



An Inner Forest of Experiences and Possibilities: Creativity and Imagination from a Pre-reflective Perspective

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Abstract

This article has sought to represent creativity and imagination as experiential qualities, beyond functions of a rational and perceptual nature in the human being, committing them as elements of pre-reflexive constitutions. Phenomenology has developed an important comprehensive field from the dimension of pre-reflexive self-awareness, which has given transcendental relevance to the understanding of the subjective particular experience, managing to identify authors such as Husserl (2005, 2012), Heidegger (1971, 2022), Sartre (1968, 1993, 2005), Casey (2000), and Jansen (2016), that creativity and imagination constitute autonomous capacities in human functioning, beyond elements that are activated only in a rational and intentional way, being able to attribute to the creative value and the ontological generative capacity, characteristics that go beyond the will and precede any productive intention. The present work constitutes a complete theoretical review that favors the development of an understanding of the creative and imaginative capacity, as significant positions of the pre-reflective consciousness, which clearly shows that the creative elements in the human being not only respond to one type of intellectual or executive thought. This proposal can favor the development of comprehensive forms regarding the process of human creativity and the development of artistic exercises, which are positioned as an action that involves elements that come together as exercises typical of a pre-reflexive sphere, which constitutes a base of reference that articulates all types of individual functioning.

Keywords Imagination · Creativity · Pre-reflective consciousness · Phenomenology · Subjective experience

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Introduction

Phenomenology has historically been constituted as a philosophical tradition of an existential nature, linked to the comprehensive exploration of characteristic dimensions of the human condition. Such a task has entailed the development of a wide spectrum of comprehensive lines, which are characterized by the pre-reflective and embodied value that human existence presents based on the approaches of Husserl (2012), Sartre (1993), and Merleau-Ponty (1945), the comprehensive possibilities of the human being from its horizon of meanings and linguistic constructions typical of authors such as Heidegger (2022) and Gadamer (2007, 2010), and its application to fields of exploration of subjective experience in authors such as Thompson et al. (1997), Vermersch (1994, 1997), and Zahavi (2005).

From the understanding of the human being as a being that bases its functioning from a pre-reflexive perspective, the assumptions of Husserl (2012), Hopkins (2016), and Merleau-Ponty (1945) favor the development of a deep perspective in which the Cartesian rationalist principle is contradicted, attributing that human nature responds to a greater extent to an existence positioned from an existence embodied with reality, an aspect that precedes the reflective and intellectual value that endows the human being with a position upon life. A fundamental part of pre-reflective existence is linked to the theoretical assumptions that position pre-reflective self-awareness as a transcendental unit of our sameness, a characteristic that fosters, based on Antony's (2002) approaches, a self-awareness regarding oneself, a self-awareness of a particular bodily character, as well as the ability of self-awareness to distinguish a sense of ownership regarding executive abilities on a personal level.

The pre-reflexive self-awareness based on the approaches of Husserl (2012) responds to the existential quality characterized by containing subjective experiential elements, which flow continuously in the day to day, which is coincident with the quality delivered by Sartre (2009), to the present dimension, establishing that pre-reflexive self-awareness is linked to an authentic form of existence, a representation of the link between being and the world, which for Merleau-Ponty (1945) is an embodied extension of our experience in the relationship with what surrounds us. For authors such as Zahavi (2005, 2014) and Gallagher (2005), pre-reflexive self-awareness is linked to a primary structure of human existence, responding to a first-order notion in which a first approach to the individual and particular experience that each human being presents in their relationship with the world is developed. Pre-reflexive self-awareness is awareness of something that is proper to a subject, a particular way of representing an intentional unity with the context, a private experience endowed with trajectory and possibilities.

Based on the approaches of Pacheco and Fossa (2022), the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology allows the figure of the researcher a deep and detailed immersion in the experience lived from a first-person experiential level, positioning alternatives for the identification of aspects at the synchronous and diachronic level from the experiential plane, being relevant to achieve an adaptation of assumptions proposed by the authors to the analysis of imagination and creativity as pre-reflexive qualities of human existence.

Although it is possible to give a broad importance to pre-reflexive self-awareness and its influence on human development from elemental and primary lines, the question arises regarding the type of relationship between this existential dimension and imagination as a generator of creativity and development. It is intended in the following investigation to visualize what is the relationship between pre-reflexive self-awareness and creativity and imagination, clearly distinguishing their respective evolutions and development as constitutive phenomena of human nature.

The Pre-reflective of Our Existence

In a habitual way, we capture what surrounds us; beyond an active or hyperreflexive exercise, we find ourselves subject to a greater disposition that leads us to experience our existence as a succession of events, which we preserve regardless of our will. This embracing fragrance that gave us a strong sensation of body heat links us to moments in life that seemed forgotten. This is, the memory did not arise as a reflexive action, but rather the said aroma was a trigger to old moments, not images but personal experiences that were hidden in layers and layers of learning.

