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Review of Moser, Keith, and Ananta Ch. Sukla (eds). *Imagination and Art: Explorations in Contemporary Theory*. Brill, 2020

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The scientific legitimation of discussing imagination in the academic world emerged from the second half of the twentieth century only after a long period of ostracism dictated by anti-psychological and anti-intentionalist thinking of certain extremist constructivism. In fact, in the decades especially after the Second World War, premises for an *imaginative turn* in humanities were clear: philosophical meditations on political utopia, the increasing centrality of psychoanalysis, the rise of thematic criticism, the enhancement of the “wild thought” of structural anthropology, and the academic study of fantasy and science fiction literature are just some of the small inputs that contribute to the collapse of certainties of the structuralist *koïnè*. Nowadays, art theoreticians, psychologists, pedagogists and neuroscientists agree that imagining is a fundamental act and faculty capable of recursively building our personality and knowledge of the world. However, discussing imagination is still a difficult challenge. It is increasingly difficult to analyse imagination in a systematic and philosophically coherent manner, taking into account and matching both new and past research. Imagination is, actually, the classic object of study that lends itself to being analysed through a plurality of methodologies that are often in epistemological conflict with each other or are dictated by the academic fashions of the moment. Nowadays a rational resolution of the conflict between the different theories of imagination might seem like a utopia prompted by the myth of finding a universal theory on imagination which, as a consequence, would lead to one on knowledge and affectivity.

For this reason, attempts to provide overviews of the state of the art of research on imagination that could illuminate a multiplicity of heterogeneous theoretical frameworks, while at the same time enhancing a methodological pluralism, are to be rewarded. For instance, the volume *Imagination and Art: Exploration in Contemporary Theory* (2020) edited by the literature’s scholars Keith Moser and Ananta Ch. Sukla follows a “relativist” direction in the sense mentioned above. *Imagination and Art* is a collective project that convincingly takes up the challenge of framing a broad theme with a transdisciplinary, multicultural and “polyphilosophical” approach, avoiding any presumption of exhaustiveness and exploring unusual critical perspectives.

Divided into nine sections, the thirty-eight essays that compose *Imagination and Art* bring together the voices of scholars (and artists) from all over the world to promote, as Keith Moser declares in the introduction (1-31) of the volume, an all-encompassing vision of the imagination, understood as a subject that knows no limits of investigation in the system of knowledge. It is, however, useful to highlight that this collective itinerary does not have dispersive features because all scholars involved in the project show solid historical and aesthetical knowledge, rooted in the awareness that the act of imagination has raised profound questions in humanity of all ages and all geographies.

The first part of the volume—‘Historical Imagination and Judgment’—addresses the issue of imagination through the literary works of the Greek-Latin heritage, not avoiding the comparisons with the contemporary world and thus making anthropological considerations.

Analysing in detail the Aristotelian concepts of *phantasia* and *mimesis*, David Konstan (35-49) provides a reading of a masterpiece of antiquity such as Lucian of Samosata's *True History*. The scholar argues that ancient *literati* did not have the concept of possible and utopian world as we do. Fantastic stories (such as *True History*) were only rhetorical exercises, in which poets and orators publically practiced tropes to adorn philosophical and political considerations. Claude Calame (50-66) analyses the cultural devices involved in the construction of collective memory in ancient cultures. Referring to Marshall Sahlins and Jan Assmann's anthropological and historical analyses, Calame invites us to consider the different semantic devices and aesthetic frameworks that transform historical facts into mythological events. As a consequence, the scholar argues that there is no oral and written historical narrative without *a priori* cultural construction behind it that dictates its values and rituals. Allen Speight (67-80) proposes a deep examination of the link between imagination and historical judgement, highlighting the imaginative construction of the narrator's identity and of its perspective position which could create a fictitious distance between him and the character judged. Speight's choice of starting to tackle this complex topic from the examination of the epigraphs in Hannah Arendt's philosophical work—dedicated to the Stoic Cato in Lucan's *Pharsalia* and the eponymous protagonist of Goethe's *Faust*—is appreciable because it shows how historical judgements are always correlated to complex questions of moral philosophy.

