CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
THE ROLE OF IMAGINATION
IN HUMAN THOUGHT

Imagination is a peculiar capacity of our mind under the influence of which we find ourselves in strange situations, meet unknown persons, do new actions, change our personality wholly, rearrange the past and anticipate the future. It is that capacity which is also responsible for the greatest achievements of human beings. Without it our literature, religion, science and artistic creation would have been impossible. Unfortunately the problem of imagination has not so long received the attention of philosophers. The reason behind this is that it rightly deserves, perhaps, a misunderstanding about the nature and function of imagination. It is often believed that imagination is a non-rational faculty, it is related only to our feelings and senses but not to our intelligence. It stands against reality and hence it is conceived as an obstacle to knowledge. But fortunately this misunderstanding is gradually disappearing and the situation has been greatly changing in recent times. Different eminent thinkers have variously dealt with imagination, but they have all admitted that imagination is not an obstacle
to knowledge but an element in it and the study of imagination is an important task of the philosophy of mind.

I

There is a great difference between the philosophical and the psychological approach to the problem of imagination. We often confuse the psychological or empirical investigation of imagination and the philosophical enquiry into problems concerning imagination. First, let us consider briefly the psychological approach to the study of imagination, and then we shall pass to our main concern - the philosophical questions concerning imagination. In psychology imagination is taken as a kind of mental manipulation. According to the structuralists all mental processes are composed of simple elements, namely, sensations, affections and images. They explain all thinking as the occurrence of images, combining and recombining in various proportions. Of course imaginative construction need not always involve deliberate guidance of thought, it may be free and spontaneous. Thus a child cannot often distinguish between what he has actually seen and what he imagines. Such imagination of little children is free and spontaneous.

Many thinkers admit that recollection depends on mental imagery. If I look at the typewriter before me what I experience
is a percept. If, on the other hand, closing my eyes I recollect it, my experience is an image of the visual kind. Experiments of Galton show that individuals differ widely in imagery. In 1904 Galton classified people into the categories of 'visible', 'audible' and 'motile' according to their dominant imagery. Mental imagery varies in vividness in the dominance of one or other of the sense modes.

The individual variation in mental imagery may be illustrated with the help of certain introspective reports by some leading British psychologists. Professor Sir Cyril Burt mentions his vivid auditory imagery by saying: "Your mind may be like a silent cinema; mine is more like a broadcast debate, with the voices of conscience,..." 1

It seems that it is an essential function of our mind to project on its secret screen different types of images. These may be memories, day-dreams, fantasies, as well as direct perceptions of the external world. A distinction is often made between 'memory-images' and 'imagination-images'. If I have the visual image of Tajmahal, it is a case of memory-image, but if I imagine how the Tower Bable looked like, it is a case of imagination-image. This distinction although useful is not absolute; and this is because of the following two reasons. First, our memory images are not complete and accurate reproduction of perceptual experiences. Second, imagination images would be impossible if they are not composed of elements derived from actual perceptual experiences. Hence the difference between

The relation between imagery and imagination like the relation between imagery and thinking is not as simple as it seems at first sight. It is very difficult to find out the exact difference because such relation varies from person to person. The role of imagination in our day to day life may be stated as follows:

(1) Enjoyment and Play: When we relax our minds, we want to recall pleasurable past experiences merely for their own sake. A little child exercises imagination in its play. It behaves with its play-things as if the play-things were not merely play-things but were real, living figures. When the child plays, it imagines a stick to be a horse, broken chair to be a throne of a great king, a doll to be a living body.

(2) Interpretation and Appreciation: This function of imagination is generally found in the aesthetic appreciation. The artist is engaged in constructive imagination to create or appreciate a beautiful work of art. A painting which remains the same physically may never give rise to the same response twice.

(3) Guidance of Action: Imagination enables one to anticipate the future. In such cases the individual may evaluate alternative courses of action.
(4) Constructive or Creative Thought: Imagination is an indispensable aspect of the artistic or inventive thought. Our minds create something fresh and novel out of the materials supplied by memory images.

