent upon the form as they can only ' participate ' in the form's reality.

Ryle has uncovered a grammatical fact that suggests that there might be some ontological importance in that we consider some things to be genuine and some things as only being copies. He believes that the fact that some adjectives apply to only some types of visual experience counts against the positive ontology of

mental images. Since there are actually several metaphysical schemes that can accommodate this fact—from the simple positive assertion of the reality of mental images to forms of Platonism—the discovery of this grammatical fact really does little for his position. The grammatical fact he has uncovered certainly lacks the force that Ryle believed it to have.

The next line of argumentation in Ryle's programme against the positive ontology of mental images is his characterization of 'seeing' as a species of mimicry. This is one step further along the way to achieving the total divorce of seeing (proper) and 'seeing'. To illustrate this line of argumentation, I wish to draw attention to two types of juggling—the ordinary sort and play-juggling. The former requires a set of physical objects, but the latter has no such requirement. In play-juggling you merely move your body as if you were juggling—you raise your arms up and put them down in a circular motion—you can even move your head as if you were following the track of the balls. If you want to pretend that the balls are heavy, you can brake the force of their fall and pretend to absorb the imaginary impact. It feels like juggling. Now imagine that you are seeing the balls—four shiny red ones. Is this just another act of mimicry? The other acts might well be explained in terms of the movement of skeletons, muscles, and tendon—so are we to believe that visual imagery is to be properly sorted into the class that includes these other acts of mimicry? That would suggest to us that 'seeing' the balls involves going through a set of physical processes similar to those that we would be going through if we were reacting to (and seeing) non-imaginary balls. If this is the case, then the differences and similarities between juggling and play-juggling are all explainable through only appealing to...

1. physical objects, such as red balls, and

2. different physical states of ourselves when in the presence of red balls, and

3. different physical states of ourselves that occur whenever we are mimicking the reaction we ordinarily have when red balls are present before us.

Conspicuously missing is the often-supposed fourth item... the mental image counterpart of the red ball.

Again, there is an apparent alternative. No one denies that there are lawful relations that hold between there being certain kinds of physical objects present before us and the character of our experience. When in the presence of flying red balls, I almost always have the experience of red, shiny objects moving in amongst one another. The Imagist would claim that the ordinary experience is an experience of redness and roundness of the colour and shape of an image, just as imaginary experience. The Imagist would claim that the similarity consists in the occurrence of images which are similar in the two cases. It is true that we cannot create physical balls by only imagining to be juggling them, but it is not automatic from that to the conclusion that we cannot create ball-images whenever we are imagining to be seeing them. The juggling example shows that we cannot conclude that an act of mimicry always does obtain a parallel existence for the counterpart objects.

Sometimes mimicry is possible without any props, as in the case of play-juggling. Sometimes you do need something to be used as a prop, as the prop-less action does not convey the intended information. It is like playing charades ... those actions that are easily signified by gestures are the easiest to imitate. Juggling is very easy, reading a book is a little more difficult, reading *The Concept of Mind* would be an almost impossible action to guess from a prop-less charade. The principle would

be that the more complex and less adaptable an activity is to imitation, then the greater the need for the prop. The important question is, when we are imagining are we using a prop ? This is what Ryle needs to focus upon; instead he is begging the questions in favour of materialism as he assumes that mental images must be exactly parallel in their logical behaviour to physical objects. The interesting possibility is that mental objects are real, but not physical. Ryle does not seem to appreciate this alternative enough to be careful in his considerations to account for it. The preceding argument is a relative of the old 'two-tables' dispute. It is certainly true that there is a straightforward answer to the question of the number of tables in the room; there is only one. The philosophically interesting question is about there being only a table in the room, or there being a table in the room *and* a table–image present to me, or even perhaps there only being the table–image present.[14] It would be very poor philosophy to automatically infer from the fact of there being only one table in the room (in the straightforward sense), to the conclusion that there are no such things as table–images. Hannay observes, " the fact that I seem to perceive one thing does not entail that I cannot be perceiving, or at least seeing, another ". (*Mental Images : A Defence*, p. 39) Yet Ryle moves in just this direction. Extreme caution ought to be observed when moving from a grammatical fact to a metaphysical conclusion. Sometimes grammatical observations are helpful in locating distinctions, but they are rarely final. The truth conditions about there being one or two tables before me in the straightforward sense that is uncovered by the grammatical fact has little to do with metaphysical and epistemological questions of mental images and the details of just what they are and how we come to see them. If there do exist mental images apart from the physical objects that they are intended to represent, then the fact of our seeing one table is explained by there being one

physical table and one image representing that table. In the case of seeing two tables, there are two physical tables and two images, etc....So if Ryle really believes that the unexamined grammatical fact is especially relevant to the question of the ontology of mental images, then he has again overestimated the force of his argument.[15]

