THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION : A DYNAMIC BALANCE

Man is not only a creature but also a creator within his limited range. He is a minor creator, creating things depending upon the vast creation around him and getting assistance from the ultimate creator above him. Speaking about this man Longinus has said:

It was no mean or low-born creature which Nature chose when she brought man into the mighty assemblage of life and all the order of the Universe and ordained us to be spectators of the cosmic show and most eager competitors; from the first she poured into our souls a deathless longing for all that is great and diviner than ourselves. (qtd. in Scott-James 83)

We are not only "spectators of the cosmic show", we can also be active participants in the beautification of the cosmos through our minor creations by the exercise of our creative imagination.

Let it now be examined what men can create and how, by his minor creation, he can beautify the universe. When the ascending human imagination, moving in the right direction, touches that higher imagination which is responsible for the creation of the universe and then begins to act in cooperation and harmony with the cosmic creative design, it becomes truly creative. Man then
becomes the second creator who, as James Engell says, "participates in the divine shaping of the cosmos" (45). If the first creator created night, the second creator created candle for the night. Similarly, the voice or the sound of the first creation is creatively turned and tuned by man to music or song; words are arranged to rhyming poetry; events of life are ordered and organised to give us dramas and novels; rough and ugly stones are carved, designed and shaped to beautiful images. Wild, wandering steam is utilised in devising powerful engines; sands are transformed to fine glasses, and out of the flowing water hydro-electricity is extracted. This way the creative imagination of man, the second creator, acts creatively depending on the first creation and receiving intuitive assistance from the first creator and causes the human civilisation to go ahead. It is the result of a joint effort, human and divine. It is, to elaborate the point, the outcome of a dynamic balance between persistently active and ascending human imagination on the one hand, and the descending divine grace or intuition on the other. To this dynamically balanced creative imagination of man are attributed all the good and great things of life and civilisation, such as the voice of the prophet, the vision of the poet, the art of the artist and the discoveries and inventions of the great scientists. It is that faculty which is "the great spring of human activity and the principal source
of human improvement .... destroy this faculty and the condition of man will become as stationary as that of brutes" (Spearman7).

After knowing what man can create, let us see how he creates and goes ahead in his creation. The progress of human civilisation hangs on the chain of such things that are the products of the creative acts of the human mind. If we examine those things that are the products of the creative acts of the human mind we find that man gradually knows and makes many new things which he did not know or make previously. In such cases we can say that he produces or originates, makes or creates. Therefore, Spearman, in a very simple way, explains that for man, creating means "the bringing into existence of that which did not ever exist previously (Spearman 1). This gradual advancement and extension of human knowledge shows that man may not know many things of the vast creation at the present or at any particular moment, but possesses the ability to know all the things. In other words, actually he may not know, but potentially he knows. Being in this position, when man imagines or ponders incessantly till he knows (or is helped by God in knowing) what he did not know earlier he actualises the potential and acts creatively. Therefore, Aristotle appears to be correct when he says: "The passive mind is potentially all things, but the creative mind is that
which converts the potential things into the actual things, as light turns potential colour into actual colour" (qtd. in Spearman I). Thus, the creative mind actualises the potential by incessant ponderings, by persistent imaginings, or by intense desire or longing. Therefore, Charles Morgan defines creative imagination thus: "When we imagine with love, we create what we imagine" (59).

But can man's imagination be always creative? Because man in a private or purely personal or subjective mood can imagine many things falsely and can long for many things greedily and whimsically. Advancing his argument Morgan says: "A man who wants consistently and above all else, to become rich, will probably attain riches but his power to do so is not an instance of the power of creative imagination. Whatever else it is, creative imagination is not a means by which to acquire the object of ambition and greed" (59). Therefore, human imagination, in order to be in the right direction and to be truly creative, must act with love and must also be guided and balanced by the touch of some impersonal cosmic force, which can be in the form of divine intuition or divine inspiration. Here, we come to the idea of the necessity of a link or balance between the human effort and divine assistance. This takes us to the concept and the role of divine assistance or inspiration.
Much has been said about this concept of divine assistance or inspiration. Explaining the origin and the development of this concept Herbert Read in his "The Nature of Criticism" writes:

This concept of inspiration must have arisen as soon as mankind began to distinguish between spirit and matter, that is to say, in prehistoric times. When a man spoke with the voice of God, it seemed that the very breath of God had entered into his mortal frame. All the Hebrew prophets were regarded as being thus breathed into or inspired. It was, therefore, natural enough at a later stage of development to transfer this concept to the poet, for the poet, like the prophet, seemed to speak with a more than human voice. (178)

Modern critics, on the other hand, avoid such transcendental speculation. This takes us to another concept which is the psychological concept of inspired imagination. Scientifically oriented psychologists do not think that poets speak with a "more than human voice". They do not accept that poets take down from the dictation of the angels. They regard the creative dynamic balance of the human mind as a purely psychological phenomenon, happening within the man having nothing to do with any external or impersonal force or factor. Modern psychologists think that in matters of creative thinking, sudden illumination or inspiration is due, solely, to a
intuition. This idea which suggest the dynamic balance between human effort and divine assistance is traceable in the ancient Greek conception of the inspired singers. The minstrels, who were singing and pleasing the public before Homer and Hesiod and to whom Homer has also referred in his work, are reported to be inspired souls. Homer makes Alcinous say:

Bid hither the divine minstrel Demodocus for the God hath given minstrelsy to him as to none other, to make men glad in what way soever his spirit stirs him to sing. (Odyssey VIII 43-45)

Odysseus hints that the truth of his story will be the test of his divine inspiration.