(5) Anxiety: Anxiety which is a common experience clearly involves imagination concerning the result of certain action. This function of imagination appears to have a self-reinforcing quality.

We may note here that in psychology imagination is classified into two types namely, normal and abnormal. The above mentioned functions of imagination belong to the first group. The abnormal imagination is found in the investigation of pathological cases. Hallucinations, day-dreaming, autistic thinking and according to some psychologists, dreaming also belong to the realm of abnormal imagination. "Preparation for action through imaginative activity may become an inability to accept the actual event when it happens. Constructive imagination may become exaggerated into the bizarre, the utterly fantastic, the impossible, the misshapen creation. Anxious imagination may become neurotic fears, agonizing conflicts, painful and debilitating worry." ²

Hallucination: In hallucination we perceive an object where there is no such object. Visual and auditory hallucinations

are quite common. The phantom 'dagger' which Macbeth perceived was a case of visual hallucination. We sometimes hear our names being called from behind when we discover that there is nobody to utter our names. This is an instance of auditory hallucination. It is true that certain types of hallucination are common and found even in healthy persons. But frequent hallucinations may be a sign of mental abnormality.

Day-dreaming and Autistic thinking: Day-dream is an unconsciously imaginary thinking when we are not sleeping. The well-known story of the milk-maid is an illustration of day-dream. The milk-maid while going with a pail of milk on her head imagines that she would sell milk and buy hens. Then she would collect eggs and sell them in order to have more money. Gradually she would be rich and buy a beautiful dress for herself and would look attractive. After a few days when the young men of the village would come with the proposal of marriage she would refuse them with a toss of her head. The milk-maid was so absorbed in her dream that she completely forgot the real situation and threw the pail of milk on the ground by tossing her head. Day-dreaming is not an abnormal form of imagination, but excessive day-dreaming is an indication of abnormal mentality.

Dream images: These are autonomous and tend to be visual. It is that type of imaginative consciousness which occurs during sleep.
This type of images is typically reported as more vivid than ordinary waking images. There is little or no voluntary control over our dream images. Arnold-Forster, however, claims that she can increase the number of her flying dreams by thinking about the flight of birds and aeroplanes before she slept. But it is generally believed that dream images are highly autonomous and their author have no control over their occurrences and their contents. Such experiences arise from our unconscious mind.

II

The investigation of imagination has crystallized in two directions. Of these one studies the development of imaginative activity in the child and the other deals with projective techniques in order to obtain information about personality through the channels of imaginative response. It should be mentioned that the imaginative activity differs in accordance with certain general factors, namely, intelligence, group organization, socio-economic status, environmental condition etc. Different experiments show that the bright children generally play for longer duration than do the duller ones. The children of relatively low socio-economic backgrounds play that type of imaginative play which is intimately connected with prosaic, everyday events but the children of higher socio-economic status display more fanciful imaginative
activity. There are also various environmental conditions which influence the imaginative activity of children, for instance, urban and rural conditions, climate, topography etc. Frustration also greatly influences the imaginative activity.

The study of imagination contributes to the understanding of personality, for there is reason to believe that personality is revealed in imaginative behaviour. Any kind of imaginative production whether dreams, fantasy, free association, response to projective technique helps us to understand different types of personality.

III

Now we may take up the study of imagination from the philosophical point of view and consider philosophical problems about imagination. It is generally held that imagination is that capacity by which we form the mental images. When we imagine something the object of our imagination is not present before us. We may imagine, Clark Hull says, what is 'the not here and not now'. When we are image-forming, we may relax attention but our imagination never remains unmixed from an admixture of intellectual elements. Suppose we relax our minds and leave the imagination free. We may watch the moving clouds in the sky and may form strange and fanciful shapes and figures. On such occasions we are not simply perceiving or conceiving but we are creating or inventing something out of the
natural objects which we perceive. The images which we ascribe on the clouds are never new creatures. We unconsciously and automatically attach the memory-images of the past to the present sense material. It is true that there is no experience of an image-forming activity isolated from other activities of the mind. We may distinguish this activity from other activities of the mind by reflexion. Different mental activities are intimately related to each other and if there is no imaginative activity the other activities would be impossible. It is said that "such an activity must be the pre-condition of thinking, for there can be no reflecting, no abstracting, no constructing, until images are born". 3

