

CHAPTER - II

IMAGINATION: HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT

Imagination is derived from Latin *imaginatio*, which was a late substitute for *phantasia* (a simple transliteration of the Greek from which fancy is derived). The two terms, with their derivatives, long appeared as synonyms designating the image-forming faculty or process. From philosophy they were borrowed by criticism, and in both contexts were subject to different evaluation by different schools. Their history, though far from a simple linear development, falls into fairly clearly marked division.

Classical and Medieval :

(1) The history starts with the elementary recognition, first, of a mental image accompanying sense perception (and viewed by the materialist as real and an impress made by the object, by the idealist as mere appearance, by the dualist with depreciation as dependent on matter and the senses), and, secondly, of images occurring in the absence of any object, and in various combinations, which might be depreciated as fictitious, suspected as proceeding from the passions, valued as divinely inspired, or simply examined as psychological phenomena.

(2) All these attitudes find some reflection in Plato, who further recognizes a connection of art and poetry with imagination. Initially, he regards the image as illusory, yielding no knowledge of reality (since of the "idea" one can form no image) but confined to appearance and opinion, and a prey to every prompting from the irrational soul; hence in part the limitations of artist and poet. Thus, Plato inaugurates a long tradition of distrust, which was little mitigated by his own important second thoughts, namely (by his own important second thoughts, namely) that "image answering to true opinions are true", that to form images from "ideas" was indeed possible to the god, that an image of pure beauty (subsuming the ideas of truth and goodness) while it could not be produced by any activity of the soul, might be passively received from above, or even

"remembered" from the soul's earlier state, a process in which earthly images of beauty might be instrumental, and, finally, that provision was perhaps made (in close proximity to the irrational soul) for a reflection, in the form of images; of ideas entertained by the rational soul. But the ideas entertained by the rational soul the gap between "ideas" and "images" was never securely closed. At most the soul could passively receive an image reflecting an idea : it could not actively produce such an image. In the Platonic tradition the distrust of phantasy is emphatic; not until it is dissipated can Platonism make its full contribution to the theory of imagination.

(3) Aristotle's interest, in the *De Anima*, was psychological and free from prejudice. Set in motion by sense perception, phantasy forms images of objects and their relations; and from such images reproduced, reason abstracts its ideas. Thus, in the process of deriving knowledge from experience, images are the intermediaries between sense and thought; and in the act of choice images have an equally essential role. Aristotle's failure, however, to invoke his theory of the reproductive image in an "imitation of nature" at once realistic and philosophical, was to impede the recognition of the imagination's role in poetry (see below 7).

(4) Distrust of phantasy is dominant in the Stoics (despite some inheritance from the *De Anima*). Neoplatonism, as represented by Plotinus, is more ambivalent. His emanationist theory permitted him to distinguish a higher and a lower phantasy ; the lower dependent on sense and a function of the irrational soul, the higher reflective of ideas because a function of the rational soul, but with the lower capable of being brought into harmony with the higher because it is indeed its shadow. Further, as soul was an emanation of mind, nature was an emanation of soul, inferior to it because lacking, among other powers, that of phantasy and, consequently, all perception of its own activity, namely, the imposition of forms upon matter (the last and lowest of the emanations). Here was a philosophy with large, if undeveloped, possibilities for poetic theory; for the imaginative reflection of the ideal, and even for something the Coleridge's conception of "poesy or art".

(5) Though, in discussing the art of poetry, Horace had ignored imaginatione, and thus impeded its recognition (cf. 7), Quintilian, with

illustrations from Virgil, recognizes that by visions (or phantasies) absent things seem present, whence the orator can feel and, by his eloquence, arouse emotion; and Longinus, with illustrations from Euripides, recognizes imagination as a source of sublimity when "moved by enthusiasm and passion you seem to see the things whereof you speak and place them before the eyes of your hearer". Here as later imagination and passion unite to characterize poetry and eloquence. A further development is adumbrated in Philostratus, when imitation is declared to be inferior to phantasy, since it can represent only what has been seen, but phantasy what has never been seen, fashioning it according to the analogy of the real.