Ryle asks us to consider the example of a sailor demonstrating the tying of a certain kind of knot...with the provision that there is no rope used...instead the sailor only goes through the appropriate motions with his hands and fingers. This is similar to my juggling example. He then compares the knot-tying example to the example of 'seeing' the golden mountain... "while he (the person 'seeing' the mountain) is enjoying, so to speak, only a hypothetical view of the mountain, (he) does not seem to be really doing anything. Perhaps his non-existent visnal sensations correspond to the sailor's non-existent piece of string, but what corresponds to the movements of his hands and fingers? The sailor does show the spectators how the knot would be tied, but the person visualizing (the golden mountain) does not not thereby show them to himeself?" (*The Concept of Mind,* pp. 266-267, with some editing) First, I would be very much interested in knowing just what it is to enjoy a "hypothetical view of the mountain", or a hypothetical view of anything for that matter. I can understand something's being hypothetical in a logical or theoretical sense, but there is absolutely no way to employ the distinction phenomenologically. This would be a category mistake. Either I am enjoying a view or I am not, and if I am then it is a *view,* whether or not there is something physical for us to take into account. There are no hypothetical views in the sense that Ryle would require. There is no seeing a would-be boat on a would-be lake, imaginary or not

It is also the case that when we imagine a scene we can show it to ourselves *at will.* Some scenes require more effort than others, it is easier to imagine a red ball than to imagine a cathedral. There are sometimes mental blocks to be overcome in the imagining af some scene that is believed to be repugnant, or unpleasant, or fear-inspiring. The sailor tying the knot with the imaginary piece of rope does suggest that it is possible for there to be an intentional act where the counterpart intentional object does not enjoy a parallel kind of existence. In an earlier essay, " Imaginary Objects ", Ryle claims that to say that x is an imaginary object is a way of saying that x does not exist [16] It is plausible that there could be no imaginary piece of rope as a direct counterpart to the physical rope, and at the same time be real mental images present to the spectators. Again, Ryle's arguments and examples fail to squarely address the crucial issue... do mental images exist ?

Ryle gives another example of how—when unsure of the spelling of a long and difficult word—he sometimes imagines that he is looking at the appropriate page and column of his dictionary and then somehow discovers the correct spelling. He reports that this... " feels rather like reading off the letters from a dictionary". (*The Concept of Mind,* p. 249) In regard to this kind of example, Reynold Lawrie cites psychological studies done by Jaensch where " eidetic " imagery had been found to occur in about 60% of the children and about 7% of the adults tested. One subject was even able to recall an image and read off the fine print on a sign in a shop window.[17] Like Ryle and his long and difficult word example, it seems that the image is in some way separate from ourselves lying there to be studied. From this sort of data, Lawrie draws the conclusion that .. " the phenomena of eidetic imagery support my contention, against Ryle, that some of us visualise something *by* contemplating a mental image of it ".

(" The existence of Mental Images ", p. 254) Lawrie even suggests that Ryle is probably not one of the lucky 7%, as if he were he would likely change his position on mental images.[18]

Again, the conclusiveness we seek is lacking. The phenomena of eidetic imagery can also be explained by each of the two opposing theses. If the Imagist is correct, then the images are simply there to be studied, but there are still avenues open to the materialist's side. Someone like Ryle can argue that it is a fact about our ability to imagine that we can produce a series of imaginary events where it *seems* that we are focussing upon some image. If we grant him the possibility of one kind of mental image being viewed without the image existing, then ther could as easily be a wide range of experiences where it is suggested that a mental image exists, but where there is no such image. It is perhaps only a curious fact that some of these experiences 'feel' like our experiences of studying some image of the physical variety. We have had exderiences where we have been looking up words in the dictionary, and have felt perplexed looking for the proper spelling. Perhaps we are only again engaged in an act of mimicry, only this time it is at a more abstract level. Rather than assuming the reality of the image, this might as well be considered as only another degree of illusion, where we imitate being surprised to find added content in the image that was before unnoticed. At least to this doint, we have a stalemate. The materialist's arguments can be disarmed by the Imagist, the Imagist's arguments can be accommodated by the materialist.