Imagination does not play any significant role in Plato's theory of knowledge. For Descartes it is a body function and its operations are not guaranteed by cogito ergo sum. According to Berkeley imagination 'doth denote the mind active'. But in Hume's theory of knowledge imagination occupies the central position. Kant is very much influenced by Hume's theory and he develops the doctrine of imagination in his Critique of Pure Reason. He fills up the gap between sensation and understanding by using the transcendental synthesis of imagination. Coleridge distinguishes between primary and secondary imagination. R. G. Collingwood holds that the artist creates an imaginative experience to express emotion.

3 Carr, H. Wildon: The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce, p. 58.
For Susan Langor picture being an art symbol, expresses imaginative experience. Benedetto Croce believes that images are the basic constituents of thought. In Jean-Paul Sartre's doctrine we find a peculiar and novel approach to the problem of imagination. There is no difference between the image and its object except the character of nothingness which the images have. G. Blyle maintains that imagining not only implies 'picturing' but also 'mimicking' playing and other types of behaviour. According to H. H. Price mental images occur and they are even spatially related to the physical objects that are non-imaginary.

In the present study of imagination we shall confine ourselves to the doctrines of five outstanding thinkers namely, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Gilbert Blyle, J. P. Sartre and Benedetto Croce. Here we give brief outlines of their doctrines about imagination.

IV

While the intellectualists generally solve their problems by recourse to reason or intellect, Hume solves them by advancing a doctrine of 'imagination'. Hume's philosophy has the peculiarity of attempting at the solution of the philosophical problems by offering a doctrine of imagination. Hume holds that to think is to have ideas, and all ideas are images. Hence to think is to have images. Images are the faded away elements of sense-experience. He assigns
unprecedented functions to imagination and maintains that there are certain beliefs that cannot be explained by reference to present experience (impressions), past experience (memory) or reasonings. In morals also imagination plays a crucial function. It is a necessary agent to produce sympathy. It should be noted that the word 'idea' in Hume's philosophy refers only to those ideas which in modern terminology are called images.

Hume uses imagination in two senses namely, imagination as a faculty of perfect ideas - a faculty of feigning, and imagination as a faculty of productive beliefs, memory beliefs and beliefs reached by understanding. Imagination as a belief faculty operates also in the case of whimsies and prejudices. Although he uses the term 'imagination' in two senses yet he claims that his use conforms to that of common sense. There is no doubt that his first usage - imagination as fancy - is a common usage, but not the second sense. He admits that understanding is the 'general and more established properties of the imagination' which is vital to knowledge. Thus he explains causal inference by the imaginative function of our minds and says that neither reason nor experience is the source of causal beliefs. It is imagination which following definite laws gives rise to causal inference. Imagination which causes true beliefs has not only weight but also authority. Hume claims that imagination has authority because a benevolent Nature has implanted it in our mind and hence it is imagination and not reason which is the Prime instrument of Nature to lead us to truth.
If we closely examine Hume's view we see that "... it is not their being caused by the imagination which justifies causal inferences. It is rather being caused by what is 'permanent, irresistible, and universal' in all men's imagination which justifies them. Only that core of human imagination common to all men has, presumably, been implanted by Nature; other traits of the imagination which vary from man to man have been formed by other influences such as education." 4

It is very difficult for us to accept Hume's view of causality. Perhaps he himself thinks that such explanation is unsatisfactory and notices an inner inconsistency within imagination. "No wonder a principle of the imagination so inconsistent and fallacious should lead us into errors, when implicitly followed (as it must be) in all its variations." 5

Hume's doctrine has its greatest development in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Kant makes a distinction between sensibility and understanding as the two distinct faculties of knowledge and takes imagination as the ground of both sensibility and understanding. Imagination, for Kant, is a spontaneous activity which

5 Hume, David: Treatise, pp. 265-266.
completes the necessarily fragmentary data of the senses. We cannot perceive an object wholly at once yet we are never aware of the partial nature of our perception. This completion of our perception is given by the reproductive imagination which is different from productive imagination. The transcendental synthesis of imagination which combines our separate and isolated experiences into a single united whole is possible for the productive imagination. Without the transcendental synthesis of imagination no experience of the external world would be possible. Thus we find that in Kant's theory of knowledge imagination occupies central position.