Human existence has respected a rationalist and empiricist tradition that has allowed it to provide an understanding or explanation of its own existence or reality, being the debate between the assumptions of Plato (in Ross, 1989) and Aristotle (in Vigo, 2022), an initial moment that consolidated a confrontation of positions, visions that would later influence thinkers such as de Hipona (2005), de Aquino (2003, 2017), William of Ockham (2011), Hume (1993), and Descartes (1999). This conception of existence and reality placed great value on two central elements, human reason and experience in contact with nature, constituting conflicting positions that achieve an alternative resolution by the hand of Kant (2008) and his Idealist proposal, managing to develop a theory that surpasses all rationalist and empiricist dimensions, attributing to knowledge and human nature a particular value in the generation of knowledge, a space in which experience and perceptive possibilities of reality are combined.

In the progress of the study of knowledge and human approaches to the concept of reality, the emergence of phenomenology represented a foundational alternative in the existential exploration of the human being. The initial approaches of this philosophical approach arise from the hand of Brentano (1995), who accounts for phenomenology as an alternative understanding associated with the fact that all psychic events do not necessarily respond to a physical correlate that corresponds to it, but rather are links to a respective intentionality that gives shape and representation to the said content. Brentano's approaches were deepened by Husserl (2012), who develops a phenomenology of the intentional subjective experience, a form of consciousness associated with something from an intentionality, but not a form of physical or textual representation of perceptible reality. From this perspective, it is possible to observe that phenomenology emerges as a theory with an orientation based on the understanding of particular representations of reality, compromising an exercise based on the distinction of the attributions that each subject gives to the perceived objects.

Husserl's (1990) intention was to position phenomenology as an aprioristic perspective, which is directly linked to the subjective experience of the subject, called "intentional experience," developing an antipsychologist perspective, based on the fact that the understanding of psychic units will tentatively be based solely on a descriptive exercise over an explanatory one, tending an observation disposition based on the bias on the part of the researcher. As a central part of Husserl's (1990) phenomenological project, the possibility of having an approach to the understanding of reality by the subject arises, which implies an approach to contact with the experience itself from intersubjectivity, which is born through the so-called "intentionality," being constitutive of the approach of the individual to the world of things. It is the subject in his encounter with the phenomena—an interpreting subject—that must not understand consciousness as a box or container in which the objects or their images are (Husserl, 2012). The atomic structure of objects is not a determining element for the identification of the "reality of

things,” based on what the author has stated, it is the possibility that “The objects in their mutable and highly remarkable structure in a way create the objects for the self” (Husserl, 2012, p. 84).

It is from this understanding of the interpretation of personal experience that it is possible to refer to a Husserlian understanding regarding the possibility of science to reach a real ontological understanding.

Husserl’s proposal incorporates the understanding of the so-called pre-reflexive dimension of existence, which is based on an existential perspective based on the fact that all initial intention arises from a consciousness that goes beyond any action or reflective exercise, thus fostering a Basal understanding founded on the fact that human existence is based on a passivity beyond all thought. These approaches are maintained by Sartre (1968, 1993), who in his theory of the “pre-reflexive cogito” positions pre-reflexive existence as a critique of the prevailing tradition in modern culture, seen as a culture dependent on the thinking structure, attributing from the author that authentic human existence will respond more to an intentional existence prior to any reflective exercise, which is linked to a consistent articulation that existence precedes all thought.

Heidegger (2022) developed a perception of “Dasein” (being in the world), as an existence that goes beyond all temporality, consciousness, or reflective representation, in his work “*Being and Time*” the author states:

“Dasein is there for itself, even when the ego does not expressly address itself, in the manner of its own peculiar turning around and back, which in phenomenology is called internal as opposed to external perception. The self is there for Dasein itself, without reflection and without inner perception, before all reflection” (p.159).

From the author’s perspective, it is possible to account for how the pre-reflective perspective precedes any vital exercise, being a basic and primary element of the human being, emphasizing existence over reflection, an element that goes beyond a Cartesian perspective. Heidegger’s existential project (2022) exposes the human being as an entity endowed with tradition, culture, and language, spaces in which he has been thrown and that are in tune with his own existence in a representational way, finding the human being immersed in these correlates beyond a rational intention to associate with them, passively absorbing the elements that surround their immediate environment.

In the works of Sartre (1968, 1993, 2005), it is possible to distinguish a dependence similar to that observed in Heidegger, between subject and world, pointing out that the intentionality of consciousness is always associated with the world that surrounds individual reality. In other words, consciousness cannot exist without a world that gives form to this consciousness that provides it with content and form. These approaches are consistent with what was observed in the assumptions of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), who, from a phenomenology of perception, exposes the concept of “enaction” as a form of existential definition, based on the fact that mundane life is based on in the persistent relationship between the units of the world, consciousness and corporality, referring:

“Through sensation I capture, apart from my personal life and my own acts, a given life of consciousness from which they emerge, the life of my eyes, my hands, my ears, which are so many other ‘natural’ self. Every time I experience a sensation, I experience that it is of interest, not only to my ‘own’ self, the one for which I am responsible and for which I decide, but also to ‘another self’ or another self that has already taken sides with the world, that it has already opened to some of its aspects and has synchronized with them” (p. 231).