The idea that human identity is a construction that is always mediated and renegotiated through the collective imaginary also concerns the second part of the volume entitled 'Gendered Imagination,' in which is specifically examined the imaginary representation of women in subaltern position. Adrienne Mayor (83-100) explores how Greek, Roman, Islamic and Chinese cultures have imagined the Amazon warriors captured by men during ancient wars and conquests. From a methodological point of view, Mayor's iconological and transcultural investigation takes into account a large number of sources drawn from literature, historiography, figurative art and archaeological artefacts. Reshmi Mukherjee (111-36) analyses the novel *Women Without Men* (1989) written by the Iranian writer Shahrnush Parsipur. Using psychoanalytic, intersectionalist and ecofeminist concepts, she argues that Parsipur's masterpiece focuses on the theme of imagination as a cognitive frame that implies an active political practice capable of resisting both the Western and Eastern patriarchal ideology. Furthermore, Mukherjee claims that the surrealist "automatic writing" technique in Parsipur's novel - which inevitably refers to the poetic of Claude Cahun rather than that of André Breton - becomes the stylistic device for narrating in a transgressive manner the female body beyond the repressive desire of males.

Since topics and issues raised by gender studies have moral and ethical implications, these matters are central to the volume's section entitled 'Imagination and Ethics.' Carol Steinberg Gould (139-54) analyses the concept of "imaginative resistance" in the Freudian psychoanalytic theory, focusing on the conflict of intentions in the aesthetic relationship between author and reader and, more specifically, on the identification with a perverted character. From Steinberg Gould's point of view, the phenomenon of imaginative resistance occurs when we feel something that disturbs our axiological order during the aesthetic experience and, thus, we reject the narrative pact: the reader is who resists polemically to the experience of trauma or danger, while an author is like the therapist who transforms through language and interpretation a disturbing experience into an acceptable one. However, Steinberg Gould notes that an author and an analyst have different assignments: the former guides a patient to a mental *equilibrium*, while the latter attracts the reader into a possible and pleasurable suspension of disbelief. Chandra Kavanagh (155-73) reinterprets the concept of solidarity presented in the neo-pragmatist philosophy of Richard Rorty and Alexis Shotwell. These two contemporary thinkers are opposed to the essentialist and realist concept of solidarity because it is typically defined on a reified vision of human being. Kavanagh shows how it is more productive to think of

solidarity as an imaginative form of relationship. Imagination, therefore, extends the field of relationality beyond the cultural boundaries that define a human community. David Collins (174-205) reflects on the role of *phantasia* in Aristotelian empirical psychology, outlining the relationship between imagination, perception and moral judgment. The image in our mind could be true or false, and therefore subject to judgement. As a consequence, imagination—as the faculty of understanding situations or anticipating factual and counterfactual events—is useful for improving wisdom, doing the right action and nurturing the proper desires. A. Samuel Kimball (206-26) focuses on a specific case in which an ethically unimaginable act, such as infanticide, occurs in the cultural horizon of society. Kimball offers an analysis of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and models her argumentation on Jacques Derrida's philosophy, thematizing infanticide as a concept that the Western culture is unable to sublimate psychologically but, at the same time, is capable of conceiving, imagining and transforming into an aesthetic object. Michel Dion (227-52) examines the structural relationships between imagination and the discursive genre of Christian prayer. Referring to philosophers (Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Ricoeur) and theologians (Romano Guardini, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Paul Tillich, Karl Barth), Dion argues that prayer is necessarily linked to temporal experience and, in particular, to an imaginative reorganisation of the latter. Particularly noteworthy in this sense could be the re-conceptualisation of Sartrean phenomenology, in which Dion recovers the idea of prayer as an imaginative experience of a "quasi-observation" of the image of God, which makes possible a spiritual and imaginative experience for believers. In addition, Dion's essay has the great merit of analysing a wide *corpus* of quotations extrapolated from modernist literature (Fëdor Dostoevsky, Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Robert Musil) as well as from mystical texts (St. John of the Cross, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Teresa of Avila).