But Plato is ironical towards this inspiration when he writes:

... all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed and as the corybantian revellers when they dance are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains (qtd. in Scott-James 37)

This remark of Plato shows that the rightness of the external source of inspiration can be doubted. Plato himself felt and found that even Homer and Hesiod were not right and reasonable in their poetic inspiration. In Plato's simple terms they were 'not in their rightmind'.
It does not mean that Plato was blind to their poetic power, or that he was hostile to religion and fine arts. He was moved by the poetic power of Homer and Hesiod, loved their poetry and borrowed their poetic lines for the adornment of his own prose. But at the same time, he could clearly see that poetic inspiration could come from sources other than the divine. The devil can inspire poetry. Therefore, he withdrew his support from Homer whom he loved a lot and adored much: "I confess I am checked by a kind of affectionate respect for Homer, of which I have been conscious when I was a child" (qtd. in Scott-James 37). But Plato was a highly reasonable man, a guardian of the state. How can he allow Homer to misrepresent the gods and show them as revengeful or lustful or cruel or as waging wars among themselves? "Can he allow God who is good to be described as the author of evil? Can he permit the gods to be shown as assuming fictitious shapes or telling paltry lies or in any way demeaning themselves?" It is intolerable that falsehood should be told about the next world" (Scott-James 39). But the matter becomes more seriously dangerous when this falsehood is presented in powerful poetry, because in such a case "The more lovely and fascinating the arts may seem, the more deadly they may be in luring us to false views of life or the emasculating influence of emotion" (Scott-James 40). Plato being a greater genius and having sharper poetic sensibility was more prone to
such influences of powerful poetry. So in case of Plato it was this consideration "which made poetry something to be dreaded and shunned" (Scott-James 48).

Aristotle was in no such danger. He was a lesser genius having no such sharper poetic sensibility. "Without the demonic genius of Plato, without his poetic gift, he avoids his (Plato's) inspired errors, confining his attention to what is before him he adheres coolly to his logical method -- he examines poetry in itself -- he distinguishes its kind" (Scott-James 50) without being aware of its deeper and dangerous moral implication.

Plato not only detected and shunned the falsehood about gods and about the next world that Homer's powerful poetry offered, he also warned against the seductive influences of emotion and imagination in luring us to some false view of human life, on this earth. "The spectacle of many disasters of unbalanced temperament filled him with disgust" (Scott - James 48). Thus Plato, with his broad-based wisdom and wider range of perception, was keenly aware of and was fully open to the enchanting influence of emotional and imaginative art and poetry and at the same time his prophetic eyes were open to the serious danger inherent in it. Acknowledging this danger Scott-James also writes:

Even we in our own time and in our own not too
impressionable and sensitive Anglo-Saxon society are not unaware of the fact that the artistic temperament may have its danger and its anti-social temptations (44).

Continuing his support for Plato Scott-James says that Plato is right when he thinks:

Each and all of the arts must always work through a material medium, which we apprehend with sharper senses, in terms of sights and sounds and tastes of the things of 'this world'. And those sights and sounds and tastes, as Plato realised, are sweet and seductive things. They may even be perilous things for a sensitive and unstable character, deficient on the intellectual or rational side. (qtd. in Scott-James 44)

After understanding all these deeper implications it will be quite unfair and highly superficial, if we brand Plato as one who was blind and was hostile to the finer influences of art and poetry. Rather, the things he emphasizes are so profoundly humane that a really good and great art can hardly afford to ignore them. I have brought the argument to this point only to demonstrate that Herbert's art and poetry emphasize and embrace these valuable things and thereby disprove Plato's argument that poetry ignores or goes against those values and is, therefore, "some thing to be dreaded and shunned". This quality of Herbert's poetry indicates a balanced and integrated soul that enjoyed the fullness of "comprehensive harmony". The passionate poetry, on the other hand,
of poets like Donne, Marvell, Cowley and others, with its emphasis on sensuous love for woman and her body, indicates souls or characters that were imbalanced, torn and disintegrated. Their poetry may be enchanting, powerful and seductive; it may startle and dazzle us; but such dazzle only intensifies the darkness and leaves us more confused and groping. However Herbert's life and art, his poetry, that was music for a king, was well tuned and illumined by the lasting glow of enduring values. Thus, in Herbert we find the artistic charm of poetry and artistry along with the goodness and the greatness of Plato's humanity.

As Plato was surprised to see the devil inspiring the powerful poetry of Homer and Hesiod, Herbert was also surprised to see woman and her physical charm inspiring the powerful poetry or the "smooth verse" of the sensuous and popular poets of his time. They wrote charming or enchanting poetry on lustful love, wine, woman and her body. John Donne, for example, in "The Canonization" passionately longed for love and says: "For God's sake hold your tongue and let me love" (1). His love was not spiritual. It was not for God but for his mistress, because he himself clarifies the matter in his poem "Love's Growth" and says:

Love is not so pure and abstract as they use,
To say, who have no mistress but their muse. (11-12)
Andrew Marvell in "To his Coy Mistress" talks of spending ages in describing the eyes, the forehead, and the breasts of his coy mistress and finally persuades her to surrender her youthful body and virginity to him because time is short; very soon they will be destroyed by old age and death:

Now therefore, while the youthful hue,
Sits on they skin like morning due.
. . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Let us roll all our strength and all,
Our sweetness up into one ball. (33-34, 41-42)

Abraham Cowley also frankly says about his mistress:

Her body is my soul, laugh not at this,
For by way life I swear it is. (13-14)

In his poem "Drinking", after offering witty arguments in favour of drinking wine Cowley says:

Nothing in Nature's Sober found,
But an eternal Health goes round. (15-16)

and finally demands:

Should every creature drink but I,
why men of morals tell me why. (19-20)

George Herbert, on the other hand in the Sonnet which he sent to his dear mother for a new year's gift in the first year of his going to Cambridge questioned the popular poetry of these popular poets and asked God:

Why are not 'Sonnets' made of thee? and layes
Upon thine Altar burnt? can not thy love
Highten a spirit to sound out thy praise
As well as any she? Can not thy 'Dove'
Outstrip their 'Cupid' easily in flight? (5-9)

These questions of a divinely inspired poet are of great fundamental significance in the world of poetic or any artistic creation. It challenges the source of inspiration of a particular class of poetry but at the same time acknowledges the charm and power of this wrongly inspired poetry. He then aspires that a poetry which is inspired by divine love can be nobler and higher than these poems.