In this reflection, it is possible to extract the value of the unity between being and world, from an interconnected configuration that speaks of a mutual dependence, which configures both the subject and the context in a dependent manner, making this perspective an existential premise based on how reality it is formed from the permanent immersion in the world of life. In Sartre's (1993) approach to the pre-reflexive cogito, a human being is exposed who, from passivity, continuously receives signals or reflections from the world that become part of his own existential configuration, beyond a reflective attribution. This is, the stimuli of the world are pre-reflexively experienced and stored as subjective experiences as symbiotic constructs of our passive existence.

The possibility arises of granting a pre-reflexive attribution in the link between corporality and the world of life, insofar as bodily existence develops as an autonomous unit, beyond all control or dependence on mental structures. There is a clear intention on the part of the authors reviewed, to start a path towards the exploration of human nuclear existence, which is positioned from a pre-reflexive dimension, being able to annex to it the true subjective experience that represents a particular link with the world, from personal borders or individual possibilities. The path of these philosophers has been supported by authors such as Zahavi (2018), Gallagher and Zahavi (2021), Thompson et al. (1997), Legrand (2007), and Kriegel (2009), who have positioned pre-reflexive self-awareness as a relevant subject of study in understanding human existence as a passive/active position that emerges together with the vital exercise, offering a significant value in how from the present borders, the subjective experience is positioned, an experience that has been configured from the continuous relationship with the world from a representational construction, not only from the sensitive capacities, but also as a reflection of particular possibilities that give shape to what is captured.

The pre-reflexive dimension of human existence positions human nature from a continuous dependence on the surrounding context, a space in which it is continuously experienced and a form of representation regarding the world and our own identity is generated. Pre-reflexive self-awareness is linked to the possibility of how human beings have the ability to associate ourselves with their own, a development that is given experientially, instead of a reflective exercise in identity construction. Based on Gallagher's (2005) approaches, the development of a pre-reflexive self-awareness responds to a maturational process, which is not related to the construction of one's own identity in a narrative way, but rather constitutes a process that requires time, experiences, and stability, elements that offer possibilities of approachment and identity consolidation.

In these sections, a review of the pre-reflexive dimension has been carried out from a phenomenological perspective, identifying how human existence is associated with an active/passive dimension at the experiential level, which demarcates a continuous experiential flow and incarnation with reality, an aspect that goes beyond a reflective perspective of human existence. When considering this dimension, the element of subjective experience has been linked as a fundamental part of pre-reflective consciousness, these aspects constituting the elements that account for a particular form of link with reality and demarcate a form of relationship between subject and context.

Having a description of the pre-reflexive of human existence, how can we relate these elements to imagination and creativity? In this task, the need arises to give central importance to the value of subjective experience as a focal element of the pre-reflexive existential dimension, which contains the particular experiences of the human being and their individual link with the world of life. When we find ourselves in a position that has a way of meeting with the world, there is no mere link to the factual world in a passive way. From this perspective, we cannot affirm that "we only see a tree because it is in my garden," we

do not count with an absolute dependence on the phenomena that are outside our consciousness, all objects and perceptible elements are part of our possibilities at a structural, perceptual, and experiential level, meaning that we not only see the tree that is in my garden but also that we generate a specific representation of a tree in my garden, which is irreplicable.

These approaches have a support that emerges prior to the emergence of phenomenology and constitutes one of the central understandings from which we have an approach to the knowledge of reality. From Plato's approaches (in Ross, 1989) and his theory of ideas, we have an approach to understanding reality as a representational reflection, a perception based on internal images that represent a personal and particular link with the surrounding world. This theory has an important imprint on the approaches of Kant (2008), who from his critique of pure reason exposes the main approaches linked to German Idealism, giving a main role to the human being as an active generator of knowledge, above a perspective based on his passivity as a recipient of stimuli or phenomena, approaches that significantly influence a modern understanding of elements based on personal experience and forms of representation of reality.

The Creative Entity

Creativity as an essential characteristic of human nature empowers every individual with the generative possibility of new spaces or products that position development alternatives beyond those perceived from a merely rational perspective. In ancient Greece, creativity was perceived in a dual way, from the approaches of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, constituting for the first two an exercise of divine origin, specifically, a breath of the muses on the creative person, contributing in a state temporary madness, instance in which creativity arises. On the other hand, Aristotle promoted a naturalistic perspective to the concept of creativity, extracting the supernatural characteristics that his predecessors granted, referring that creativity responds to a particular form of rationalization, a form that respects certain heuristic rules more effectively than people who do not show some creative ability. The present division is one more way of distinguishing the polarized perspectives regarding knowledge, maintained by Plato and Aristotle, cementing from such a division a historical debate that will lead to the perception of reality from the fronts of the corporeal, the rational, the physical, the metaphysical, the empirical, and the essential.