(6) while Christian asceticism, with biblical phrases about vain imagination no doubt fortified existing prejudices, St. Augustine distinguished the reproductive from the simple sensory image, reserving to the former the term *phantasia* or *imaginatio*. He recognized its role when in reading history or in writing and reading fables, we see in our mind's eye persons and scenes; he further noticed the interdependence of the reproductive image and the will in the hypothetical representations formed by addition, subtraction, or combination of attributes. But for him imagination remained inferior to intellect: to the former prophetic vision might be vouchsafed, but its interpretation only to the latter. In the "faculty psychology" of the Schoolmen, where this order is maintained, imagination, like the other faculties, is given its location and its distinctive function, namely, with or as the *sensus communis*, to produce from sense data the images of objects and their relations, and (sometimes under the designation of *phantasia*) to reproduce and combine images at will. Of the truth of images reason must judge, and from them it abstracts ideas, which memory in turn retains. This is the basic scheme, of which there were many variants. Dante's interest centered on ascent from the image of earthly beauty to intellectual or heavenly love, and on the image divinely bestowed or inspired; but his practice as poet outran his theory; where, in the *Divine Comedy*, he finally declares that imagination fails, he is actually making his most effective use of the symbolic image, and in his account of the poem's fourfold meaning¹ he does not refer to imagination at all.

Renaissance to Romantics . (7) In Pico della Mirandola's *On Imagination*, the early Renaissance combined a renewed reference to classical sources

with much from medieval tradition. Those critics who, in the 16th century, commenced to formulate the principles of neo classicism, built upon Aristotle and Horace and largely ignored imagination in favour of the imitation of nature; and even when Scaliger and Sidney acclaimed the poet as a "creator", they still clung to the doctrine of imitation. Puttenham's summary of current theories which ascribe poetry to creation, imitation, natural endowment, divine inspiration, etc. remarks (under the first of these) that the poet may indeed be likened to the Creator "who without any travail to his Divine Imagination made all the world of nought, "but also bears testimony to long-established prejudice in his defense of imagination as, in its healthful state, no wise irregular but very orderly, productive of "beautiful visions", and so helpful to invention that "without it no man could devise any new or rare thing." But it is not till Bacon that imagination really begins to claim a central role in poetry and then with an attendant limitation, for poetry ceases to be knowledge and becomes fiction and play. "History", he writes, "is referred to memory : poesy to imagination; philosophy to reason". With the primary materials to knowledge" the "mind... exercises itself and sometimes sports. For as all knowledge is the exercise and work of the mind, so poesy may be regarded as its sport. For "being not tied to the laws of matter", as are memory and reason, imagination "may at pleasure join that which nature hath severed and sever that which nature hath joined" and give thereby "some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man" by representing "a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety than can be found in the nature of things."

(8) for immediate acceptance this view ran too completely counter to the neoclassical conception of poetry as an imitation of nature. In England, however, neoclassicism early sought its philosophical basis in empiricism, and while it regarded poetry as an imitation of empirical reality (a severely limiting criterion, as seen in Hobbes) and yielded imagination only a secondary role, a philosophy which grounded all knowledge in sense experience had less reason to distrust imagination than had rationalism in its Cartesian or any other form, and psychological interest prompted a study of its operation. Hobbes sums up his view of poetry in the dictum; "Time and education beget experience; experience begets memory; memory begets judgement and fancy; judgement begets the strength and structure, and fancy begets the ornaments of a poem." But this did

1. Literal, allegorical, anagogical and the tropological.

not close the subject. I, or fancy, drawing all its data from sensation, was in its "simple" form, the memory of sensory images; but it had also the power of "compounding" them to form new images. further, images presented themselves in "trains", the result of undirected association, or (more significantly) or a directing with judgement) became the indispensable instrument of invention in "whatsoever distinguisheth the civility of Europe from the barbarity of the American savages". In critical theory Addison, in effect, grafts Hobbes's psychology of the imagination upon Bacon's theory of poetry.