VI

Benedetto Croce maintains that images are the basic constituents of knowledge. It is often believed that intuitive knowledge is useless without intellectual knowledge. Croce does not share this belief but holds that intuition is not blind - it has its own eyes. "Intuitions are the whole of our experience, abstract from them, and nothing is left to sustain the concepts which are intellectual knowledge." Intuition is a peculiar mental activity, its mark is expression. For Croce there is no distinction between intuition and its mark because intuition itself is a 'forming' and 'expressing activity'. It exists independently of intellectual

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6 Croce, B. : Aesthetic, p. 61.
Croce also identifies intuitive knowledge with aesthetic knowledge. Art is intuition but not vice versa. Below the intuitive knowledge there is sensation as it is in itself. It is not possible for us to grasp pure sensation in its brute form, in its pure passivity.

Croce's theory, though novel, faces certain serious difficulties regarding the relation between imagination, expression and intuition. Commonsense view shows that imagination expresses itself in fables, fairy tales and myths and certainly intuition is different from such an activity. Again, it is said that intuition is wider than expression because we use the term expression in a limited and restricted sense only to mean human manipulation. The main difficulty is that intuitive knowledge is so universal and so fundamental that it is not an easy task to distinguish it from intellectual knowledge.

VII

Gilbert Ryle introduces his view on imagination in *The Concept of Mind*. His primary aim is to avoid the mind-body dualism of cartesian philosophy which involves, he says, a category mistake. In order to get rid of this dualism he questions the existence of mind which according to him a ghost in the body-machine. Ryle says that mind is nothing but certain functions of the body, mental qualities are nothing but dispositions. He, therefore, favours not
two worlds but one world, not a ghost but a Body.

He explains all mental activities in terms of bodily behaviour. We think of them as existing but the objects of imagination exist nowhere. Imagination means not one single activity, but a variety of activities namely, pretending, fancying, acting etc. Ryle makes a distinction between seeing and (the quoted expression) "seeing". When we see an object, it exists before us but when we 'see' something there is actually no such thing. We may see unknown objects but cannot 'see' unperceived things. There is no special quality of imagination. 'Seeing' things, growling like a bear are all different acts of fancy. Therefore the question where do the things and happenings exist which we imagine as existing is a spurious one. We do not see mental images. Just as mock-murder is not the committing of a faint murder, picturing is not seeing a faint object. Imaging occurs but images are not seen.

The main difficulty of Ryle's arguments lies in his assertion that there is no mental act. We may say as Alastair Hannay has noted that Ryle fails to find out the exact relation between observable conduct and the mental content and thus undermines "his conception of mind as a topic of observationally testable proposition". In order to avoid the cartesian dualism he unnecessarily denies the existence of mind and all mental activities. But denial of mind

7 Hannay, Alastair : Mental Image : A Defence, p. 54.
cannot lead to the proper solution of the problem. Just as Berkeley
denies the existence of material objects and reduces them to ideas
similarly Ryle denies the existence of psychical entity and reduces
all mental activities to bodily behaviour. Stuart Hampshire holds
that mental activities are recognisable and dateable activities.
Such activities are not strictly visible and audible - we guess or
infer their occurrence or simply wait to be told. Ryle admits that
these activities occur "although he also mistakenly thinks that if
he can show, as of course he can, that observation of behaviour may
provide evidence of such an occurrence he has thereby shown that it
is not really or wholly an occurrence, but also a propensity to behave
in certain ways." 8

VIII

Husserl claims that like physics, psychology is concerned
with what really exists - exists in the sense of having factual
existence. This attitude leads the psychologists in describing the
imaginary or unreal objects. In the phenomenological reduction the
natural world is put "in parenthesis", that is to say one concerns
oneself not with factual existence but with the 'intentional' objects
of consciousness. Sartre is very much influenced by this view of