From the approaches of Kant (2000), it is possible to distinguish an innate attribution to creativity, which emerges as an individual characteristic from birth and cannot be replicated or learned from experience, also establishing that creativity responds to an attribute of an unknown and mysterious character, which cannot be fully understood both from its origin and its respective evolution, identifying the difficulty of providing a naturalistic explanation to the present phenomenon. From an introspective review of the phenomenon of creativity, Poincaré (2011) gave an account of the creativity process at a mathematical level, referring that this capacity emerges as a set of ideas that initially present an unconscious origin, emerging unexpectedly, later emerging as an awareness regarding these ideas and carrying out a selection process based on those that were most interesting or beneficial. It is interesting the assimilation that Poincaré makes regarding that the phenomenon of creativity depends to a large extent on unconscious functioning, an aspect that positions the emergence of creative action as an exercise of dependency

over a voluntary action. However, it is not yet possible to establish a generalization associated with the fact that all kinds of creativity are dependent on the unconscious, the pre-reflexivity, or are placed before any kind of rationalization at all times.

For Campbell (1960, 1969), it is possible to associate the creative process with two stages, the first of which is a “blind” perspective, at which time ideas arise automatically and without any relation; on the other hand, the second stage is characterized by being a moment of arbitrary selection, a moment of discrimination of ideas, visualizing which ones are most promising and beneficial for the development of a certain project. Based on Campbell’s approaches (1960, 1969), the “blind” stage responds to a moment prior to perception, something pre-scientific that goes beyond conscious existence, constituting a key moment in the emergence of creativity. These approaches are consistent with what is referred to in aspects related to the pre-reflexive dimension of human existence, a basal space that constitutes an experiential field that demarcates a particular form of connection with the world of life.

Boden (2009) proposes a useful perspective regarding creativity, founded in its origins as a quality that presents an intimate and particular link with the human being, attributing that this can occur both at a historical and psychological level. Regarding creativity at a historical level (CreativityH), the ideas generated from a creative exercise have never been exposed to another person and have both an original and innovative nature at a sociocultural level. On the other hand, creativity at the psychological level (CreativityP) is constituted by sets of ideas or creative exercises that result in innovative products for a single individual; however, these elements have already been experienced by others in a similar way. It is complex to attribute from now on the possibility of experiencing a creative product or particular related experience in a “similar” way, based on the consideration that the experiential link is constituted by a specific and irreplicable relationship, which is not subject to comparison in an explanatory way, but to an understanding from the particularity. Although Boden’s (2009) approaches are illustrative from the understanding of linking with creativity, it is not possible to share the psychological perspective that he attributes to a comparative experiential margin.

Although the concept of creativity has a historical understanding and a broad perspective since the approaches coming from Ancient Greece, it is necessary to refer that the present concept is considered as such in recent times, considering the contributions in the twentieth century by authors such as Guilford (1967), Wertheimer (2020), Sternberg (1998), and Torrance (1970). Creativity from its elementary development can be found linked to both a pre-reflective dimension and an experiential reflection, emerging as an element that not only represents a reproductive tendency of reality, but as a reflection of the particular link with the life scenarios that have been experienced, being more than a reflection, becoming a form of representation of reality. Despite this, it is also possible to identify the coexistence between the type of pre-reflexive creativity of an existential nature and a rational creativity, which is attentive to the quality of results or products that arise from a specific creation, allowing making decisions or taking new steps that demarcate new creative exercises.

Based on Vygotsky’s approaches (in Lindqvist, 2003), it is possible to distinguish that creativity responds to the ability to create something new, based on elements experienced in a particular way at an experiential level, as well as a productive exercise of a rational nature, appreciating a convergence that demarcates the possible coexistence of two forms of creative construction.

- *The reproductive form*, based on the use of memory, its ability to recall and build a set of situations or events that have already occurred, establishing new forms of representation at a creative level.
- *The imaginative way*, oriented towards creative construction based on the particular possibilities of each individual, based mainly on a world of representations of images or situations that do not have a direct reference in the real world.

In these two revised forms of creativity, it is possible to identify the link between what is generative at a creative level and personal experience, which is represented as a container of ideas and experiences that nourishes the imaginative and creative dimension. It is important to mention that not all artistic expression is continuously linked to a reflective exercise; it is also possible to distinguish full immersion exercises, in which the creative power flows from its most intimate and vital essences, achieving a raw encounter with the subjective experience. The concept of “flow” has been defined by the psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (2008) as a state of total immersion in the development of an activity, which went beyond an exercise of attention or immediate reflection, responding to an exercise developed from a pre-reflexivity; however, not only the pre-reflexive dimension is part of the present phenomenon, also managing to appreciate the development of instances of analytical reflection.