(9) For Addison all the data of imagination are supplied by the sense of sight. Its primary process is to form visual images of objects in their presence. Its secondary is to reproduce their "ideas" (imaginative images) "when the objects are not actually before the eye, but are called up into our memories or formed into agreeable visions of things that are either absent or fictitious." Here indeed are two processes : simple reproduction of images, and "altering and compounding those images ... into all the varieties of picture and vision ... ; for by this faculty a man in a dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes and landscapes more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole compass of nature". And "because the imagination can fancy to itself things more great, strange or beautiful than the eye ever saw, and is still sensible of some defect in what it has seen,.... it is the part of poet to humour the imagination... by mending and perfecting nature where he describes a reality, and by adding greater beauties than are put together in nature where he describes a fiction." In "the fairy way of writing" the poet quite loses sight of nature and "out of his own invention" represents "ghosts, fairies, witches, and the like imaginary persons" (which Hobbes had specifically rejected as contradicting nature). In word, imagination "has something in it like creation : it bestows a kind of existence."

(10) To the influence of Addison's *Spectator* papers much of the emphasis on imagination in 18th century criticism may be traced. "In the fairyland of fancy," wrote Edward Young, "genius may wander wild : there it has a creative power and may reign arbitrarily over its own empire of chimeras". Reynolds, abandoning "ideal form" for "appeal to the imagination" as his criterion in art, declares that its aim "is to supply the natural imperfection of things, and " to gratify the mind by realizing what never existed but in imagination." Unlike

the majority of his predecessors, he makes some distinction between imagination and fancy in the assertion : "Raphael had more taste and fancy, Michelangelo more genius and imagination." Such theorists as Lord Kames and Alison anticipate the romantics in their emphasis on emotion and its dependence upon imagination.

(11) Meanwhile Hume, having deposed reason, in effect replaced it by imagination, which he was careful to distinguish from "the loose reveries of the fancy". Adam Smith made sympathy, the groundwork of the moral sentiments, depend on imagination. Alexander Gerard, attempting an empirical account of genius, describes it as fertility in associating ideas, and attributes this in turn to an active imagination, as also does William Duff, in whom merge the cults of imagination, of genius, and of the primitive; the mark of genius is "an inventive and plastic imagination" which "sketches out a creation of its own", and is something quite different from the mere "quickness and readiness" of "sportive fancy". And genius, thus conceived, flourishes best in primitive societies. Blackwell, Wood, Blair, and other primitivists expatiate on the metaphorical character of primitive poetry ; and while not all attribute this mainly to imagination, all would agree with Vico (in Italy) that "imagination is more robust in proportion as reasoning power is weak". Vico's importance lies less in his theory of imagination ("imagination is nothing but extended or compounded memory") than in the results which he attributed to it in ancient poetry and myth, thereby anticipating modern anthropological criticism. To Herder and the Germans it chiefly fell to take up and develop English ideas of primitive poetry and the imagination of the folk. More central are the interests of Dougald Stewart, who ascribes imagery wholly to fancy, the power that "supplies the poet with metaphorical language", while imagination (freed from its close association with the image) is the power "that creates the complex scenes he describes and the fictitious characters he delineates", as illustrated in Milton's Eden, Harrington's Oceana, and Shakespeare's Falstaff or Hamlet. This is perhaps the final development ; and utmost reach of the tradition that stops short of making for imagination the transcendental claims put forward by the romantics.

(12) Of such claims there were, however, some intermittent premonitions. After basing his early aesthetic on Hobbes, but unlike Hobbes attempting some distinction between imagination and fancy (imagination conoting the general

power whose first activity is "invention or finding of the thought," while its second activity is "fancy or variation ... of that thought"), Dryden became restive under its limitations and (with liberal quotation from Belloni) advanced the theory that imagination could reach to images of the essential ideas of things, which images were the models for painter and poet when they would represent "nature wrought up to a nobler pitch". There are hints of a similar doctrine in William Collins and the eclectic Reynolds; but it could make little headway against the prevailing empiricism. Nor must it be forgotten that the tradition opposed to empiricism, and represented by Shaftesbury, set its own limits on imagination. Shaftesbury's famous pronouncement on the true poet as a second maker, a just Prometheus under Jove" speaks in terms of the imitation of nature, not of imagination, which indeed it disparages in accordance with his oft-repeated Stoic prejudice. In it, criticism attention was being given to the imagination with somewhat different results, and notably by Muratori in his defence of the Italian poets against the strictures of French neoclassicists. In order to please, poetry must present what appears to be true and beautiful, marvelous but verisimilar, Herein intellect and imagination must cooperate and good taste control. If intellect alone works upon the images, the result is philosophical knowledge; if imagination alone, dream and delusion. "Simple" or "natural" images appear immediately true to both. Others may appear immediately true to imagination, but only mediately to the intellect: such are those images described as "artificial" or "fantastic", which are applied metaphorically under the stress of emotion. Both kinds are approved by Muratori and copiously illustrated from the poets. In German criticism English ideas on poetry and imagination were sometimes grafted on the different philosophical stock of Leibniz, as by Bodmer and Baumgarten. But it is to Kant and his followers in Germany and to the romantic poets in England that we must look for the final exalting of imagination.

