



THE WORD

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IMAGINATION

MAN enjoys the work of imagination, yet he seldom or never thinks about it so that he knows what it is, how it works, what factors are employed, what are the processes and results of the work, and what the real purpose of imagination is. Like other words, such as idea, mind, thought, imagination is usually used indiscriminately or without definite meaning. People speak of imagination with praise, as an attainment or attribute of great men whose ability and power have shaped destinies of nations and the world; and the same people will speak of it as being the characteristic of others who are not practical, who have vagrant fancies and weak minds; that the visions of such are of no use, their dreams never materialize, they expect what never happens; and, they are looked on with pity or contempt.

Imagination will continue to sway destinies. It will carry some up into the heights and others into the depths. It may make or unmake men.

Imagination is not an intangible nebula of dreams, fancies, hallucinations, fantasm, illusions, empty nothings. Imagination does things. Things are done in imagination. What is done in imagination is as real to the one who does it as are the products of imagination when harnessed to physical uses.

That is real to man of which he is aware. Man becomes aware of things by having them thrust upon him or by turning his attention to them. He does not understand that of which he is aware, until after he has given his attention to and tries to think about and understand it. When he thinks of and tries to understand it, imagination will unfold new forms to him; he will see new meanings in old forms; he will learn how to make forms; and he will understand and look forward to the final art of imagination, in the unmaking and making of form.

Imagination does not depend upon time nor place, though at times the image faculty in man is freer and more active than at others, and there are places better suited than others to the work, not the play, of

imagination. It depends on the disposition, temperament, character, development of the individual. Time and place have much to do with the dreamer who wishes things would happen and waits for opportunities and moods, but the imaginor creates opportunities, drives moods from him, makes things happen. With him, imagination works at any time and in any place.

Those who imagine are either negative or positive, passive or active, dreamers or imaginors. The dreamer's thoughts are suggested by the senses and their objects; the imaginor's imagination is most likely to be caused by his thought. The dreamer is sensitive and passive, the imaginor sensitive and positive. The dreamer is one whose mind, through his image faculty, reflects or takes the forms of objects of the senses or thoughts, and who is swayed by these. The imaginor or imaginator is one who brings through his image faculty, matter into form, guided by his thought, according to his knowledge and determined by his power of will. Stray thoughts and sensuous sounds and forms attract the dreamer. His mind follows them and plays with them in their rambles, or is gripped and held by them, and his image faculty is driven and compelled to give them expression as they direct. The imaginator quiets his image faculty and closes his senses by thinking steadily until he has found his thought. As seed is cast into the womb of the earth, so the thought is given to the image faculty. Other thoughts are excluded.

Resting finally on the latent knowledge in the mind and by the power of will, the imaginor stimulates the image faculty with his thought until the work of imagination begins. According to the latent knowledge of the imaginor and by the power of will, the thought takes life in the image faculty. The senses are then called into use and each serves in the work of imagination. The thought having taken form in imagination, is the central figure in a group or groups of forms, which take their color from it and which it influences until the work of imagination is done.

How imagination operates is shown in the case of an author. By thinking, he turns his mental light on the subject he desires to produce and is stirred with fervor as he thinks. His senses cannot help him, they distract and confuse. By continued thinking he clarifies and focusses the light of his mind until he finds the subject of his thought. It may come into his mental vision gradually as out of a heavy mist. It may flash in its entirety like lightning or the rays of a sunburst. This is not of the senses. What this is the senses cannot grasp. Then his image faculty is at work, and his senses actively engage in the costuming of the characters to which his image faculty gives form. The objects of the world without are used in so far as they can serve as material for the setting of the subject in his world within. As the characters grow into form, each sense contributes by adding tone or movement or shape or body. All are made alive in their environment which the author has called forth by the work of imagination.

Imagination is possible for every human. With some the powers and capacities for imagination are limited to a small degree; with others developed in extraordinary manner.

The powers of imagination are: the power to desire, the power to think, the power to will, the power to sense, the power to act. Desiring is

the process of the turbulent, strong, attracting and unintelligent portion of the mind, demanding expression and satisfaction through the senses. Thinking is the focussing of the light of the mind on a subject of thought. Willing is the compelling, by thought, of that which one has chosen to do. Sensing is the conveying of the impressions received through the organs of sense to the faculties of the mind. Acting is the doing of that which one desires or wills.

These powers come from the knowledge which the mind has acquired in the past. The popular notions are incorrect, that the art of imagination is a gift of nature, that the powers used in imagination are endowments of nature or the result of heredity. The terms gifts of nature, heredity and providence mean only that which has come by a man's own efforts. The art and endowment of imagination and the powers used in imagination are the inheritance in this present life of part of what the man had acquired by effort in his past lives. Those who have little power of or desire for imagination have made little effort to acquire it.