Based on the approaches of Csikszentmihalyi (2008), there are 5 key elements linked to the concept of flow, which are described below:

1. Clear and achievable objectives: the action to be carried out must be oriented towards a result, a construction that can be identified as an effective product by its creator.
2. High degree of concentration and focus: basic psychological functions emerge as a central part of this exercise, although during the development of the flow as such a full awareness from the reflective point of view is not appreciated, the beginning of the exercise as such is linked to a set of reflexive actions.
3. Continuous and immediate feedback: in the development of a certain activity based on the flow, the visualization of immediate consequences or products related to the immersion exercise gives the person a feeling of satisfaction at the perception of specific results. Here, we can once again perceive the interaction between dimensions of a pre-reflexive and reflective nature.
4. Balance between the level of challenge and satisfaction that the activity generates: the maintenance of the flow is based on a feeling of enjoyment, which is focused on the development of a product that implies a challenge for its creator. It is based on an immediate evaluation, as well as an introspective review, being the emotions a significant guide in maintaining the present practice.
5. Intrinsic gratification feeling: as a guiding guide for the flow exercise, it is distinguished the need for this practice to be linked to a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction in those who perform. It can also be distinguished that the present practice presents a direct link to an exercise related to self-satisfaction, from the exercise of free expression and creation.

It is possible to observe that the creation based on the flow phenomenon develops from a pure immersion exercise, which is not necessarily associated with a previous reflective meditative exercise, responding to the generation of creative-experiential elements at a specific moment, emerging as an activity based on a continuous flow. It can be distinguished that the present state entails a deep immersion at the experiential level, highlighting an

experiential alteration in time at the subjective level, emerging, based on the approaches of Csikszentmihalyi (2008), the development of a balance between deep immersion in the development of a certain activity and the search for an associated reward, which expose a significant isolation to all external stimuli to what is experienced, developing a position that we can call the “experiential-subjective-generative-approach.”

From the approaches of the psychological imagination, Tateo (2016) rescues a classic understanding of both creativity and imagination, being the same dimensions dependent on an egocentric perspective from which both the sense of self and otherness originate. Based on the present approaches, the author exposes the challenge that an investigative consideration from psychology implies in terms of understanding the phenomena of creativity and imagination, before being perceived as generative elements that respond to an influence of a cultural nature, postulating that the question must be found in the understanding of “man” and his particular perspective. Tateo (2015) exposes imagination as an element of adaptation from the temporo-spatial plane, which functions not in counterpart to the function of rationalization but as an element that in turn exposes a form of intimate linkage with reality, positioning the human being as an entity in continuous adaptive selection.

The assumptions that phenomenology has made regarding creativity have a value based on the representative possibilities of consciousness and its particular link to experience and relationship with the world. Conrad (1990), rescuing Husserl’s (1931) approaches, exposes how the author’s phenomenology can define creativity, making a distinction between two possible worlds, factual or naturalistic reality and the subjective-experiential world, realizing that artistic creativity is not associated with an optional exercise, but rather the work or the creative product is already part of the experiential essence of its author, which initially arises as a “notion” or “glimpse” before the appearance of a directly related product to individual experience.

For Heidegger (1971), creativity can be seen represented in his perspectives regarding art, developing an interesting turn in that the object of observation must always be the artist’s work as an element of existential representation, put to the exercise of analysis and observation, symbol that hides Dasein from its form and image. Heidegger (1971, 2012) in his writings “*The Origin of the Work of Art*” and “*Poetry, Language, Thought*” examined how and from where art arose, highlighting the value of poetry and poets as generators of truth, extracting that their form of artistic development appears not as a reflective exercise, but rather based on a type of emergency that arises from loneliness, silence, and contemplation.

Heidegger (1971) refers: “We never go to thoughts, they come to us” (p.16).

In this way, Heidegger (1971) positions the creative exercise as an action dependent on the arrival of a type of inspiration that allows us to account for a content that speaks beyond the limits of reality, exposing how this type of creativity responds to the way in which the experiential entity that inhabits the foundations of all artistic construction is positioned. For Hamrick (1994), the approaches of Merleau-Ponty (1945) are linked to creativity from its initial conception in a spontaneous way, as part of the embodied experience proposed by the author, the embryonic position of creativity develops as a reflection of the link with the world of life, arising spontaneously according to Hamrick (1994) in two possible ways, the first associated with Gestalt explained from psychology, which is based on the convergence between objective perception and subjectivity to shape a certain perceived stimulus. On the other hand, the second form is related to the fact that creativity arises from the bodily connection with the world, with the intimate, with the social, highlighting the experiential dimension as a generating factor of creation.