(13) The Romantics Blake takes an extreme line. Ultimate reality is spiritual, and the imagination is the organ of its perception : "Imagination is spiritual sensation". It is the "first principle" of knowledge, "and all others are derivative". It perceives - almost one might say, confers - form and value : "Nature has no outline, but imagination has/Nature has no tune, but Imagination has/Nature has no supernatural and dissolves : Imagination is Eternity. "In his reaction against empiricism and the theories of art based thereon, Blake condemns all those "who pretend to poetry that they may destroy Imagination

by imitation of Nature's Image drawn from Remembrance. Nothing but imagination can resolve the antinomy of material object and spiritual reality, nothing, that is, but the power to look upon the object and see the reality : "to the eyes of the man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself." Creative imagination issues not in fiction but in the highest truth. Without benefit of German metaphysics, "English Blake" reverses the assumptions of the empirical tradition.

(14) Meanwhile, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had emphasized the role of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) in the formation of knowledge, describing it as "an active faculty for synthesis," which unites and unifies the manifold data of sense perception. without it, no subjective knowledge of an objective world. It is "a necessary ingredient of perception itself" and the indispensable mediator between "mere sensibility and understanding", and, in order to account for these empirical results, Kant has further to infer "a transcendental synthesis of imagination." Nor is this all. In the *Critique of Judgement* he treats imagination in another context, which places it in a different relation to understanding and brings into relief free (as opposed to determine) activity. In aesthetic judgement "we do not refer the representation to the object by means of understanding, with a view to cognition, but by means of imagination (acting perhaps in conjunction with understanding) we refer the representation to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure". There imagination is free : not simply "reproductive" under "the laws of association," but productive and exerting an activity of its own" : and even when it is restricted by the form of the object of sense represented, and "does not enjoy free play as it does in poetry," the representation is still judged in relation to such a form "as the imagination, if left to itself, would freely project in ... general conformity to the law of the understanding". In a word, in cognition, imagination is at the service of understanding; in aesthetic judgement "understanding is at the service of imagination" in its free activity. Kant's antinomy of the necessary and the free becomes in Schelling that of the real (nature, the finite and determined) and the ideal (mind, the infinite and free) subsisting within the absolute, and the function of art is to mediate between them, to build the infinite into the finite, through the active and intermediary power of "intelligence", which no doubt subsumes imagination : "Intelligence is productive in two ways ..., unconsciously in the perception of the universe, consciously (and, he adds, with freedom) in the creation of an ideal world".

(15) In Coleridge there are elements from both Kant and Schelling. Imagination, he defines as the intermediate faculty which joins the predominantly passive and predominantly active elements in thinking, but as applied to poetry it connotes "a superior degree of the faculty joined to a superior voluntary control over it." And in a more famous passage he writes: The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I a.m. The secondary imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves ... in order to recreate or ... to idealize and to unify". It is thus sharply differentiated from fancy, which is a mere "mode of its operation. It dissolves ... in order to recreate or ... to idealize and to unify". It is thus sharply differentiated from fancy, which is a mere "mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space" but receiving "all its materials ready made from the law of association". Coleridge is critic as well as philosopher, and one of his concerns is to validate, against empiricism, the productions of the "secondary" imagination, the creative imagination of poet or artist, by identifying it in kind with the "primary" imagination, the finite counterpart of God's creative act, and thereby to give philosophic ground and content to the traditional idea of the poet as creator. Unlike fancy and understanding, which are confined to the level of the phenomenal, of *natura naturata*, reason and creative imagination, aspiring to the noumenal, approximate to each other, so that imagination becomes (in Wordsworth's phrase) "reason in her most exalted mood." Deliberately Coleridge seeks to unite creative imagination with the imitation of nature, properly understood. For "poesy or art" does not "copy" *natura naturata* but "imitates" *natura naturans*; and thus to imitate nature is in effect to interpret it in and by "symbols", "living educates of the imagination, of that reconciling and mediatory power which, incorporating the reason in images of the sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the senses by the permanence and self-encircling energies of the reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves and cosubstantial with the truths of which they are the conductors."