So, as in the case of Herbert, when the source of poetic inspiration is thus purged of all possible pestilence, the irony implied in the famous passage of Plato, in which Plato doubts the validity of the poetic inspiration in general, is removed and the views of Plotinus and Longinus regarding the possibility of a noble and right poetic inspiration becomes acceptable. These important critics show that human soul has a natural and "deathless longing for all that is great and diviner than ourselves" (Scott-James 83). According to Longinus, all the greatest writers are "above what is mortal and sublimity lifts them near the great mindedness of God" (qtd. in Scott-James 83). In case of Herbert we find that he lifts himself up to the "greatmindedness of God". Herbert, as a poet, is closer to a prophet, whose
voice enjoys the authenticity of direct divine revelation and who is the acknowledged legislature of mankind. Both in his inspiration and theme, Herbert is much above the common sensuous and amorous poets who, however lively and spirited their inspiration may be, however charming and impressive the expression of their feelings and thoughts may be, do not enjoy the authenticity of voice and are always passionately whimsical undependable and even at their best, are the "unacknowledged legislators of mankind. "But Herbert like acknowledged prophets, wants direct communication with the authentic impersonal voice of the divinity. He asks questions to God and longs to get the answer directly from him. In his poetry we find highly significant "self questioning", religious meditations" and a "hunger and thirst after Godliness". These were the sources of his poetic inspiration and are at the root of his creative imagination. Pointing out these basic things about his creative source, Eliot rightly says:

Whether we regard this as a limitation or as the sign of a solitary greatness of a unique contribution to English poetry will depend upon our sensibility to the themes of which he wrote (Eliot. George Herbert 19)

Herbert's important "self questioning", his "religious meditation" and his "hunger and thirst after Godliness" as manifested in The Temple indicate a
special relationship between him and God. At the outset, it is found that the relation between these two creators (the poet and God) is strained. But out of this strain in the relation come the strains, the melody or the music for a king. In "Sion" Herbert writes:

But grones are quick and full of wings
And all their motions upward be
And ever as they mount, like Larks they sing
The note is sad, yet music for a King. (21-24)

which means a royal music. About his poetry Herbert himself says: "In it one will find a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul" (Walton 99). While collecting and publishing Herbert's poems Grierson also in his introduction to Metaphysical Poems and Lyrics of the 17th Century, refers to this spiritual conflict and writes:

I have endeavoured in my selection to emphasize the note of conflict of personal experience which troubles and gives life to poetry that might otherwise be too entirely doctrinal and didactic. (XII)

Standing amidst these bewildering spiritual conflicts Herbert is not able to understand the will or the purpose of God behind it. He is unable to decide whether he should love God or revolt against Him, whether he should praise or complain. This state of mind, instead of bringing estrangement and distance, ultimately lifts
him closer to God or to the "greatmindedness of God". In his poem "The Search" he writes:

Yet can I mark how herbs below
grow green and gay
As if to meet thee they did know
while poore I decay
Yet can I mark how stars above
Simper and shine
As having keyes unto thy love
while poore I pine.(9-16)

He wants to fly to God and ask him the reason. So he kneels down for prayer and says:

My knees pierce the earth, mine eies the skie
And yet the sphere
And centre, both to me denie
That thou art there. (The Search 5-9)

He never ceases to seek:

I sent a sign to seek thee out
Deep drawn in pain
Winged like an arow; but my scout
Returns in vain. ("The Search" 17-20)

Even then he does not stop. His creative imagination is set into full action. Himself out of tune, he imagines creatively and tries to explore the possibility of discovering that tune which harmonises jarring chaos and gives us the music of the cosmos. This way he seeks and searches and goes on imagining till he understands the otherwise ununderstandable and knows what God wants or perhaps God helps him to know. His brooding, his
meditation or his imagination is so keen and creative that winged by his sincere emotion and throbbing conscience, it finally reaches God. Being at the very door of God he claims His attention and consideration. For in his "Longing" he says:

    Look on my sorrows round!
    Mark well my furnace! O what flames,
    What heats abound!
    What griefs, what shames!
    Consider, Lord! Lord, bow thine ear
    And heare. (25-30)

This way he insists and asks persistently till he is heard and answered and till his

    Grief melts away
    Like snow in May. ("The Flower" 5-6)

Finally in his "Paradise" he feels secure under God's protecting care and says:

    What open force and hidden charm
    Can blast my fruit or bring me harm
    While the enclosure is thy arm. (4-6)

If Plato were to read these lines he would never say that Herbert was not in his "right mind" when he composed these beautiful lyrical lines. Such a remark may be applicable to the passionate love lyrics of Donne, Marvell, and Cowley, but never to Herbert. Herbert fully satisfies the rules and discipline laid down by Plato in his Republic regarding valuable writings. Thus, Herbert's
journey from initial discord and confusion to final accord and understanding links the ascending human imagination with the descending divine grace. This way the dynamic balance between human imagination and divine grace is achieved which takes man from the ununderstandable to the understandable and thereby connects him with that power which is the source of all knowledge, information and understanding and which may be called the ultimate creator or God. It is advisable to call this balance a dynamic balance firstly because there is action from both the sides; man's mind ascends and then only God's grace descends. Morgan talks of this mutuality in his discussion on creative imagination (63). Secondly, human imagination by moving in this direction always acts fruitfully and is constantly encouraged to further action. Hence, for these two reasons, the balance is dynamic.