Sartre (1947) in his book “What is literature?” offers his own definition of creativity, conceiving it as an active exercise with purpose based on achieving order where there was none, developing particular connections between subjects, situations, or objects, developments that keep an intrinsic need of an existential nature, which is associated with our desire to satisfy a sense of transcendence, feel pride in our creation and particular form of representation of reality. For Sartre (1947), creative logic is represented as existential food which suppresses the experiential desire to find a space in the world, a way that gives meaning to our existence, responding not only to a sense of object satisfaction but also presenting a relationship with the filling of a primary void in human nature.

As these concepts have been reviewed, the establishment of a relationship between the pre-reflexive and subjective dimensions at an experiential level with creativity has been sought, managing to identify how a primary relationship develops between these elements based on the approaches proposed by Vygotsky, Csikszentmihalyi, Tateo, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre, identifying how creativity responds to an exercise of an existential and subjective nature, converging in a structured way with actions of a reflective nature, which make it possible to achieve certain objectives in a certain creative exercise. Despite this, the need arises to carry out a more thorough analysis of imagination as a basic element at an existential level, compromising a significant revision of its constitutive characteristics and its relationship with the pre-reflexive dimension of existence, identifying how it can originate from a primary sphere at a particular level.

The Imaginative as a Subjective Reflection

Imagination can be described as the human capacity to generate new ideas or concepts, which arise both from previously experienced experiences and from the generative capacity itself, being central the distance between the imaginative and the perceptive. In Ancient Greece, it is possible to identify an attribution to the imagination from the concept of “Phantasia,” defined both from a Socratic and Platonic perspective as a synonym of “appear”; however, Socrates (in Sheppard, 2014) in response to Protagoras exposes the concept of Phantasia as a simile to perception, based on the perceptive quality of the human being and which allows generating a particular attribution to the phenomena that occur in the world. The perspective of Protagoras invited a refutation of the Phantasias from an argumentative level, a situation that based on what Socrates exposed was a vain and unnecessary exercise, in that the particular perception cannot be discussed. From this perspective, it is possible to attribute an association between the imaginative phenomenon and the subjective experience from a perceptive and representative level of reality.

Phantasia was not only associated with the appearance of images or phenomena from a perceptual plane but also with how the individual faced said appearances as a reflection of their own existence. Socrates (in Sheppard, 2014) realizes that memory, perception, and experiences associated with these qualities (pathemata) respond to a form of pictorial inscription in the soul, which generates a direct link between images and words, situation that can be both right and wrong, and this approach can be understood in a mere interpretive confusion of an object in the distance, which can be a tree or a human being. In this way, the individual associative possibility will demarcate the relationship between the image and the word used to define said occurrence.

These passages are striking in terms of their possible influence on subsequent theoretical developments such as what was observed in Plato’s theory of ideas (in Ross, 1989),

Kant's transcendental idealism (2008), and the pre-reflexive dimension exposed as a subjective dimension in the phenomenological approaches of Husserl (1931, 2012). In the experience of the Phantasia as an experiential pictorial reflection, the intimate relationship between imagination and experience of the world is visualized, a disposition that exposes a dependence on the subjective dimension, which not only enables the development of a certain image internally but also a specific denomination at the linguistic level.

In the Middle Age, it is possible to identify a link between the imaginative capacity and the connection with religious symbology, which sought the representation of a subjective experience that demarcated a personal and, in many cases, apophatic encounter. Based on the approaches of González (2021), between the seventh century and the beginning of the eleventh century, a phenomenon called by the author as "intersubjective apophatic imagination" arises, which demarcates that the imaginative and creative communication channels in equal parts are based on a subjective influence based on the so-called "negative theology," which exposes that the meeting point with God is not blind or absolutist belief, but rather is related to the intimate encounter with the deity from silence, the meditation and contemplation. According to González (2021), these forms of apophatic symbolic representation respond to a position contrary to the forms of pictorial representations of his time, which were based on a common symbology to dogmatically define or establish a reality of a divine-social nature, constituting the present approaches a revolution both aesthetic and as a rescue of the subjective value that demarcates the intimate experience with God.

The Renaissance marked the return of qualities that were subject to centuries of repression; in this way, imagination, creativity, and the arts emerge as living phenomena that take their place as forms of social and human representation, constituting a new awakening from a new attempt at anthropocentrism. A relevant figure of this period is Pico della Mirandola (1996), humanist and philosopher, author of the "Oration on the Dignity of Man," developing a liberating perspective of the human being in terms of his capacity for free choice and conquest of destiny above any type of imposition of a magical nature or beyond his own will, demarcating a significant influence on the incipient Renaissance spirit. His approaches regarding the imagination are relevant as a way of understanding subjectivity and personal experience; they configure a particular form of existential representation, carrying out a rescue of Neoplatonic approaches, Kabbalah and Aristotelian assumptions, his treatise on imagination exposes how the human being is capable of building from an autonomous creation certain forms of encounter with one's own and with divinity, providing value to the imagination as a form of feeling and experience over a value based on the image or pictorial appearance at the mental level.

