

# The image-making power



## What is imagination, and what are its limits?

First published in *The Theosophical Forum*, April 1889 through April 1895, Questions 2 through 345, in Numbers 1 to 70 (First Series). Republished in: Dara Eklund (Comp.). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press: Vol. II, 2009; QUESTION 180, pp. 300-1.<sup>1</sup>

Often I see mental pictures of myself and others, acting, talking, etc. Sometimes these pictures are realized, sometimes not. Where is one to draw the line?

In my opinion *imagination* is exactly what it imports on its face, that is, the *image-making power* possessed surely by man, and inferred in brute creation. It was so defined by the ancient occultists and by the hermetic philosophers. But nowadays it is given a low place generally, yet has been raised to slightly greater eminence by the Metaphysical healers who have stumbled unknowingly on a great law. That which is often called *imagination* is, in fact, only fancy, or the idle creation of images whose tenure of life is short. But conscious exercise of this power raised to its highest degree is one of the necessities of occult art, for no occult feat can be performed without it. Experiments in mesmerism for a century, and lately those in hypnotism, show that each person has the power to create an image about himself which is perfectly objective to the inner senses of the seer. This creation is done by the use of imagination solely. If the image be indefinite, owing to the imagination not working strongly, the seer or subject will only see indefiniteness, because the subjective picture was badly constructed. But the constructor, poor or good, was the imagination. The Indian fakir makes you see the snake or other object — though you have all your senses — because through centuries of heredity and years of training his imagination has been put into such order that it sees before it the form so vividly that you perceive, as you suppose, an objective reality when none in fact exists. And turning to the letters from Adepts to Mr. Sinnett, we find them saying that in order to precipitate a note they must see (in imagination) each and every letter complete and unwavering before they can precipitate the material elements through that matrix upon the paper. So not only have we the testimony of all the mystics, but also that of those Adepts who in later days have shown those things to some.

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<sup>1</sup> [This magazine was distributed free of charge to members-at-large of the Theosophical Society in America, who were invited to “send questions, answers to questions, opinions and notes upon Theosophical subjects.” Usually they were handled by the editor, Alexander Fullerton, with the assistance of Mr. Judge. Though some of the editor’s answers (signed Ans.) may have been by Judge, we include only those contributed under his own name, initials, or pen-names. — DARA EKLUND, Compiler.]

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As to drawing the line for the questioner. That can hardly be done. For if he is a clairvoyant partially or wholly, then he sometimes sees the pictures of what we improperly call the future. For there is no future; it is all now. In such seeing he does not use imagination. But where vain day-dreams interpose, then he is either using his fancy, or is bringing forgotten combinations of thought, or is being influenced for the moment by the fleeting thoughts of another. Johann Georg Gichtel<sup>2</sup> once saw come out from heaven the hand of a widow who desired to marry him, and then a voice saying, "You must have her." He knew then that his stray thought and imagination had momentarily thrown a picture before his inner sense. That had but little to do with his imagination.



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<sup>2</sup> [Johann Georg Gichtel, 1638–1710, German mystic, religious leader and critic of Lutheranism.]