Another example will be very useful to illustrate this dynamic balance in a more comprehensive way and will also help us in locating the range of Herbert's creative imagination. It is connected with a personality who is an important figure in the history of human civilisation and who belongs to the same century in which Herbert lived. He is Sir Isaac Newton whose relevance to our topic will be clear when we discuss various aspects of creative imagination, particularly its range in the following
pages. Newton also stood bewildered when he saw the apple falling. He perhaps found some clash or conflict in his ideas and the phenomena. He could not understand as to why it happened, a situation that provides a parallel to Herbert's state of mind or his mental conflict. Newton's creative imagination was set into action by this event and he longed to know the reason. He imagined creatively and went on imagining till he knew that what was not yet known. When Newton was asked about this state of mind he modestly replied that if he had any genius not common to other man, "it lay in the fact that when an idea first came to him he pondered over it incessantly untill its final result became apparent" (More 42). This very much resembles Herbert's longing and his incessant appeal to God:

    Consider, Lord : Lord, bow thine ear
    And hear. (Longing 29-30)

Thus the creative mind ponders over a thing incessantly, knocks at the very poor of the truth repeatedly till it gets what it longs for. This way Newton came to know what was beyond the knowledge of the common man, the law of gravitation.

    But how much a Newton or a Herbert can know through the events and the experiences of their brief life ? In God's vast and mysterious universe there are many things to be known. Man only knows a little and a lot is unknown.
The iceberg that we see is much smaller than the whole of it, which we do not see. The beauty and the mystery of nature that we see or know is much less than the whole beauty of the vast creation. Herbert also in his "Providence" proclaims:

And none can know their works which are so many (143).

Of course our mind, as discussed earlier, has the potentiality to know all those things. Therefore, when it ponders and longs intensely it gets what it seeks. We know how Aristotle has explained the actualisation of this potentiality. So the intensity of the longing, the incessant pondering both by the artist and the scientist, as we have seen in both Herbert and Newton, spurs their creative imagination which soars higher and higher, groping and seeking till it is picked up, guided and assisted by divine grace through flashes of intuition that give moments of sudden illumination. This in brief, is the generally accepted story about the interaction of human imagination taken as a whole, either with devilish interference or with divine inspiration.

The above discussion covers both the possibilities that the inspiration may be divine or devilish. Now a third one, the psychological, asserts that no external factors, divine or devilish are involved in matters of human imagination or inspiration. Does George Herbert or Isaac Newton stand out complete strangers or foreigners
in this world of the Psychologist? These psychologists set aside the concept of divine inspiration or demoniac possession, and provide scientific basis and justification for the hitherto underestimated and distrusted human imagination. Why imagination was underestimated and suspected will be discussed when we will examine different theories regarding different kinds of imaginations. At present let the discussion be confined to the psychological concept of imagination. While setting aside the theory of divine inspiration the psychologists have offered their explanation about the process of action of the creative imagination. This important psychological theory springs from the general principle of "contrasted attitudes" which Jung calls "introversion" and "extroversion". It is a fundamental division of the self. It can be called the opposition between thought and feeling, between the idea and the phenomena. According to Jung the creative imagination is the result of a "specific vital activity" which is also called "active phantasy" and which is perpetually creative in its action (qtd. in Read 175). This "active phantasy" springs from within them and works independently unaided by any external agency. It examines the contrasted attitudes that are present in every mind and attempts to bridge the gap between them in order to bring them into some fruitful association or union. When it succeeds in
bridging the gap at a particular moment, then we get the moment of sudden illumination or discovery. So, we see that the moment of sudden illumination or discovery comes when the active phantasy fortuitously comes into action, finds ideas associated in a specific way and suddenly seizes upon them in their happy combination. In the common terminology it can perhaps be described as piling up alternatives upon alternatives till suddenly the truth is arrived at. In order to distinguish this creative faculty from sheer individual idiosyncrasy and to make it universal Jung talks of "active phantasy in its more than individual aspect" (qtd. in Read 175). Freud thinks that this universality or impersonality comes to the creative act of the mind through the interference of the super-ego in him. This super-ego is not at all any external or impersonal factor outside the personality but within it. Because Freud in his anatomy of the mental personality, as formulated in the New Introductory Lectures (1933), divided the individual into three levels or degrees of consciousness, called, the id, the ego and the super-ego. The id is the cauldron of seething excitement, a chaos. The ego receives, organizes and imposes order on the chaos of the id. The super-ego (which is the representative of all moral restriction, the advocate of the impulse towards perfection) makes it more than individual" which means general and universal (qtd. in Read 181). But all these things happen within the human
mind and no external or impersonal factor is involved.

Now, if this psychological theory regarding the process of action of the creative imagination is compared with the theory of divine inspiration, it will be found that the latter is not less scientific though it is profoundly religious, and at a particular point the modern psychological theory agrees with the theory of divine assistance.