In the fourth part of the volume—"Phenomenological and Epistemological Perspectives"—the scholars' essays present an ambition to enter into the details of the philosophical discussion through original elaborations freely inspired by the classical phenomenological approach. Charles Altieri (255-80) analyses John Ashbery's "The Instruction Manual" and William Butler Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" using the philosophical concepts of Edward Casey's philosophical masterpiece *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (1976). Altieri's essay is a tribute to slow reading and he shows that the most important aspect of imagination's act «is its capacity to put details and states together that do not necessarily cohere in ways that are bound by knowledge claims. This freedom is accompanied by an obvious weakness: we need testing before we make any existential claims based on imagination» (278). Particularly interesting in Altieri's paper is the fine historical reconstruction of the struggle for legitimacy of research on imagination in the North American academy. Altieri, for example, reconstructs New Criticism's attempts to recover the validity of the notion of imagination by considering it as a vehicle of "non-discursive truths" «capable of establishing objective ways of reflecting on experience that were undeniably real as what empiricism could show yet indemonstrable by any resource science could invoke» (258). As a consequence, New Criticism recasts Samuel T. Coleridge's notion of organicism: «what had been evidence in the text of how the mind could fuse with the nature became a merely formal condition characterizing the density and the fusion of internal relations within the literary text» (258). However, the consequence of this "rescue of the imagination" was the total elimination of intentionality in poetry, which would later be re-evaluated especially thanks to Jean-Paul Sartre and Paul De Man's phenomenology. The distinction between imagining and conceiving—taking up a famous Cartesian distinction between imagination and intellection in the *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (1641)—is tackled by Jody Azzouni's essay (281-303). After citing the famous example of the piece of wax, Azzouni extends the Cartesian distinction to areas that concern everyday life experience. For instance, he analyses the case of someone who knew an object but cannot materially imagine

it without function (even if such possibility is intelligible and conceivable). Finally, the scholar suggests that what is conceivable does not delimit the field of ontology and possible experiences. In fact, for Azzouni is necessary for phenomenology to be «a successful analysis of exactly what a metaphysically-genuine object boundary is» (302). Warren Heiti (304-31) picks up on Simone Weil's epistemological reflection and theory of imagination. Borrowing from Descartes' philosophy and Spinozistic-Stoic epistemology, Weil argues that the *cogito*, when it is imaging an object, perceives an image of a thing endowed with its materiality and physicality: «images are traces which things leave in the body, traces which are the reactions of the body to things» (315). Consequently, if thought is a responsive activity, every original action preceded by an imaginative act is a reaction of our body to the physical impact with something external to us which, when compares with other environmental reactions, will be categorized in the orders of possibility of experience. Rob van Gerwen (332-45) discusses the philosophical relevance of questioning the existence of different types of imagination, referring to the thought of analytical philosophers (Richard Wollheim, Gregory Currie, Derek Matravers) and James J. Gibson's psychological masterpiece *The ecological approach to visual perception* (1999). From Gerwen's point of view, there might be two types of activity of the mind concerning objects that are not directly present to our senses. The first type of mental activity is imagination proper which is induced by meanings inherent in the perceived. As a consequence, imagination could never logically be reduced to the perceived *per se*. In this sense, imaginative activity *par excellence* is reading and all related processes of filling in events through reasoning and empathy. The other types of mental activities are those simply caused from outside the perception *in se*, such as mental associations, dreaming, hallucination, and fantasy. The latter have no norms of correctness (since they have no intrinsic meaning) and do not point directly to the things that caused them since «perception is not caused» but «something we do» (343). Roderick Nicholls (346-78) provides a reading of Nietzsche's philosophy and relates surprisingly it to the thought of John Dewey, Richard Rorty, Gilbert Ryle and Daniel Dennett. Nietzsche argues that all rational experience possess an imaginative and dreamlike quality explicable by a theatrical configuration which becomes representable when the linguistic and performative devices are involved (for instance, in Greek tragedies, which represent theatrically the social life of the *poleis* and individual dilemmas).

