fantastic, a. and n.

 Forms: a. 4 fantastik, 5-7 fantastike, -tyke, -tique, -tyque, 6-8 fantastick(e), 7- fantastic. \(\beta\). 6-8 phantastick(e), 6 phantastike, 7 phantastique. 7- phantastic. [ad. med.L. fantastic-us, late L. phantasticus, a. Gr. \(\phi\alpha\tau\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\nu\delta\), f. \(\phi\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\epsilon\alpha\) to make visible (middle voice \(\phi\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\epsilon\alpha\sigma\), in late Gr. to imagine, have visions); see FANTASY. Cf. Fr. fantastique.

The form phantastic is no longer generally current, but has been casually used by a few writers of the 19th c., to suggest associations connected with the Gr. etymology.]

A. adj.

1. a. Existing only in imagination; proceeding merely from imagination; fabulous, imaginary, unreal (obs.). b. In mod. use, of alleged reasons, fears, etc.: Perversely or irrationally imagined.

\(\alpha\) 1387 TREVSIA Higden (Rolls) V. 279 What is i-seide..of Merlyn has fantastik getyne. Ibid. VIII. 63 Kyng Arthures body [was founden] yat was i-counted as it were fantastik. 1529 MORE Suppl. Soulys Wks. 338 A very fantastike fable. 1627 F. E. Hist. Edu. II (1680) 11 His fantastique Happiness. 1721 SWIFT South Sea viii, He longs to rove in that fantastick scene. 1775 HARRIS Philos. Arrangem. Wks. (1841) 299 A fourth sort..may be called fantastic, or imaginary; such as centaurs. 1816 J. WILSON City of Plague i. i, I could smile at such fantastic terrors. 1876 M. ARNOLD Lit. & Dogma 157 His hearers and reporters were sure to verse it on their own fantastic grounds also.

\(\beta\) 1678 CUDWORTH Intell. Syst. 481 All those other phantastick Gods, were nothing but Several Personal Names. 1742 YOUNG Nt. Th. i. 94 My soul phantastick measures trod O'er fairy fields.

2. Pertaining to, or of the nature of, a phantasm. Obs.

\(\alpha\) 1483 CAXTON Gold. Leg. 19/2 He shewed that he was veryr rysen..by etyn openly, and by no art fantasyke. 1491 Vitas Patr. (W. de W. 1495) I. xlii. 68a/1 [I am] noo thyng fantasyke, but a sparcle of fyre; Asshes, and flesshe.
1598 Yong Diana 127 A meere dreame, or some fantastick illusion. 1624 Fletcher Rule a Wife IV. iii, Is not this a fantastic house we are in, And all a dream we do? 1648 BP. Hall Rem. Wks. (1660) 198 One will allow of his humanity..another will allow a divine soul with a fantastick body.

1635 A. Stafford Fem. Glory (1869) 145 That He had a phantasticke Body, not made of his Mothers Flesh. 1691-8 Norris Pract. Disc. IV. 377 Aery Banquets, Phantastick Food. a1716 South Serm. (1741) VII. 16 An aerial phantastic body.

13. Of or pertaining to phantasy, in its various psychological senses (see Fantasy n. 1, 4) as denoting either the faculty (and act) of apprehending sensible objects, or that of imagination; imaginative.

1483 Caxton Cato Fviijb, By cogtacyon or thynkyng fantasyke and by illusyon of the deuyll. 1592 Davies Immort. Soul xx. ii. (1599) 47 [Phantasie] in her Ballance doth their values trie, Where some things good, and som things il do seeeme..in her phantasticke eye. 1649 Jer. Taylor Gt. Exemp. Pref. 43 There is as much phantastick pleasure in doing a spite, as in doing revenge. 1678 Cudworth Intell. Syst. 29 The different Phancies in us, caused by the respective Differences of them..Which Phancies or Phantastick Idea's are [etc.]. 1793 T. Taylor Sallust viii. 38 The irrational soul..is sensitive and phantastic life.