In an essay written in response to *The Concept of Mind* that addresses a similar issue as the case of eidetic imagery, G.B. Mathews[19] discusses a study by C.W. Perky.[20] In Perky's experiment, the subjects were asked to imagine various familiar objects as being on the surface of a ground-glass wall. At the same time, an image of the same object named was secretly projected through

the ground–glass wall from the adjacent room. If the subject was asked to imagine that he was seeing a tomato at a certain spot on the wall, then at the next moment a tomato slide was put into the projector in the adjacent room and the image was flashed on the ground–glass wall. Each time, the subject believed that the image on the wall was solely the product of his imagination.[21] Mathews concludes ... " Perky's results suggest that imagining a tomato at a certain point in space may be phenomenologically similar to seeing a faint image of a tomato there; for one may confuse the latter for the former. " (" Mental Copies ", p. 163) Here is some fuel for the Imagist's fire. If seeing things that are also present in the external world is supposed to be so different from 'seeing', as Ryle claims, then it should be evident to the perceiver as to whether or not there is an image on the wall. If 'seeing' is an act in which some special effort is required—as Ryle says, *a doing*—then we would be forced to conclude that this special exertion is taking place without our being aware of it. On the other hand, if the Imagist is correct then seeing (proper) and 'seeing' are both species of imagination, and so both kinds of images produced are on more or less equal ontological fooring. It would then be easy to understand why the subjects cannot discriminate between the faintly–coloured images and mental images. The explanation would be that mental images are the less–intense cousins of the apperances that make up our everyday experience of the world.

The next step in Ryle's strategy is to challenge the idea of mental images as being things similar to pictures. We often describe 'seeing' as seeing pictures in our minds, so Ryle needs to explain away this supposed similarity. He argues that ... " we speak of 'seeing' as if it were a seeing of pictures, because the familiar experience of seeing snapshots of things and persons so often induces the 'seeing' of those things and persons. This is

what snapshots are for ". (*The Concept of Mind,* pp. 253–254) At this point, Ryle's argument is at its muddiest. The common-sense view is that there are images present on the surface of the photograph. Is it that almost every one of us has been misled to believe that there is an image present on the surface of the photo-groph, and that the image suggests some person, place, or thing to us because of its striking similarity to the thing or person that it portrays ? Ryle avoids speaking about the surface of the photo-graph as sharing properties with the scenes that they portray. The only relationship that he seems to allow is a causal one. Photo-graphs are things that are often present when we are subject to the illusion of believing that we are ' seeing ' the scenes that they portray. This is very peculiar.

Sartre also deals with the example of the photograph. His view leans heavily on the idea of intentionality. He claims that it is only through intentionality that we come to see the subject of the photograph as being our old friend, Peter. Sartre describes the process of imagination as. . . " I wanted to produce Peter out of the void, and then something loomed up which filled my intention. " (*The Psychology of Imagination,* pp. 23–24) Sartre has an idea that each member of the image, the photograph, and the caricature–are more or less equivalent in their intentional qualities, so the variance must be accounted for in the differences of their material qualities. If the mental image is to fit into this scheme, then it must also be constituted of some kind of material; but this material. . , " derives its meaning solely from the inten-tion that animates it ". (*The psychology of Imagination,* p. 23) The phenomenological fact that there can be " empty intentions " before the appearance of the image; and that this intention is the material of which the image is composed, all seems to border on the unintelligible. First, I find the concept of intentionality difficult enough to deal with in its common forms, but intentionality as

substance is a twist that strikes me as surrealistic. Secondly, I find it phenomenologically false or at least, very obscure–that there is an experience of a void prior to the experience of the image. The image is simply present, then it is gone. Sartre is the master of making these phenomenological studies, but this time I believe that he has let loose of his imagination. If, I so desire, I can imagine a void, and then an image appearing in its place. This must be what Sartre is doing, though perhaps unbeknownst to himself. It is easy to become confused about these matters. If I were to strongly suggest to myself the idea of a void prior to the image, then it might become difficult to reflect on the act of producing the image without the accompanying suggestion. The prior void is certainly not a phenomenologically necessary condition for the image experience, and so we have no compelling reason to suppose the image to be constituted of some pre–existing intentionality playing a role counterpart to material substance.