First, let us take up the religious aspect of the theory of divine assistance or to be more exact the theory of dynamic balance between human effort and divine assistance in the exercise of the creative imagination. The implication of the concept of divine assistance is that when the soaring imagination of man moves groping and seeking through the vast mystery of creation the creator himself feels happy about it and helps man, because knowing more things or new things about creation will certainly reveal the greatness of the Creator himself. This seems to be the conviction of Issac Newton also, for his biographer in his preface points out:

In this day of utilitarian omnipotence of science it is extraordinarily difficult for a biographer to sympathise with, or even to appreciate, the conviction of Newton and his contemporaries that their purpose in the cultivation of science was to demonstrate the action of the divine will in the natural world and not to contribute to our comfort and power. (More VI)
Therefore, the creative action of the human mind is, at its root, a religious act. It pleases God and is aided by God in its action either from the beginning or at the final moment of sudden illumination. It is to be kept in mind that modern science had its beginning in the 17th century with Newton and Galileo as its heralds. It was in this atmosphere that Herbert breathed, felt, thought, imagined and wrote. The newly born science in its infancy was not far removed from its source. It easily saw that it was branching out from the same trunk, out of which came religion, art, and literature. It is not at all a matter of surprise that Newton, the first great scientist of the world, was as great a theologian as he was a scientist. It was an age when both the artist and the scientist felt that in discovering the truth or the secret of God's creation they were serving the cause of God. So it was natural for an afflicted and meditating Herbert or for a pondering and ever seeking Newton to feel that their longing to know or discover is welcomed by God. God loves it and is eager to help such seekers. So this theory of man getting divine assistance in his creative action had nothing unscientific in it and was acceptable to the important scientists of the world. But the psychological theory rejects the idea of God helping man in discovering the secret of nature and creation, though it admits that man gradually unravels the mystery.
of nature and creation through his creative mind.

These are the two possible ways (in one case unaided and in the other, aided and dynamically balanced by some impersonal, external agency) through which the creative imagination acts and achieves its fruitful results, making human civilisation progressive.

However, this is not applicable to all sorts of imaginations or to all sorts of mental acts that go under the vague title of imagination. In other words there are various kinds of mental acts that are called imagination but are not creative imagination. In the course of our discussion it will be seen how the same period (the later part of the 17th century and the earlier part of the 18th century) that originated, defined and developed the idea of creative imagination is also famous for suspecting imagination. Explaining the vagueness of the term, Edward S. Casey gives three examples and shows how the term imagination is used to refer to three quite different types of experience. He takes three expressions from every day speech:

1. My imagination was playing tricks on me when I mistook that tree over there for a man.
2. It was just my imagination when I thought I saw a red rat in my bed room.
3. In my imagination I thought that he was out to get me.
None of these three experiences can be considered a case of imagining proper. Upon even the briefest analysis it is evident that none qualifies as an instance of the kind of experience that is meant when we speak of imagining" (Casey 10). The first is "perceptual illusion" the second refers to a "hallucination" and the third is "delusion of persecution". Therefore, Casey cautions us and says that while dealing with imagination we should bear it in our mind that "we are dealing with an extraordinarily elusive phenomenon that easily slips off the tender hooks of observation and theory" (7). In this context we should free ourselves from the vagueness of the term "imagination" and should focus our attention on that imagination which is creative in nature. In order to be still more exact in our understanding of "creative imagination" we should distinguish it from other mental acts that are also called imagination, but must not be confused with "creative imagination. We can do that by having a little elaboration or extension of the comparison between the psychological and the religious views regarding the process of action of the creative imagination.

According to the psychological view, the creative imagination works independently, unaided by any external impersonal agency. But according to the religious view, the creative imagination is aided by an external
agency, the impersonal divine intuition. Inspite of this declared difference there is a point where these two views seem to agree. The point is where the psychologists emphasize the "more-than-individual aspect" of the "active phantasy" (Read 175). In this connection they talk of the moment of sudden illumination which is caused by the "fortuitous entry into activity of ideas which are immediately associated and seized upon in their happy combination" (Rignano 129). Here, the creative moment is achieved and the "active phantasy" becomes "more-than-individual" which means impersonal and universal. The word "fortuitous" here suggests something happening by chance which the mind is not aware of. It is at this point that the psychologists try to escape the situation by calling it the act of the super ego or of the unconscious. But it is most probably here that some external agency touches the human imagination and imparts to it the element of impersonality or universality saving it from being a mere subjective and whimsical speculation of any individual. It is at this point that both the views seem to agree and there appears to be little difference between them. The only difference is that in one case the external impersonal agency is called the divine grace or intuition and in another case the psychologists take the shelter of such terms as "fortuitous", "unconscious" "sudden illumination", etc. and avoid the use of those terms which Sir Isaac Newton
himself never hesitated to use. They are terms like "divine will" or "divine intuition".

When there is no recognition of the external agency touching the human imagination and imparting impersonality to it or of the super-ego making the "active phantasy", "more-than-individual", the imagination acts without the dynamic balance and may degenerate either into vague whimsical subjectivity or it may be exposed to another danger and may be seized upon and misled by some other external agency that may be anti-divine or devilish. All such imaginings will be different from the creative imagination.

It is perhaps for these two defective elements in imagination (vague subjectivity from within and devilish interference from without) that, ever since Plato as Casey mentions, "the philosophical attitude towards imaginging, ranges from distrust to disgust" (X). It is perhaps for this reason that the period (the neoclassical age) which brought to light the idea of "creative imagination" is also the period known for its suspicion of imagination. Dryden, for example, in his "The Epistle Dedicatory to the Rival Ladies" warns: "Imagination in a poet is a faculty so wild and lawless that like a high ranging spaniel it must have clogs tied to it, lest it outrun judgement" (qtd. in Engell 35).
Now it is quite understandable why results of the actions of imagination differ when it acts with balance and when it acts without balance. So the human imagination may be either aided by God or misled by the devil or distorted by sheer, subjectivity. At the beginning these three possibilities were hinted at and it was proposed to examine the nature and range of Herbert's creative imagination in the perspective of these discussions creative imagination is the central point, it is necessary to know the need of balance that makes the imagination creative and saves it from being suspected.

It was in the 18th century that the idea of creative imagination was defined and discussed. It naturally drew the attention of many critics. If we examine what was said against it or in favour of it during this period, we get some very valuable information about this creative imagination.