(16) Imagination, says Wordsworth, "has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confirmed them: "the world ... has been overstrained... to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps

the noblest of our nature". His own criterion is not philosophic but experiential; and he rejects a complete differential of imagination and fancy, listing them together as one of the qualities requisite for the poet - deceived (Coleridge thinks) by their co-presence in his own poetry. They differ indeed, but mainly in respect of value : "Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, imagination to incite and to support the eternal." He was early conscious of creative sensibility" as he was to call it. This is the beginning of the long evolution traced in the *Prelude*, and the end, a recognition of imagination as the organ equally of truth, of beauty and of spiritual love : "This spiritual love acts not, nor can exist Without imagination, which in truth/Is but another name for absolute power/And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,/And reason in her most exalted mood".

(17) Though still concerned with the image, Coleridge and Wordsworth extend the sway of imagination to "thoughts and sentiments," "characters" and "actions" : Wordsworth distinguishes the "human and dramatic" imagination of Shakespeare from the "enthusiastic and meditative" of the Bible, Milton, and (he adds) Spenser : and Coleridge between the imagination of Shakespeare, by which he goes forth and identifies himself with his subject, and Milton's, by which he brings everything to a centre in his own experience. But above all imagination manifests itself in the unity of the whole : it draws (says Wordsworth, quoting Lamb) "all things to one" and makes them "take one colour and serve to one effect". It reveals itself, says Coleridge, "in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities; of sameness the difference, of the general with the concrete ..., the individual with the representative, ... the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects, [and] a more than usual state of emotion with a more than usual orderomanticism... "

(18) Others are more eclectic : Hazlitt, who emphasizes the dependence of poetry on emotion, and of emotion on imagination; Keats, whose insights include stress on the poet's imaginative sympathy (these with no distinction of imagination and fancy), and (with some attempt at distinction) Leigh Hunt, who notes that imagination can dispense with the sensory image and wishes for a new term. Shelley attributes to imagination all creative activity in life as well as art, sets it in opposition to reason, and claims for it alone that access to the

realm of ideas which Plato had seemed to deny to it; he further assigns to imagination a central role in ethics, as it begets and diffuses sympathy, a conception which looks back to Adam Smith and on to John Galsworthy. Though "more Platonic than Plato", Joubert, in the name of imagination, opposed the master on poetry; by imagination, "active and creative" and the very "eye of the soul", the poet "purifies and empties the forms of matter and shows us the universe as it is in the mind of God... His portrayal is not a copy of a copy, but an impression of the archetype". "In their quest of beauty poets come on more truth than philosophers in their quest of truth".

(19) Ruskin distinguishes three modes in which imagination operates: the "penetrative" (whereby the artist, reacting to the inner "verity" of his subject, can present it directly, without resort to metaphor or symbol), the "associative" (the instinctive process, contrasted with conscious "composition", whereby he harmonizes every detail so that it may contribute to the effect of the whole), and the "contemplative" (whereby the artist, in treating a subject that transcends nature and the concrete image directly employed, resorts to an analogical or figurative use of image to convey its meaning and suggest the attendant emotion). None of these modes does he regard as "creative", however romanticism. For art to create is to depart from touch and produce fiction, and this is the lower activity of three modes of fancy corresponding to the three modes of imagination. But, despite his characteristic schematism, Ruskin really cares little for terminology, so long as he can assert that great art embodies truth intuitively apprehended and beyond the reach of reasoning. The criticism of reason usually entails a distinction of its discursive and intuitive operations; but Arnold chooses rather to contrast reason and the senses with imagination and the heart (imagination. feeling) and, finding neither satisfactory, seeks his exemplified in the greatest poetry. In general, however, the Victorians contributed little to the theory of imagination, using the term so vaguely that G.H.Lewes complained: "there are few words more abused".