I do agree with Sartre that there is a lesson to be learned from the photograph example. Without some theoretical ammunition, the photograph ... " is but a paper rectangle of a special quality and colour, with shadows and white spots distributed in a certain fashion. " *(The Psychology of Imagination*, p. 24) From a purely materialistic standpoint, there is little similarity between the photograph of Peter and the flesh–and–blood Peter. He is a strapping young man, the photograph is next–to–nothing He is very much alive, but the photograph is only a piece of paper with a peculiar arrangement of exotic chemicals on its surface. For Sartre, it is intentionality that brings the photograph image into Peter's " family " ... " If I see Peter by means of the photo it is *because I put him there.* " *(The Psychology of Imagination*, p. 25) The analysis of the photograph is then a curiousity on both sides of the channel. Ryle will not admit a similarity between the photo-

graph image and the mental image, as for him there is no mental image upon which to found the similarity. The best he can say is that the photograph is an object that causes us to imitate the state in which we would be in if we were in the proper spot to be viewing the portrayed scene. For Sartre, looking at the photograph involves an act of intentionality obtaining the substance of the image being placed on the surface of the photograph.

There are similarities between photographs and mirrors. In both cases, they present a flat surface that reflects light with a minimum distortion. In both cases, there is an experience of an image being located on their surfaces. If we consider this experience as a placing of the image throbgh an action performed by the perceiving agent, then the example of the mirror would parallel Sartre's treatent of the photograph. What we see as the mirror–image is not especially revealing as to the physical state of the mirror surface. The image depends on the character of the scene being reflected. The image is subjective in that as you move around it. the character of the image changes. If you are standing at a different vantage point than your neighbour, then the image that you see on the surface of the mirror is dramatically different than the image seen by your neighbour. It is misleading to think that there are many—or an infinity—of images that are actually on the mirror It is an illusion. The only images present are those that you imagine to be there, or there are no images present there at all. In the example of the mirror, we can be literally put face–to–face with an image, perhaps a mental image. You have been 'seeing' that image every morning when shaving—or powdering your nose—pointed towards your bathroom mirror. The first thing we notice is how lifelike these images are. This is so because mirror–images are close relatives to the objects of our ordinary visual–experience. This is the best explanation of this similarity available.

By now, I have discussed a few key arguments and examples relevant to the ontological status of mental images. I claim to have defeated and disarmed those arguments that once comprised the core of the materialist's arsenal. I offer some evidence that supports the positive ontology of mental images, I even describe an everyday situation where you are able to carefully inspect one variety of them Can we any longer deny that they are real ?

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NOTES

1. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. trans. by Norman Kemp Smith as *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (New York : St. Martin's Press, 1929), B. 150–152.
2. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 152.
3. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London : Barnes and Noble, 1949). pp. 245–279.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 257–258.
5. *Ibid*, p. 8.
6. For a positive account I suggest, Alastair Hannay, *Mental Images : A Defence* (New York : Humanities Press, 1971).
7. Gilbert Ryle, "Phenomenology Versus 'The Concept of Mind'", reprinted in *Collected Papers*, Vol. I, (London : Hutchinson, 1971).
8. Jean Paul Sartre, anon. trans. as The *Psychology of Imagination* (Secaucus, N. J. : The Citadel Press, no date).
9. In this respect, Kant's doctrine is superior, see his "Schematism", B 177–187.
10. *Op cit*., p. 154.

11. Hide Ishiguro, " Imagination ", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Vol. XLI (London : Harrison and Sons, 1967).

12. *Op cit.*, pp. 246–247.

13. *The Psychology of Imagination*, pp. 22–77,

14. For Jean Paul Sartre there would be an infinity of images, see *L'etre et le neant*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes as *Being and Nothingness* (New York : Washington Square Press, 1966), pp. 3–7.

15. *Op cit.*, pp. 210–222.

16. Gilbert Ryle, " Imaginary Obects ", reprinted in *Collected Works*, Vol. II.

17. Reynold Lawrie, "The Existence of Mental Images ", *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 80, July 1970, p. 254.

18. For anotner discussion of this study, see *The Psychology of Imagination*, pp. 11–12.

19. G. B. Mathews, " Mental Copies ", *Philosophical Review*, Vol. LXXVIII, No. 1, January 1969.

20. C. W. Perky, "An Experimental Study of Imagination ", *American Journal of Psychology*, No. 22. 1910, pp. 422–452.

21. For another discussion of this study, see *The Psychology of Imagination*, p. 75.

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