The first noticeable point to which Dryden draws our attention is that the balancing force for the imagination may not necessarily and always be direct divine assistance. This divine assistance may come at the final stage, through intuitive flashes, leading to the consummation of the creative process. But at the initial stage when it moves on the mundane plane it must be
balanced by reason and judgement. For Dryden's concluding words are "lest it outrun judgement". In other words it must not be childishly irrational and absurd if it is to be really creative and productive. This is the understandable and natural reaction of the age of reason to any imbalanced, irrational and whimsical act of imagination.

Another concept of the external and impersonal agency balancing and guiding the inspired creative mind or creative imagination is the concept of the "Muse". It makes us hark back from the neo-classical world of the 18th century to the classical antiquity of the Greek Civilisation. Before examining the balancing role of the "Muse" as an external impersonal agency, let us for a brief while examine whether the concept of the creative imagination was there in the world of Homer, Plato and Aristotle. Though the term "creative imagination" came into vogue in the 18th century, it has ever been present since the beginning of human civilisation. Like Herbert and Newton (a poet and a scientist) of the 17th century we have the classical example of Homer and Archimedes. They all worked under the same powerful spell of the creative imagination. But it bore different names; such as "heat", "fervour", "enthusiasm", "fire", "inspiration" etc. In the 18th century the ideas was christened as "creative imagination" and all these terms of the classical and neoclassical period came under the umbrella of one term -- the "creative imagination". Therefore,
Engell in the preface to The Creative Imagination writes: "the progress of the idea is to some degree semantic" (VIII); a development in the meaning of words. The "creative imagination" with this distinct title for itself originated in the earlier part of the 18th century (1973), developed through exchange of ideas between critics and poets of England, Scotland and Germany; had its important repercussions in America and France and by the end of the 18th century reached full maturity and emerged as the central value. In the 19th century it "enjoyed its brilliant romantic expression" and in the present century it is "the supreme value of art and literature" (Engell 10). But it will be a serious mistake if we think it to be a recent thing for it was a thing of supreme value even in the ancient world. They might not be conscious of it, but it had its powerful influence on poets and scientists like Homer and Archimedes of the classical world.

Now coming back to the term "Muse", the classical world used it to suggest the ultimate source of inspiration for this creative imagination. This concept of the Muse is a mythical version of divine intuition. Instead of having a single God they have different "muses" in charge of different branches of art and knowledge. When the inspired creative minds brood over a thing or "ponder incessantly" the Muse visits them and
whispers the truth they long to know. This way the final moment of sudden illumination was achieved which Archimedes experienced when he sprang out of his bath and ran through the streets, crying out "Eureka, Eureka".

This way the well directed and balanced creative imagination has been operating since the beginning discovering fresh truths, expanding the horizons of human knowledge and ensuring the growth of human civilisation. Thus each achievement of the creative imagination enhances the beauty of creation and thereby the greatness of the creator. One such achievement is the music that echoes in The Temple of George Herbert. In all such creative achievements some external agency guides and helps the seeker in his final illumination. It disciplines, directs and lends a dynamic balance to the human imagination. Modern psychologists may call it the "super-ego" the romantic critics may call it "divine inspiration", the neo-classical writers of the age of reason (like Dryden) may call it "judgement" or "reason" and the classical writers the "Muse", but it has been whispering, balancing and directing the human imagination throughout the ages. They all appear to be different names, scientific secular and mythical for the same divine grace that descends to help the soaring and seeking imagination of the human mind.
Besides the charge that the imagination is wild and lawless and may "out run judgement" and reason, another charge that the age of reason in particular and most of the modern philosophers in general have brought against imagination is that it is an inferior mental act. "Far from being "the queen of faculties" revered by Poe and Baudelaire, imagining has been regarded, with rare exceptions as the improverished chimney sweeper of the mind performing tasks (if it is given any task at all) that are considered beneath the dignity of other Psychical powers" (Casey X). From the classical age of Plato, through the neoclassical age of Dryden and Pope to the modern philosophers, there is a tradition of condemnation and neglect of imagination. Philosophers think that philosophical thinking should be image-free. At the beginning of this century Francis Galton wrote that "a habit of suppressing mental imagery must therefore characterise men who deal with abstract idea" (qtd. in Casey X). Naturally, therefore, the function of the imagination was taken to be inferior. The general idea about the function of the imagination is that it reproduces or copies visual images. Sitting in the afternoon if we imagine our breakfast table of the morning, what do we do? Here the imagination only reproduces, or copies, mentally what we received directly from our experience. Therefore, a philosopher dealing with the abstract will certainly belittle such a mental
act. But it is also to be kept in mind that imagination not only reproduces, copies or imitates, it can also create and can make itself creative from which comes the concept of the "creative imagination". Here, imagination is taken out of the clutches of those philosophers who confine it to a very narrow cell. This was done by Addison who in his famous *Spectator* series on "the pleasure of the imagination" (Nos. 409, 411-421) explained how imagination is creative. He first used the term Primary and Secondary imagination which Coleridge was to use a century latter. According to him reproducing or copying visual images is the primary function of the imagination. But "we have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding those images ... into all the varieties of pictures and visions" (Engell 36). This is the role of the secondary imagination which involves an internal and distinctly psychological process. It is "less visual, less sensuous and more psychological". Here "the mind reworks and transposes what it has sensed and with this altering power produces new combinations and ideas" (qtd. in Engell 36). In this case imagination is not something merely based on vision and the literal sense of image. According to Coleridge it "dissolves, difuses, dissipates, in order to recreate" (164). This way it has "something in it like creation, it bestows a kind of existence and draws up to the reader's view
several objects which are not to be found in being, it makes addition to nature" (Engell 37). Now, the imagination becomes creative and the philosopher, boasting about his abstract thinking, begins to shrink in size. Because the mind inspired by the creative imagination emerges as the second creator and in this act the human mind stands second only to God, the first creator and all other actions rank below it, Mark Akenside, thirty two years after Addison's paper, in 1974, wrote: "The Pleasure of Imagination" and added much to what Addison has said. He sees in the process of the creative imagination an "instinctive drive towards the unity and inner harmony of the completed work of art, the blending and fusing of ideas until they form a whole. And this whole process is by implication and analogy, similar to God's creating power which works continually in the universe" (Engell 44). This way the creative man who, according to Ankenside is the "Second Maker", "participates in the divine shaping of the cosmos" (45). Here the abstract thinking of the philosopher stands belittled and the creative imagination emerges as a thing of supreme value.