8 Hampshire, Stuart: Freedom of Mind and Other Essays,
Husserl. For Sartre it is necessary for us to know what images are of and the term intentionality refers to this fact. We have noted before that Ryle completely denies the existence of mental images. Sartre, on the other hand, tries to do justice to the common belief of images and at the same time tries to bring together several human activities under the heading of 'imagination'. The notion of intentionality renovates our notion of the images. The mental contents always point beyond themselves to extra-mental objects and that is why we want to know what images are of, not what they are like. Unlike Hume Sartre argues that images are of something and cannot be copies or reproduction of sense-impressions. He does not believe in the existence of an 'imaginary world' of objects. To exist 'as an image' is not to exist at all. Although the image is of the object, it is itself not the object. The image of the loved one, for instance, is not as satisfactory as the real presence of the loved one because it is much less full and less complete. From these Sartre arrives at a far-reaching conclusion which shows that the difference between the image and its object is nothing. Images have nothingness in the sense that the image of my friend, for instance, contains certain feature of not touching him, not seeing him, not being at a certain distance and hence it contains certain nothingness. However, being an image it may always represent its object as not being. Indeed all intentional objects contain within themselves some sort of nothingness. Imagination differs from all
other mental activities, it is a peculiar power which has considerable importance for other mental activities.

Berkeley holds that ideas are inert and it is imagination which proves the existence of active mind. For Sartre it is not ideas that display inertness, but the objects of external world. The objects exist outside consciousness and consciousness itself is active. What is inert for Berkeley is just an effect for Sartre. Where Berkeley finds the element of the notion of activity, Sartre notices ideas or the content of acts of consciousness which gives rise to our knowledge of mental activity.

According to Ryle the question — where do the things exist which we imagine existing — is a spurious one because the objects of imagination exist nowhere. Sartre also argues in a similar way that our habit of thinking about things leads us to believe falsely that images are in the mind and the objects of imagination are in the imagination. Both Ryle and Sartre maintain that the object of imagination is not a mental entity. Miss Hide-Ishiguro points out that Ryle believes that to see in the mind's eye does not mean the existence of mental objects. She mentions that Sartre also says this by using the term 'nothingness'. We know the object of imagination as a 'nothing' or 'non-existent'. We may say that though there are certain similarities between these two thinkers yet they differ in respect of certain fundamental points. We must admit, she says,
that "Sartre's account at least has the merit of trying to say what imaging positively is, as opposed to what it falls short of being".\footnote{Hannay, A.: op. cit., p. 143.}

\section*{IX}

Psychologists, art critics, writers on aesthetics, epistemologists, moralists and even ordinary men all have something or other to do with imagination. Imagination is a creative faculty which all men possess in some degree. Without it we could not create or enjoy art, without this faculty not only speculative philosophy but also discovery in positive science would have been impossible. The history of science shows that 'bold imaginative leaps' made in the dark later on receive astonishing experimental evidences. "The true attributes of commitment, imagination and tenacity seem to be the distinguishing marks of greatness in a scientist. A scientist must be as utterly committed in the pursuit of truth as the most dedicated of mystics ... his imagination must be as vivid and ingenious as a poet's or a painter's."\footnote{Taylor, A. M.: Imagination and the Growth of Science, p. 2.} Karl Popper in his \textit{Logic of Scientific Discovery} says, "Science does not pursue the illusory aim of making its answer final. Bold imaginative conjectures are required, carefully and soberly controlled by systematic tests ..."\footnote{Popper, Karl: \textit{Logic of Scientific Discovery}, p. 111.} Not only...
Ordinarily imagination means fancy. But in philosophy imagination is used in a wider sense. Professor Furlong maintains three types of uses of the term 'imagination' namely, 'supposal', 'in imagination' and 'with imagination'. For him if we want to study imagination, we must discuss it under three main heads, these are: (a) the imaginary, that is to say, which takes place in the head, (b) supposal and (c) the imaginative - it is that which is formed by creative thought. Furlong discusses these three separately.