Imagination can be developed. Those who have little, may develop much. Those who have much may develop more. The senses are aids, but not means in the development of imagination. Defective senses will be defective aids, but they cannot prevent the working of imagination.

Imagination is attained to by discipline and exercise of the mind in the work of imagination. To discipline the mind for imagination, select an abstract subject and engage in thinking about it at regular intervals until it is seen and comprehended by the mind.

One develops imagination to the degree in which he disciplines the mind for the purpose. Culture of the senses adds certain superficial values to the effects of the work of imagination. But the art in imagination is rooted in the mind and is transmitted to or through the senses by means of the faculties of the mind which have to do with imagination.

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IMAGINATION.

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IN thought lie the sources from which imagination draws nourishment. Inborn tendencies and motive in life will decide from which sources imagination draws. One whose image faculty is active but who has little power to think, may have many conceptions of many forms, but instead of coming to life and full form, they will be miscarriages, still-born. These will be of interest and give excitement to that individual, but will be of no use to the world. Man must think, he must think his way into the realm of thought, the mental world, before he can provide fit forms for thoughts which he would bring into the psychic and the physical worlds. If he cannot enter the thought realm, the thoughts which stimulate him will not be of his kind¹—not of the mental world, and he will be unable to hold and know them and to judge and deal with them. When he enters the thought realm, he will find his thought and the thoughts to which he is to give forms and which he will bring into the world through imagination. He enters the thought realm by trying to think, by disciplining his conscious light to focus on the abstract thought to which he aspires, until he finds and knows it. Faith and will and controlled desire are necessary to begin and continue thinking, until the subject of thought is found and known.

Faith is not a guess or wish or belief in a possibility. Faith is the settled conviction in the reality of the subject of thought, and that it will be known. No number of futile attempts to find it; no failure, however wide of the mark, will change the faith, because such faith comes from knowledge, the knowledge which one has acquired in other lives and which remains for man to lay claim to and to secure. When one has such faith and chooses to

¹Man, the incarnate mind, is an exile from his home in the mental world, the world of thought. His ideal thoughts and good works pay his ransom, and death is the way by which he returns home for a respite—only for a respite. Seldom during his life on earth can he find his way back, nor even for a moment look at his home. But it is possible for him to find the way while still in this world. The way is by thinking. Inconstant straggler thoughts intercept and distract him, and lead him away when he tries to think, as the diversions and pleasures and temptations of the world lead him away from his responsibilities and duties of life. He must work his way through the horde of straggler thoughts that stand between him and his goal.

act, his choice induces the power of will; he turns his mind to the thought in which he has faith, and his thinking begins. Inability to know his subject of thought is not failure. Each effort is an aid in the end. It enables him to compare and to judge the things which come into mental vision, and he gains practice how to dispose of them. More than this, each effort helps to control the desire necessary to imagination. Controlled desire gives strength to the forms produced by imagination. By control of the blind turbulence which interferes with thinking, the light of the mind is clarified and strength is given to imagination.

Memory is not necessary to imagination, that is, sense-memory. Sense-memory is memory through the senses, such as recalling and remembering, re-picturing, re-voicing, re-tasting, re-smelling, re-touching, the sights sounds and tastes and odors and feelings that were experienced through the senses in the present physical life. Memory is of service in the work of imagination after, but not before, one has found the thought which is to be the work of imagination to bring into form and produce.

Imagination is a state of mind in which the image faculty is compelled to action. In imagination the action of the image faculty is positive and negative. The *negative* action is a reflection of objects of the senses and thoughts, and the assumption of their color and form. The negative function of imagination is exhibited with “imaginative” people, who are awed and lose equilibrium by picturing things which might occur (whereas a sure-footed beast is unimaginative). By the *positive* action, that of the “imaginator,” the image faculty produces figure and color and gives them to matter, and articulates sounds, all as determined by the influence of the other six faculties of the mind.

All objects and works of art must be fashioned in imagination before they can be given appearance in the physical world. In giving appearance in the physical world to forms created and made living in the imagination by the thoughts there conceived, the outer organs of sense are used only as tools, guided by the inner senses to give an outer body to the inner form. The instruments of sense build the body of crude matter as imagination projects its form to live in and through and ensoul that body.

Expression of art is impossible without imagination. After he has conceived the thought, the imaginator must make its form. After he has made its form the artist must give it expression and make it appear in the world. Works which come into the world in this way are works of imagimators, works of art and the work of imagination. Artists are or should be imagimators. If so called artists do not see the form before they attempt to make it appear, they are not artists, but merely artisans, mechanics. They depend not on their imagination for their forms. They depend on their memory, on the forms of other minds, on nature—which they copy.

By the processes explained, the artist imagimators give to the world what the world has of art. Mechanical artists copy from these art types. Yet by work and devotion to their subject they, too, may become imagitors.