Thus, we see how elusive the idea of imagination has been and how fluctuating and vacillating has been man's attitude towards it. Nevertheless, the problem is understandable though at the outset it appears confusing.
The idea has developed simultaneously in literature, criticism, philosophy, religion and even in science. Important figures belonging to different disciplines have joined hands on the subject of imagination, no matter their dispute elsewhere, their attitude was basically co-operative and affirmative. In this field there is noticeable, a continual sense of affirmation, of preserving and not denying what had been stated before and then enlarging on it. Therefore, James Engell, in his preface to *The Creative Imagination*, says: "as it was discussed the idea, like an ore being processed, was enriched"(1). So we find that, if we are cautious and careful, the fear of confusion can be warded off and we can steer clear our way, can pass through confusion and reach our goal where the scene will be clear and the higher level and the wider range of the creative imagination can be seen and enjoyed. We can see how Herbert's creative imagination has acted creatively and is different from that imagination which was condemned as an inferior mental act. Herbert's imagination functioned in such a way that it achieved the dynamic balance by establishing a link with the divine agency as a "participant in the divine shaping of the cosmos". It was for this that critics grouped Herbert together with spiritually elevated and creatively imaginative personalities like St. Joan, Milton and Dante.
Mr. A. D. Nuttal for example, wrote a book entitled "Over-heard by God: Fiction and Prayer in Herbert, Milton Dante and St. Joan. These important personalities, with their creative imagination were able to imagine and trace the cosmic and creative design of the creator in every work around them. This is the result of an 'instinctive drive' in the creative imagination towards the unity and inner harmony of any completed work either in creation or in art or even in human behaviour. They were able to imagine the divine benevolence even in moments of intense spiritual agony. At such moments Herbert's sensitive and sincere soul spoke to himself which was overheard by God and then God in turn spoke to him and comforted him. In this process of the imagination there is blending and fusing of ideas and events until they form a harmonious whole. According to Mark Akenside, this process of the creative imagination is "by implication and analogy, similar to God's creating power ... " (qtd. in Engell 44). With such a creative power when Herbert creates a poem that becomes an unforgettable work of creative art. For example, in his poem, 'Jesu' Herbert presents God as his comforter and writes:

That to my broken heart he was I ease you
And to my whole is Jesu (9-10)

This is a beautiful instance of the creative imagination because here the imagination is creating a
thing that did not exist previously. The word "Jesu" when
broken apart into three pieces becomes "J" "es" "u". The
imagination moves a step further and transforms it to "I
ease you". Thus, "Jesu" breaks himself into "I ease you"
in sympathy with the agony of those who are broken
hearted in this world and tries to ease them. It is an
idea that did not exist previously in the world of
poetry. Here, we can quote coleridge and say that
Herbert's imagination " dissolves, diffuses, dissipates
in order to recreate" or in the words of Addison it "has
something in it like creation, it bestows a kind of
existence, and draws up to the reader's view several
objects which are not to be found in being " (qtd. in
Engell 37). Describing this creative act of the mind
Engell says that it "reworks and transposes what it has
sensed, and with this altering power produces new
combinations and ideas" (36). Similarly, when Herbert saw
a pulley and sensed its mechanism he found that by using
it any thing heavy and far off can be dragged up closer
and closer quite easily. Then his mind reworked and
transposed and produced "new combination". He connected
this mechanism with the mechanism that God adopted in the
creation of man and produced a remarkable poem like "The
Pulley". In this poem Herbert says that in the creation
of man "word's riches which dispersed lie/contact into a
span" (4-5). God pours on man all His blessings one after
another, but He did not give him "rest" because God says:

If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast. (19-20)

Dr. Johnson and other critics on metaphysical conceit say that here "heterogeneous elements" or things that lie remote are brought together or "yoked by violence together". But the argument here shows that it is the work of a creative mind, a higher thing where the mind, to repeat again, "reworks and transposes what it has sensed and with this altering power produces new combinations and ideas". It moves from the visual and the sensuous to something psychological and spiritual. It is not the trick or the magic of the metaphysical wit but the miracle of the creative imagination; a thing much higher and sublimer. With this miracle of the creative imagination G.Herbert was like prophet Moses and with the magic of the metaphysical wit other popular metaphysical poets of Herbert's age were like those magicians who vainly competed with prophet moses. This sort of creative imagination in George Herbert moves in a higher direction taking him to his master's breast. It is an elevation of the soul and reminds us of Plotinus who in his essay "On the Beautiful" says:

The soul, ranking as she does with what is nobler in the order of realities, must needs by her very nature thrill with joy if she see something even remotely akin to her own spirit, and will draw it to her, becoming aware alike of herself and of that
which is her own. (qtd. in Scott-James 83)

It also shows how Longinus is right when he says that nature has "poured into our souls a deathless longing for all that is great and diviner than ourselves" (38)

This deathless longing works well in George Herbert and takes him further and further. He moves from a mechanical object like pulley to the divine mechanism adopted behind the creation of man. He even talks of physical contact with God. His emotional and spiritual intimacy with God leads to his loving reception by God. In his poem "Love" God Himself comes forward, holds Herbert's hand with love and care and affectinately welcomes him to His graceful company.