Based on this brief historical review, it is possible to identify how imagination has developed not only as a form of appearance of images or visual or perceptive representations at an intrapsychic level but also as a form of individual representation and encounter with one's own subjectivity, not being subject exclusively to the dependence of a quality of a rational nature. However, the need arises to more directly relate imagination with the pre-reflexive dimension, which can be found in the philosophical approaches of phenomenology and how imagination can be understood from an existential aspect from its elemental constitution.

For Husserl (1973), imagination is associated or "anchored" both to one's own subjective experience and to the world of life (*lebenswelt*), involving a type of reflection associated with the concept of "Besinnung," based on a form pre-reflexive or pre-configured constitution, which is given from a perspective prior to any conscious action. From the observation of Husserl (1973), it is possible to identify the imagination as a constitution of existential pre-reflexive consciousness, which exposes the present dimension as part of

a perspective given by the experiential plane. Based on the approaches of Aldea (2020), it is possible to identify the perspective of Husserl (1973) in relation to imagination in the seven points described below.

1. Imaginative consciousness is co-extensive with the “as if” form of consciousness, which is associated with a form of representation of reality, beyond a specific form of perception.
2. The imaginative consciousness is neutral; it does not take a position; it is marked by disinterest.
3. The freedom of positions of the imagination is absolute, unconditional.
4. Imagination does not have teleology or motivation on its own; it only borrows motivational elements.
5. Imaginative consciousness does not accept doubts; it is linked to what Husserl refers to as consciousness of difference; it responds to an authentic form of development as part of a form of experience.
6. Imagination and perception are qualitatively separated by a crack that separates them without being contaminated by one another.
7. In its purity, imagination is not necessarily part of the world of life; it is a playful form of representation and possibility.

These approaches account for the form of development of imagination from the so-called “imaginative consciousness,” which emerges as a form of representation that is characterized by aspects such as neutrality, possibility, autonomy, and differentiation with perception, highlighting imagination as a dimension that is independent of rational action or does not respond to the same rules of operation. Based on Husserl’s (1973) approaches, the particular form of development of imagination responds to the concepts of imagined positionality (*Setzung*) driven by a distinctive class of modification (*Modifikation*), which empowers the logic that imaginative consciousness is associated with a way of breaking the rational nature of the world of life, linking itself to its own style of operation that does not adapt to rational operating rules, constituting itself as an existential, experiential, and linking dimension from a particular level with the world of life.

It is possible to observe that Heidegger (1997), in his interpretation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, made an observation regarding the so-called Transcendental Imagination, referring to it as a way of rescuing the approaches of Kantian Transcendental Idealism, that the contents of the imagination are already present prior to the development of all imagining, which is given in advance by the experiential plane that provides possibilities or imaginative categories to which to resort as a rescue exercise.

Heidegger (1997) gives importance to the concept of “*a priori*,” establishing how previous concepts can generate a gateway to imaginative possibilities, which are related from the *a priori* to the perspective of “*apperception*” and later as a form of identification of the own possibilities of consciousness from a reflective plane. For the author, a phenomenological logic based on the existence of a previous position marked by the existence of *a priori* contents that would serve to generate a subsequent understanding of a conscious nature would be respected at all times.

Heidegger’s proposal (1997) is mainly linked to the idea that imagination is closely related to the pure categories proposed by Kant, visualizing how, from a position prior to all experimentation, there is previously a spatial, temporal, or ordering link to experiential contents, which, although they do not put any experience of the “*thing in itself*”

beforehand, expose a form of linking or visual representation of the element as a form of representation of consciousness.

Furthermore, Sartre (1968) exposed a way of understanding imagination as an element that is not related to human perceptual quality, establishing that imagination must be separated from the notion that it works as a form of intrapsychic pictorial representation, but rather it is related to a form of “total appearance” different from the perceptive possibilities, which are based on learning that develops at a temporal level. The representations given by the imagination cannot teach the subject anything, from the logic that these forms of development are associated with “quasi-perceptive” phenomena, which arise in a similar way to what Heidegger (1997) referred to as a past form of categorical representation, that is, they provide a form prior to any experience of knowledge or approach to a phenomenon or situation. These approaches are consistent with what has been observed regarding the differentiation of imagination as an autonomous unit beyond any perceptive or voluntary exercise, highlighting the role of categories or previous constructions in the configuration of a form of imaginative-experiential representation.