(20) The twentieth century In popular criticism the word imagination and its derivatives are still encountered, if less frequently. Their meaning is sufficiently vague, connoting most often perhaps sustained fantasy as opposed to realistic writing; but it is largely devoid of the transcendental overtones inherited from the romantics. One could expect no less from the widespread

and varied reaction against romanticism in general and transcendentalism in particular. An example of this reaction was seen in American humanism, though Irving Babbitt conceded the importance of imagination, and a distinction between the "ethical" (or classic) imagination and the "idyllic" (or romantic) is pivotal in his doctrine. More unequivocally hostile to imagination as such was the whole naturalistic movement in thought and letters (which the humanists also opposed). In and beyond its ill-defined boundaries transcendentalism is of course out of fashion. If, for example, Coleridge is to be accepted by IMAGINATION. Richards, he must first be divested of his metaphysics. The psychology and aesthetics of the romantics have been in part repudiated, in part developed. Whatever their metaphysical affinities, the romantics had assumed that essentially art was the expression of emotion, with emotion and imagination indissolubly linked therein. Here contemporary opinion sharply divides, with one school of critics denying or markedly qualifying the dependence of art on emotion, while others (whose interests are more psychological than purely aesthetic) retain it. Again, if we hear relatively little about imagination we hear a great deal about the image. The dominance of the image is a principle, and its investigation a method, common to groups holding divergent views on the nature of poetry. The Freudians who regard poetry as wish fulfillment and analogous to dreams; cultural anthropologists see it as reducible to archetypal myths and patterns, and there are critics who regard the poem as self-contained entity without significant external relations, whose meaning and effect reside in a pattern of interdependent images. This concentration has restored attention to the image-forming process, often at the expense of those wider powers manifested in description, characterization, narration, and structure, which with increasing emphasis previous criticism had ascribed to imagination. But it has borne fruit in a closer study of the image as symbol. Such study look back in part to Coleridge, and it is significant that Richards should find Coleridge on the imagination of absorbing psychological interest. The Freudian association of imagination with dream is as old as Plato, and the view of poetry as wish fulfillment is fundamentally Baconian, Cultural anthropologists, though immediately responsive to Frazer and Jung, are the distant descendents of Vico and Blackwell. And Croce and Collingwood, among exponents of the aesthetic as an area and mode of knowledge, and the role of imagination therein, are evidently continuing the exploration of Kant.

(21) In Croce's doctrine of art as intuition (where intuition demands expression and expression is art), imagination, as productive of the unifying image, is in its turn identified with intuition, so that the doctrine might as well be phrased, art as imagination the central role here accorded to imagination (fantasia) implies a sharp distinction from the mere recalling of images in accidental succession or arranging them in constrained or capricious combinations.

(22) ROMANTICISM. Collingwood, in expounding a not dissimilar theory, treats imagination in greater detail. Imagination is neither mere sensibility, which is passive and below the level of consciousness, nor intellect, whose activity issues in thought, in the formation and ordering of concepts: it is an activity of mind which coexists with full consciousness, and it is the intermediary between the other two. It furnishes "the basis for a theory of aesthetic experience", and it fills an essential "place in the general structure of experience" since it provides the means whereby "the activity of thought makes contact with the merely psychic life of feeling". It is creative because it is an activity of mind and produces something, namely, the work of art. Its product is not, however, mere make believe but a form of knowledge and, within its own terms of reference, true. For it is not only creation, but expression, and what it expressed is real feeling, raised in the process to the level of consciousness. Nor is this all. If the psychic life is nothing but feeling, thought, the activity of intellect, also carries its "emotional charges", and to these likewise imagination can give expression in its own proper medium, which is art. Nowhere, perhaps, in contemporary aesthetics are so many of the past findings on the imagination critically examined and, if they survive the test, built into a coherent theory of art.