Love bade we welcome :

   Yet my soul drew back
Guilty of dust and sin
   . . . . . . .

Love took my hand and smillingly did reply
who made thee eyes but I. (1-3, 11-12)

   Thus Herbert's hand, with his creative pen in it, enjoyed the touch of the divine hand. Not only that; Herbert talks of the divine hand taking his pen from his hand and writing on his behalf. When he was spiritually inspired and wrote "A True Hymn" in which his "soul unto the lines accord," he says:
Where as if the heart be moved,
Although the verse be somewhat scant,
God doth supply the want.
As when the heart says sighing to be approved
O, could I love ; and stops : God writeth, Loved.

(16-20)

Here, we find the instance of a groping, self questioning and everlonging soul, balanced by the divine touch, picked up, guided and directly helped by God Himself. However, mean a human art, after such divine touch and "tincture" as Herbert writes in his "Elixir", must "grow bringht and clean" (12).

This is the range of Herber's creative imagination which is the source of all his poetic creations, and which imparts to his work the glow of enduring values, as a result of which his works shine like a pole star giving direction to the wandering barks of the human soul.

It is often said that Herbert is limited in his range. If by range we mean the variety of topics or subject matters on which poems are written, then we may say that Donne, Marvel and others wrote on many topics besides religion, and Herbert wrote only on religion. Talking about those who considered Herbert's range limited, T.S. Eliot, with a sense of regret in his tone, writes : "This is the view even of Prof. Grierson" (16). Eliot goes further and explains that in the case of Herbert "it was only in faith, in hunger and thirst
after Godliness in his self questioning and his religious meditation that he was inspired as a poet " (Eliot 19). He clearly points out that this aspect in Herbert should not be regarded as a limitation. Because if a higher sensibility is applied to Herbert's theme then this aspect becomes "a sign of solitary greatness" and a unique contribution to English Poetry xxx (Eliot 19).

His poetry touching the divine at its source, passing through his sensitive and sincere soul, touches all those who are equally religious and goes still further touching the feeling and "enlarging the understanding of those readers also who hold no religious belief and find themselves unmoved by religious emotion "(Eliot 19). Therefore Eliot says : " As such I regard it (The Temple) as a more important document than all of Donne's religious poems taken together" (20). Donne may be powerful and impressive but as Grierson remarks he is "More aware of distintegration than of comprehensive harmony" (XIV). If in Donne we find a massive disorganised heap of strong bricks, Herbert's work is a well designed beautiful temple. Eliot rightly says that "The Temple is not be regarded simply as a collection of poems but a record of the spiritual struggles of a man of intellectual power and emotional intensity who gave much toil to perfecting his verses. As such it should be a document of interest to all those who are curious to
understand their fellowmen" (20). It also enables us to understand God and His ways. This way the Temple also becomes fit to be a lovely abode of the benevolent deity. Thus, in matters of completeness of perception, wholeness of vision and "comprehensive harmony" Herbert far excels Donne and many others around him. It is for this reason that Eliot exalts him high, praises his "balance between" or "fusion" of intellect and sensibility (20) and opines that "he (Herbert) may justly be called a major poet" (15). Thus, Herbert emerges as a major poet having a far wider range of vision when attention is shifted from the topics or subject matter of his poetry to the creative imagination responsible for the creation of his poems. This is the main theme of this dissertation and all these considerations take our mind to a stage where it asks whether Herbert belongs to the "school of Donne" or he himself is the leader of a "School" with Vaughan, Crashaw, Harvey, Hopkins, and many other religious poets down the ages as his followers.

Now, to have a birds eye view of Herbert's position and popularity down the centuries, we find that he was much praised and imitated in his own time. Bacom dedicated his translation of Psalms to Herbert; Harvey wrote Synagogue or "The Shadow of The Temple", Vaughan called him "an example of pre-revolutionary piety" and borrowed many things from him. Barnabas Oley declared
that the king and the church would have triumphed if they had followed Herbert's life and writings. Izaac Walton was full of praise and enthusiasm for him and wrote his biography. In the 18th Century, Herbert along with all other metaphysical poets suffered a general neglect, but was resurrected in the 19th century, in which Coleridge played an important role. During these three centuries his works have been valued chiefly for their piety.

In the beginning of the 20th century when Grierson revived the metaphysical poets, Herbert's poetry and piety were weighed together and he was recognised as a pious soul but a poor artist. Everything went in favour of Donne who emerged as the leading figure of his age. Herbert was unfavourably compared with Donne in matters of range and with Crashaw in matters of intensity. Consequently he shrank to the position of a minor poet. But towards the later part of the twentieth century, perhaps after the famous remark of T.S.Eliot that Herbert's poetry is definitely a "finished good" and "Herbert should be read entire" and with deeper attention, the picture has changed (Eliot. Spectator 360). Modern critics on the poet, such as C. Hutchinson, J.H.Summers, Rosemond Tuve, Marry Elen Ricky, Stanley Fish, Arnold Stein and other complain in chorus that Herbert is often read superficially. Their critical effort has been a co-operative venture in learning to
read him with greater attention. Helen Vendler, referring to Eliot's remark that "Herbert should be read entire" writes "that study has not yet been made", and feels that "He (Herbert) has yet to be ranked, as I believe and he deserves to be ranked, higher than Donne" (Vendler 5). The present dissertation aspires to be a modest step in this direction with its emphasis on the creative imagination, an imagination though slightly affected by long Christian tradition is neither distorted by the internal whimsical subjectivity nor is misguided by any external "daemon" or devil. It is dynamically balanced by the impersonal intuitive whispering of divine grace and is even, at times, directly helped by God, because Herbert writes that wherever his verse is found to be ...

... some what scant

God doth supply the want. (True Hymn 17-18)