Supposal: We say, for instance, Peter, imagine you are a bear, and you are on an ice-berg. Peter may play bear 'in his head'. He may make physical movements which shows that he is not playing 'in imagination'. Supposal is one of the many ways that give rise to false beliefs. While playing soldier 'in imagination' Peter may suppose falsely that he is a soldier. We have false supposal also in dreams, hallucination and even in illusions so far as they elude us.

'In imagination': In imagination means the opposite of 'in reality'. What exists in reality may occur in imagination, for instance, day-dreams. The day-dreamers are usually relaxed. They may pass from unbelief to belief. Feeling is related to imagination in three ways - either as stimulus, or as material or as companion.
The content of day-dreams being mental imagery is variously arranged and used. It is generally believed that imagination is subject to our will. Hence imagination in this sense has what Furlong says five dimensions those are - receptive state, belief, content, feeling and controlability.

'With imagination': This is the third main usage of imagination. In this sense it is the creative power, the source of originality. Naturally scientific and artistic activities come under this head. Thus Furlong agrees with Sartre and holds that 'to act with imagination is to act with freedom and spontaneity'.

Now, it is very difficult for us to find out either the exact time when man first becomes an image-maker or a particular image which at first emerged in the mind of the primitive man. Indeed it is not an easy task to conceive of the human mind in a completely pre-image state. In short man is an image-maker from the very beginning of his evolution.

It should be noted that there is a difference between to be an image and to function as an image, because the function of image always requires a person or an analogue of a person. If an image works as an element in perception, it will have to function as the raw material and not as end product because it leads to an infinite regress. Bennett says, "... if we suppose that the product of the perceptual process is an image, we shall have to design a parsi-
ver-analogue to sit in front of the image and yet another to sit in front of the image which is the end product of perception in the perceiver-analogue and so forth ad infinitum. Imagining is depictional or descriptional but not pictorial. J. M. Shorter also admits that imagining is more like depicting in words than like painting certain pictures. Suppose we imagine a tiger having stripes. If imagining is having a mental picture then our image of tiger must involve a definite number of stripes. When we describe a tiger we need not speak of the number of stripes. Imaging, therefore, is not making pictures but it is 'seeing'. There is no doubt about the fact that our mental image is always bound by a limitation of seeing. We can imagine only that which we see at a glance. "Differences below the threshold of discrimination of causal observation cannot be represented in imagination." The distinction between imaging and conceiving, therefore, is right and it is like the distinction between seeing and listening.

Recently A. H. Johnson while dealing with mental contents explains the nature of imagination. He says that being a creative activity, it produces entities simple and complex that cannot be grasped by other faculties. Imaging may give rise to peculiar objects that do not resemble to actual physical objects. Seeing a fish and a woman one can 'imaginatively generate' a mermaid image.

13 Ibid., p. 139.
One can also make imaginative link between a physical object and a mental entity, for instance, 'a blue elephant sitting in one's favourite chair'. We can also imagine those things that accurately resemble real objects, say, our image of a cup of coffee. Further, we often imagine certain concepts which fit the facts even though the facts, at the time, remain unknown to the imagine. Johnson refers to certain types of imagining. These are:

(a) Fantastic imagining: It produces fantastic entities like Absolute Mind;

(b) Realistic imagining: It gives rise to such entities which may be actualised later on. A student, for example, may imagine himself as being the recipient of a particular academic degree which he receives later on.

(c) Instrumental imagining: Some imagined entities may be helpful in dealing with problems of natural and social sciences, for instance, the atomic theory in modern form. There are also other types of imagining which produces artistic, aesthetic and speculative construction.

We may point out that if we take the term 'imagination' in a wider sense it includes within itself philosophical, artistic, aesthetic, scientific and literary imagining. It also includes both
creative, original, active and passive imagining, both normal and abnormal imagining and also free and spontaneous imagining. In other words, it is the ground of all other mental activities. We may conclude that, "The imagination gives problems to the understanding. Those who ignore its extraordinary function in human experience, who dissolve it into philosophic ideas, are shelving the task". 14