The composer-musician rises in aspiration until he conceives the thought. Then his imagination begins its work. Each character, scene,

feeling to be expressed, appears to his inner ear in form of sound, and lives and acts its part among the other forms of sound which are grouped around his central thought—which is the inspiration for each of the various parts, keeps each in relation to other parts, and makes harmony out of discords. From the soundless, the composer forms inaudible sound. This he puts into written form and it is sounded forth into audible form, so that those who have ears may hear and follow into the realm where it was born.

With hand and brush and hues from his pallet, the artist painter builds the form in his imagination into the appearance of visibility on his canvas.

The artist sculptor chisels and compels to stand out from the rough stone the invisible form which his imagination has projected into visible semblance.

By the power of imagination the philosopher gives system to his thought, and builds into words the invisible forms of his imagination.

An unimaginative statesman and law giver plans and provides statutes for the people, based on his direct view of the phenomena of the past. The imaginator has views which appreciate and anticipate changed and changing conditions and new elements, which are or will become factors in civilization.

Few people are or can become at once imaginators, but many have lively imagination. Those who have imaginative power are more intense and susceptible to the impressions of life than those who have little imaginative power. To the imaginator, friends, acquaintances, people, are active characters, who continue to live their parts in his imagination when he is alone. To the unimaginative, people have names which represent so much or little, the result of what they have done and from which may be calculated what they are to do. According to his imaginative power, one will be in touch with things and people and these will enter and people his mind, or, things and people will be outside him, to be seen only when required by occasion. An imaginator can in imagination live through and review in colors, the scenes which his memory has printed. He can build new forms on memory, and paint new scenes, which his memory may reprint on future occasions. In imagination he may visit foreign lands or enter a new world and move among people, and take part in scenes with which he had not before come into contact. If the unimaginative person considers places he has visited, his memory reminds him of the fact but is not likely to reprint the scenes; or, if it does, there will be no movement and color, but only indistinct objects without life, in a fog of grey. He will not build on the picture of his memory. Why should he picture what was there?

The unimaginative man lives by rule according to habit, in set forms and grooves, and based on experience. He does not wish to change them, but wants to continue these. Perhaps he thinks they should be improved, but any improvement should be along the lines of what has been. He dreads the unknown. The unknown has no attraction for him. The imaginator lives by change, according to impressions, in moods and

or, if he does, it has for him the attraction of adventure. Unimaginative people are usually law abiding. They do not wish to have the laws changed. Imaginative people chafe when law is restraint to innovation. They would adopt new measures and try new forms.

The unimaginative way is cumbersome, slow and expensive, even wasteful of time, experience and human suffering, and clogs the wheel of progress. By imagination much can be anticipated and much time and suffering often be saved. The imaginative faculty rises to a point of prophecy, can see what the thoughts of the people will compel. The unimaginative law giver walks for instance with his nose close to the ground and sees only what is in front of his nose, sometimes not even that. The one with imagination can take in a greater field of vision, see the working of many forces, and of some which are not yet apparent to the unimaginative. The unimaginative sees only scattered phenomena, and does not appreciate them. He is forced along by habit. With the people of imagination, however, the essence of what are the signs of the times can be grasped, and by imagination suitable and timely, means for the regulation of the phenomena be provided.

Castle building, day dreaming, the play and fumes of fancy, dreaming in sleep, hallucinations, phantasms, are not imagination, though the imaginative faculty is active in the production of these various activities and conditions of the mind. Mere planning, especially that of a utilitarian nature, is not imagination. And of course, copying or imitating is not imagination, therefore those who merely re-produce form, are neither imaginative nor imaginers, even though the re-production be that of an artist and exhibit talent.

When imagination works for the production of forms of a sensuous nature, the spirit of the earth does not interfere, but it encourages its action because this earth spirit thus receives greater opportunities for experiencing sensation through new forms. As the mind imagines, it learns. It learns gradually, but it learns. Imagination teaches the mind through forms. It appreciates law, order, proportion. With this constant development of the mind through higher forms, comes a time when it would use imagination to different ends than to make forms for the senses. Then the mind attempts to create abstract forms, which are not of the senses, and the spirit of the earth at once opposes and rebels. Desire spreads confusion in the mind, beclouds and bedazzles the mind. The earth spirit causes the senses, desires and bodily powers to be arrayed in battle against the bedazzled mind, as it still attempts to make forms for abstract thoughts and for spiritual beings. Seldom an imaginator is able to battle successfully against this army of the earth spirit in himself. If he abandons his ideals the earth spirit rewards him with world honors for the wonders his imagination brings into the world. If the imaginator does not give up the fight, he fails or appears to the world to fail. In reality he does not fail. He will fight again, and with greater power and success. He will bring imagination out of the realm in which it works for the senses, into the realm where it works for the supernal spirit. Once in ages an imaginator succeeds in this. It is no common success, no ordinary event. He reveals new spiritual laws to the world. He makes, by imagination, forms in which

the beings of the spiritual world can come and do come into form and manifest themselves.



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