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IMAGINATION AND PERCEPTION

by

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This thesis is my own work, and to the best of my knowledge all sources have been acknowledged.

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Special thanks go to my wife who undertook the arduous task of typing this thesis.
The task I set myself in this thesis is a fairly limited one. What I hope to show is that a commonly accepted doctrine of the nature of imagination is untenable.

This doctrine arises, I suggest, out of its proponents' attempts to rebut traditional image-theories of imagination. The difficulties which arise from the postulation of this anti-image-theory doctrine of imagination stem mainly, I contend, from its supporters' assertion of too tough an account of perceiving. These critics of image-theories are at such pains to deny what they take to be a basic postulate in any image-theory - the claim that imagining is a form of perceiving (a private mental object) - that they adopt (uncritically, I maintain) Realist accounts of perceiving. Thus, no perceiving-statement can, to them, be true if there is no publicly perceptible object in the subject's perceptual range which he takes (rightly or wrongly) to be something.

The adoption of this view of perceiving leads proponents of this doctrine of imagination to assert that no imagining can be a perceiving. It also leads them, I argue further, into the fatal trap of contending that imagining must still have close logical links with/
with perceiving; that the objects of imagination must be things of which it is true to say "They might have been perceived if they were present or if they existed". Both these claims, I hope to establish, are false. It is not the case, I will conclude, that no imagining can legitimately be termed a perceiving and that imagining must always have close logical links with perceiving. This is sufficient to show that this particular anti-image-theory doctrine of imagination is not a tenable one.