The fifth section of the volume—'Postmodern Perspectives'—aims to explore more closely the implications of theory of imagination within French theory. In fact, when postmodernism dwells on the global failure of totalising epistemological and metaphysical regimes, it simultaneously highlights the work of human imagination. Keith Moser (381-411) sets out a diptych between post-Marxist thought of Jean Baudrillard and Michel Serres, comparing in particular their common critiques of symbolic power and showing how a critique of power that focuses exclusively on material production (and not on imaginative and communicative one) is problematic today. Both French philosophers have a vision of the contemporary as entirely akin to that of a dystopian novel, in which the simulators of hyper-reality (notably television and radio) and devices of mimetic violence (analysed by René Girard too) destroy the reality through simulacral imagination—intended as «an instrumental apparatus for social control and domination by political authorities and other powerful institutions» (385)—and heterodirected disinformation. However, Moser notes how the two philosophers' thinking changes when they both address the Internet and digital revolution: Baudrillard remains pessimistic about the consequences of the marriage between capitalism and hi-tech, while Serres predicts a return of revolutionary and democratic *ethos* in the social media communities. Victor E. Taylor (412-24) focuses on the philosophical contribution of Jean-François Lyotard and his anti-Kantian aesthetics, largely based on the rejection of modernism's teleology. From Lyotard's point of view, modernism aimed to make the «unrepresentable representable» (419) in an attempt to understand it. A new postmodern aesthetic, on the other hand, has the

assignment of leaving the «unrepresentable unrepresentable» (419). Moreover, Taylor focuses on the Lyotardian notion of the “differend” through an analysis of Lyotard and Thierry Chapat’s exhibition *Les Immatériaux*. The differend is a point where the parts of a conceptual device communicate with each other using radically different codes. Disputes concerning meaning cannot be formulated in either of the two source codes, since doing so would eliminate the coexistence of inhomogeneous parts within the device. As a consequence, in the absence of a main meta-discourse that unifies the knowledge of the world, we could aesthetically contemplate only a proliferation of differences. Erik Bormanis (425-47) analyses the thought of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who denounce the risk of a drift of imaginary production in the sense of lack, which involves the idea of imagination as a purely representative faculty. In the philosophical masterpieces of Deleuze and Guattari emerges the idea of imagination as a productive capacity that could eliminate static and conventional images through an object’s encounter and allow true desiring creativity constantly urged to produce even something unimaginable or beyond the immediate *data* of reality. However, Bormains notes that «the attempt to escape to cliché, it seems, is doomed to fail, or at least is doomed to always be provisional, insofar as every escape itself become a new cliché» (444).

The sixth section of the *Art and Imagination*—‘Imagination in Scientific Modeling and Bio-semiotics’—presents essays that touch on connecting research on imagination with contemporary epistemological reflection. Drawing on Kendall Walton, Michael Weisberg and Tarja Knuuttila’s theories, Fiona Salis (451-74) argues that scientific models are similar to fictions because they are both created through imagination. When scientists build a model to explain empirical phenomena, they create a kind of imaginative pact: models are constructed from a set of true statements inside a non-existent system, outside of which the same statements are false. Moreover, this dichotomy between true and false also applies to attributions and proprieties which only real objects can have. Justin Humphreys (475-502) explores the connection between imagination and geometry. Analysing the concepts of Aristotle’s purely empirical geometry, Proclus’ neo-Platonic-psychological geometry and, finally, the Kantian relationship between geometrical imagination and aesthetic judgment, Humphreys argues that geometry is characterised not only by calculation but also by the imaginative deformation of figures and diagrams. The scholar also discusses recent challenges to the Euclidean and Kantian tradition: the advent of non-Euclidean geometry and the neo-positivist linguistic logicism. Wendy Wheeler (503-32) discusses the concept of “meaning” from a biosemiotic perspective concerning to evolutionary processes. Recovering the increasingly fundamental notion of *Umwelt* coined by Jakob Von Uexküll, the semiotics of Charles S. Peirce and that of Ivar Puura and Jesper Hoffmeyer, the anthropological-ecological thought of Gregory Bateson, Wheeler claims the need to think of imagination not as a category of phenomena ordered by a closed and conventional doctrine. Imagination is, actually, a sign relation, and one which produces further sign relations. Consequently, imagining is the true primary act in establishing a dialogue between human beings and all organisms. Moreover, referring to the psychological research of Jerome Bruner, Wheeler argues that the meaning is a matter of collective agreement. As a consequence, thinking about imagination in biosemiotic terms not only helps us to reflect on the issue of the identity of subjects of an environment, but also helps us to develop a vision that makes us responsible for those around us in the face of social challenges (for instance, the ecological crisis).