In Merleau-Ponty's (1945) approaches, imagination presents a direct relationship with phenomenological corporality and space, elements that are experientially developed from an embodied dimension, referring to the fact that, although imagination is a way of accounting for reality of the world of life, it is not directly associated with perception, but rather arises as a form of internal representation. For the author, intellectualism is not related to the phenomenon of imagination, in that perception is subject to an analytical possibility from the empirical level, but not the imaginative dimension, which is only a form of subjective exposure regarding the sensory character, which takes precedence over any reflective dimension, constituting the sensory a form of particular representation of existential bonding.

It is important to highlight how from phenomenology, imagination is nourished by the world of life, having a direct link with the world of life described by Husserl (2005), appreciating an immediate relationship between these two categories. It is possible to identify the origin of these approaches in a preterite way in what was exposed by authors such as Locke (2017), Freud (2010), or later Piaget (1972), who related experience with the contents of the imagination, describing the experiential plane as a source of resources that nourishes the contents of the developed imagination.

The role of Steinbock (1995) stands out with his phenomenological theory of imagination, based on the concepts of Imaginative Phenomenology and Generative Phenomenology. The author describes the first as the relationship between life experience and imagination, explaining how the imagination is nourished moment by moment by the experiences at a particular level. Regarding Generative Phenomenology, it indicates that imagination also allows us to nourish our experiences with new approaches or points of view, which results in a circular relationship of complementarity between imaginative and generative instances.

Regarding imagination from the mathematical level, the approaches of Hadamard (1954) are notable. The author gave an account of how mathematicians went through a period of insight in which they spontaneously immersed themselves in a type of thinking that allowed the delivery of novel solutions to complex mathematical problems, providing great value to the unconscious world. Hadamard (1954) highlights imagination and creativity as central points in the development of mathematics and the resolution of problems linked to this form of thinking.

It is possible to distinguish both in Casey's (2000) and Jansen's (2020) approaches that imagination from a phenomenological dimension emerges as a form of functioning totally

differentiated from perception, which constitutes imagination as a free form of functioning, subject to rules based on the development of “ideal possibilities,” which point to the imagination as a form of experiential eidetic representation, prior to the development of any analytical exercise, being a fundamental part of a form of experiential subjective functioning. From this way of understanding, it is possible to distinguish the value of the distinction between imagination and perception, already observed in the development of phenomenology, assigning to the imagination autonomous rules of operation which are not related to a form of convergent reasoning.

From the understanding of the human being as an imaginative being arise the interesting approaches of Noel Lapoujade (2014), who exposes how the human being beyond being by essence a *Homo sapiens*, characterized by its capacity for analytical thinking and problem solving, is linked more to what she calls “*Homo imaginans*,” associating the human species with a generative nucleus coming from the imaginative sphere, prior to any thought of rational character.

The historical and phenomenological contributions clearly refer to how imagination represents a human characteristic that takes precedence over all types of reflective exercise, being closely related to an experiential dimension and a way of representing the world of life from the subjective plane. From this line, it is possible to refer that imagination is an experiential dimension that must have differentiated rules of analysis, based on its distance from the perceptual dimension, given that it develops as a form of destruction and construction of a world of possibilities, not necessarily responding to a conscious or reflective activation, which positions the researcher in a complex dimension, making it necessary to establish new forms of empirical exploration that allow an approach to the structural development of the so-called “imaginative phenomenology” to be achieved, as an experiential, subjective, and representational dimension.

Conclusion

In the development of this article, we have sought to clarify the relationship between pre-reflective awareness of human existence with creativity and imagination, identifying how both elements function differently from perception, which positions imagination and creativity as units, with particular rules of operation and which do not depend exclusively on a reflective exercise, which is in significant contrast to the traditional consideration that positions both dimensions as part of an intrapsychic exercise with convergent characteristics. The approaches presented in this article expose a new way of understanding central aspects of human existence, identifying that it essentially precedes all kinds of thought, a consideration that phenomenology has adopted as an epistemological, theoretical, and methodological proposal.

The main contributions of this text respond to the possibility of expanding the field of exploration of imagination and creativity at the investigative level, given that the same units can not only be understood from a rational current, since they are also part of an experiential plane at an existential level, also demarcating a central part of the individual, which can be seen represented in their respective artistic development. Hermeneutics has exposed an interesting field of exploration regarding the “rescue” of the individual who is immersed in a text or generative construction at a creative level, being able to maintain from the perspective of Heidegger (1971) a need to achieve a deep immersion exercise in the creative work as an alternative to rescue essential elements generated in an imaginative

and artistic construction, turning the present scope into a process of phenomenological and hermeneutical exploration.

Future challenges point to the development of specific methodological proposals for the understanding of imaginative and artistic developments at a particular level, as a way of identifying global processes at an experiential level that compromise their respective developments both globally and microphenomenologically. The nature of the human consciousness may be understood as an inner forest in which the possibilities of development converge with the set of personal experiences, which nurture the path from which the subject passes his own existence.

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