1b. Of poetry: Concerned with ‘phantasy’ (Gr. φαντασία) or illusory appearance. Obs. [See Plato Sophistes xxiii, li. In quot. 1581 the word may be merely a transliteration of Gr. φανταστική.]

1581 Sidney Apol. Poetrie (Arb.) 54 Mans wit may make Poesie, (which should be Eikastike, which some learned haue defined, figuring forth good things,) to be Phantastike: which doth contrariwise, infect the fancie with vnworthy objects. 1669 Gale Crt. Gentiles I. III. i. 18 Phantastick Poesie is that, which altogether feigns things.

fantastic, a. and n.


6. Having the appearance of being devised by extravagant fancy; eccentric, quaint, or grotesque in design, conception, construction, or adornment.

b. Arbitrarily used by Milton for: Making ‘fantastic’ movements (in the dance);
hence in later allusions to Milton's phrase. So in Comb. **fantastic-footed**.

1632 MILTON *L'Allegro* 33 Trip it as you go On the light fantastic toe.  

1790 WARTON *On Approach of Summer* 59 Haste thee, Nymph! and hand in hand..Bring fantastic-footed Joy.  

1826 DISRAELI *Viv. Grey* v. xv, Mr. St. Ledger..prided himself..on his light fantastic toe.

7. In trivial use: excellent, good beyond expectation. **colloq.**

1938 M. ALLINGHAM *Fashion in Shrouds* xi. 175 Oh, Val, isn't it fantastic?..It's amazing, isn't it?  

1971 New Statesman 5 Feb. 176/3 A friend tells me of a recent experience..which really does rate that over-worked adjective, fantastic.  

1973 Brand New Monty Python Papperbok (1986) 27 For the past seventeen weeks Janet has been on a fantastic package tour to Malaga.  

1973 *Los Angeles Times* 5 Sept. v. 2/3 ‘Only..very nice?’ he asked woefully. ‘Oh, it's great! I mean, it's fantastic!’

**B. n.**

1. One who has fanciful ideas or indulges in wild notions. **Obs. exc. arch.**

1598 MARSTON *Pygmal.* III. 148 Thou art Bedlam mad..And glori’st to be counted a fantastick.  

1621 QUARLES *Div. Poems, Esther* (1717) 111 Power..to perverse fantasticks if conferr'd..spurs on wrong.  

1706 E. WARD *Hud. Rediv.* (1715) I. vii, The Church-men justly growl to see..that the Force of Toleration..Should set each canting proud Fantastick Above their Courts Ecclesiastick.  

1882 SHORTHOUSE *J. Inglesant* II. xv, A Fantastic, whose brain was turned with monkish fancies.

1630 R. BRATHWAIT *Eng. Gentl.* (1641) 3, I would be glad to weane this Phantasticke from a veine of lightnesse.

1675 G. R. tr. *Le Grand’s Man Without Passion* 132 Opinion is the Fountain, this Fantastick which seduceth our understanding, etc.

2. One given to fine or showy dress; a fop. **Obs.**

1613 OVERBURY *Charac.*, A Phantastique, An Improvident young Gallant.  

1628 MILTON *Vac. Exerc.* 20Trimming..which takes our late fantastics with delight.  

1680 BUTLER *Rem.* (1759) II. 131 A Fantastic is one that wears his Feather on the Inside of his Head.

1641 G. H. *(title)*, Wits Recreations, Containing..Variety of Fancies and Fantasticks.

4. Power of fancy or imagination. *Obs.*

1764 Public Advertiser 31 May in N. & Q. 3rd Ser. IV. 385 It [Mozart's playing] surmounts all Fantastic and Imagination.

5. That which is fantastic, strange, eccentric or odd.

1908 Daily Chron. 17 Mar. 3/3 The tradition of the fantastic which has clung to the memory of Buckingham.