The seventh part of volume—‘Aesthetic Perspective’—is devoted to the problem of imagination from the point of view of its aesthetic reception, in particular art forms. Unlike the previous parts of the volume (except for Gerwen’s paper, see *supra*), in this section the scholars move mainly within the theories of analytic philosophy. Despite the main reference text in this part of the volume is Kendall Walton’s masterpiece *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (1990), key concepts from the main works of philosophers such as

Nelson Goodman, Richard Wollheim, Noël Carroll and Alan H. Goldman are also cited. However, it is appreciable the fact that in this section there are essays that explore imagination through hermeneutic, narratology and the Theory of Possible Worlds. Dominic Gregory (535-58) investigates visual images and theorises a typology that includes, for instance, images that are representations or that are not. With many examples that invite the readers to imagine and experience for themselves the theoretical scope of the essay, Gregory sets up a systematic study through a typology of images, whose categorisation depends on parameters such as perspective, projection systems, represented space and time, and the inference of subjectivity during aesthetic reception. Jiri Benovsky (559-81) reflects on the relationship between imagination and “depiction” with particular regard to photography. The distinction between depiction and representation is important: we could speak of the latter to mean that «a lot of imagination» has been experienced, while we speak of the former when we like to remain to a «first level experience» (580). Moreover, Benovsky discusses the Waltonian statement that non-fictional visual representations do not exist except for documentary and cartography photographs, which are like vision aids that help us to see better. On the other hand, the scholar notes that the process of producing all kinds of photographs is partly mechanical, but the photographer’s decisions are also necessary to imaginatively construct the aesthetic object. David Fenner (582-93) explores how a photograph or film frame is experienced by the viewer. In particular, Fenner focuses on all those imaginative operations - for instance, the phenomenon of identification intended not as a physiological affair - involved in recreating the world not directly seen in the image. Moreover, Fenner highlights the problem of the fictional character, suggesting a tough path scale of aesthetic values inspired by Alan H. Goldman’s work *Aesthetic Value* (1995). Deborah Fillerup Weigel (594-620) explores the theme of musical imagination, analysing in particular John Cage’s *4’33”*. This well-known piece (and, many times, superficially quoted) suggest that we could begin to consider field-recordings in the same aesthetical values’ system of music composed through the tonal system. Even today, Cage’s masterpieces continue to challenge artists and listeners, inviting them to consider noises as aesthetic objects and to perceive the overlap between different aesthetic frameworks (such as the concert hall or the private listening). Renee M. Conroy (621-45) proposes a very interesting exploration into the world of artistic dance, which is usually underestimated in general theories of art. Dialoguing with Waltonian theory, Conroy focuses in particular on the idea of “kinesthetic empathy” and dance as a game of recognition. Dance could induce the spectators to pay attention to their body reactions to contribute not only to a better understanding of dance art but also to «draw attention to our collective condition as embodied animal-agents. [...] The arts of dance are, thus, an exaggeration of what comes naturally to every human. As such, they are lens through which we can see clearly aspects of ourselves that are often overlooked because [...] our body become partially invisible to us» (631). Referring to cognitive scientists, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricœur, Ton Kruse (646-68) addresses that imagination doesn’t simulate an experience but it is a kind of experience in itself which could function as ways for knowing, living and constantly recreate our world and being-in-the-world. As a consequence, Kruse notes that understanding takes place in language: «the formulation of experience in language is an occurrence and experience in itself. In the formulation, the experience is imagined (experienced again) and understood (there is something is like to have a belief)» (652). Moreover, drawing to Johan Huizinga’s thought, Kruse highlights the assimilation of imagination and game: «the game constitutes itself. [...] [The game] is experienced by the contemplator as something that needs to be contemplated, imagined and understood, rather than as something that is merely done» (656-57). Riyukta Raghunath (669-91) proposes a rigorous analysis of Sarban’s uchronic novel *The Sound of His Horn* (1952) using the theoretical and critical tools of narratology (Wayne C. Booth, Seymour Chatman) and the theory of possible worlds (Marie-Laure Ryan, Robert Vogt). Raghunath aims that the text, which presents also the protagonist-narrator as an

unreliable narrator, demonstrates the methodological potential of Possible Worlds Theory on novels with complex ontology because «a narratorial actual world is used to label and describe a textual actual world that is created through unreliable narration» (689).

The eighth section of the volume—‘Non-Western Perspectives’—presents four papers analysing the important role of imagination in Eastern cultures, particularly Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic ones. Arindam Chakrabarti (695-707) discusses the role of laughter and humour within Indian aesthetics - such as those of the mystic Abhinavagupta (who shows twelve different types of laughter) and the poet Rabindranath Tagore - appropriately compared with Socrate, Charles Darwin and Henri Bergson’s thought. One of the most interesting facts is the connection between game, irony and imagination act because it reveals the possibility of giving meaning not only to fun and celebration, but also to moments of sadness. Yanping Gao (708-20) analyses “petrophilia” in traditional Chinese culture through traditional literary and scientific sources from medical and astronomical treatises. Rocks are valued through imagination as entities with subjectivity and not (only) as collectible objects but. In this essay, the recovery of the famous distinction proposed by the philosopher Gaston Bachelard in *L’Eau et les Rêves* (1942) between formal and material imagination is very appreciable (the former is understood as a turning to objects from a merely visual point of view, while material imagination has to do with the of internal dynamism of imagination act). Moreover, Yanping investigates the Daoistic origins of *petrophilia*. In fact, rocks could be symbols of time or timelessness: by contemplating rock, one understands the ephemeral nature of existence. Amy Lee (721-34) examines contemporary Japanese culture and imagery through an analysis of the works of novelist Yumemakura Baku, screenwriter Mukoda Kuniko, children’s writer Nashiki Kaho and the cyberpunk saga *Ghost in the Shell*. Japanese imagination presents itself as a faculty capable of puzzling the boundaries of what is real and what is imaginary, thus symbolising attempts to rationalise between the ancient traditions and the hyper-modernity. Ali Hussain (735-58) analyses the relationship between imagination and Islamic culture, especially through the *Quran*, the Sufism and the work of the mystic Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī. Hussain shows how in Islam the social dimension of art and creativity is rooted in metaphysics and in the essence of the relationship with the divine: human creativity is not an attempt to imitate the demiurgic process, but is inspired to illuminate the life of the Muslim and the language used to described mystical experiences. Finally, the scholar explores in detail “the spiritual reality” of the Prophet Muhammad and Jesus’ images in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s writings.

In the last section of the *Art and Imagination*—‘Artists Reflect on Imagination: An Imaginative Epilogue’—Moser and Sukla decided to give space for thought not only to academics but to artists, asking them to reflect on imagination with their artistic insights. The artists involved in this section are the performer Marion Renauld (761-8), the visual artist Ton Kruse (769-71, same author of the contribution of the seventh part), poets Jesse Graves (772-3), Umar Timol (774) Louise Dupré (775- 7) and Lisa Fay Coutley (778-9). In addition to the freedom to follow an argument that goes beyond the academic style, the artists involved are given the freedom to experiment with different genres and forms of discourse. However, most of them had chosen a philosophical *epoché* or a sort-of diary form to question the role of imagination in their life.

At the end of this wonderful journey through the theories of imagination and the various types of imaginaries, one is certainly fascinated by a polysemic view of the concept of imagination. Moser and Sukla have managed to find the best way to organise and channel a multitude of expert opinions towards a single goal: the revival of interest in the subject of imagination and its profound meaning in human life.

It should be borne in mind that *Imagination and Art* is not the first international academic volume to present the topic of imagination from various and diverse perspectives. The collective *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination* (2016) edited by Amy Kind and *The*

Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination (2020) edited by Anna Abraham are excellent summaries of examinations of the philosophical theme of imagination through the philosophy of mind and mathematics, cognitive science, ethics, moral psychology, neuroscience, and epistemology. However, what differentiates the volume edited by Moser and Sukla from Kind's and Abraham's ones is the choice to extend the reflection on imagination also within the reception of particular aesthetic and cultural objects—such as novels, historiographical narratives, and visual arts—not limiting to a theoretical elaboration. Moreover, the focus of Moser and Sukla's volume on the philosophical aspect is nevertheless well represented, with essays inspired by both the continental and analytical traditions. Another interesting volume on imagination is *L'histoire du concept d'imagination en France de 1918 à nos jours* (2019) edited by Riccardo Barontini and Julien Lamy, composed of essays focused on reconstructing the presence of the theme of imagination in French aesthetics and phenomenological thought, from Roger Caillois to Jean-Paul Sartre, from Gaston Bachelard to Cornelius Castoriadis. Moser and Sukla's volume, on the other hand, goes beyond the boundaries of national philosophies and aesthetics, preferring to provide glimpses into ways of approaching the imaginary from other perspectives, such as analytical philosophy. However, both delving into a 'national' aesthetic and being open to the multiplicity of cross-cultural viewpoints help to analyse the history of the evolution of ideas from the centres and peripheries, thus undermining the foundations of theories that claim to be universal.

It should be noted, however, that volumes mentioned above and *Art and Imagination* are all collective works. Perhaps, to make a synthesis of all theories of imagination, opening up to collective work could be the only way to account for the multifaceted subject of imagination. Indeed, it could be argued that talking about imagination implies a constant dialogue because every scholar (or, in general, every human being) imagines and conceptualises differently from others. Thinking imagination means thinking within a community.

For these reasons, one might feel permitted to suggest some research directions that might fit within the community of scholars that Moser and Sukla have expertly brought together. Allow me, for example, to suggest some names of scholars from twentieth-century literary criticism and Italian philosophy who have focused (and are focusing) on the theme of the imagination and who deserve to be rediscovered and (re)valued in the international debate.

It could be important, for example, to take up the pioneering literary studies present in the works of the Geneva School (Albert Béguin, Georges Poulet, Jean-Pierre Richard). The Geneva School is also influenced by the thought of Gaston Bachelard, who is a key figure in the philosophy of imagination. In my opinion, there is still much to be discovered in Bachelard's works (as also Moser argues, 24), especially regarding the link between his phenomenology of images (which influenced Gilbert Durand and his "archetypological" analysis of mythical and folkloric imaginaries) and his epistemological work.

Imagination is at the centre of interest of some Italian philosophical schools that deserve to be re-discovered in the international debate. Fundamental, in this sense, are the works of Giovanni Piana. Piana, through a careful reinterpretation of Husserlian phenomenology, has contributed to renewing interest in the theme of imagination, in particular regarding the musical imagination. Piana's philosophy, also, influenced the research of his pupils, such as Paolo Spinicci (who studies visual arts and storytelling) and Carlo Serra (who is closer to ethnomusicological research). Moreover, the role of Emilio Garroni should also be remembered: he proposed a notable reinterpretation of the Kantian aesthetic, which nowadays is applied to cinema and digital media studies by Garroni's pupil Pietro Montani. Lastly, I think that an analysis of the theme of imagination in the thought of the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico would be equally necessary.

As *Imagination and Art* invites us, there are a lot of possible research works to do and, of course, to imagine. The perspectives that open up, both in re-conceptualizing the past with a

renewed view and in opening up towards a future with theoretical challenges that we can only imagine today, are enthusiastic. And for this inspiration, we have to thank the *Imagination and Art* and its explorations through art and theory.

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