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On Bartlett's (1928) "Types of Imagination"

TANIA ZITTOUN

Summary

Known for his work on memory, Sir Frederick C. Bartlett also repeatedly wrote about imagination as part of his attempt to understand the dynamics of mind. Bartlett's 1928 text explores autobiographical and literary material so as to identify three types of imagination (assimilative, creative, and constructive) on a continuum, depending on how passive or intentional these are. This chapter discusses how three of Bartlett's propositions have been taken on by research: processes of imagination, typology of people, and methodological choices. Finally, it is proposed that researchers pursue the exploration of variations of processes involved in imagination as proposed by Bartlett, as well as his original methodologies.

Introduction

Sir Frederick C. Bartlett (1896–1969) was a psychologist known mostly for his work on memory. Trained in philosophy, sociology, and ethics, he worked all his life at the University of Cambridge, where he directed the Psychological Laboratory from 1922 on, and remained in constant dialogue with the scholars (anthropologists, philosophers) of his time (Rosa, 1996; Wagoner, 2017b). His core contribution is the idea that mind is constructive, that is, that remembering or imagining is based on a multitude of experiences transformed, following specific processes, according to the person's past trajectories as well as social and cultural norms (Wagoner, 2017a, 2017b). Imagination was a subject of interest for Bartlett since his first experimental studies published in 1916, where he exposed people to inkblots—among other tests—and documented their associations. Variations of these studies appear in 1921

and 1925 and are summarized in Bartlett's (1932/1995, Chapter 2) seminal book.¹ There his analysis is based on the variety of associations "projected" and reflecting people's interests and occupation. He proposes to distinguish two types of respondents, the first one citing specific images, either emotionally charged or simply lively detailed, from a second group, who propose generalizing and distanced answers (Bartlett, 1932/1995, pp. 39–43).

Bartlett was in search of general theoretical explanations that could account for the variations he observed. It is thus that we can read his 1928 paper "Types of imagination," which examines dominances in people's ways of imagining. In this paper, Bartlett refers not to experiments but exclusively to autobiographical material from writers and scientists. The paper's core argument is a distinction between three types of imagination: an "assimilative imagination," mainly based on emotional resonance and associations triggered by external events; a "creative interpretation," which demands resonance but is also an active re-creation of someone else's proposition; and a "constructive imagination," in which it is a person's intentionality that guides and organizes the process of imagining.

Reading: "Types of Imagination"

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At first sight it may seem as if Imagination can easily be characterized as a continuous process of having images; but this is very soon found to be inadequate and misleading. On the one hand we have a great number of good witnesses who insist that in their best imaginative work they have made use of no images, or of very few; and on the other, everybody makes [a] distinction between flights of fancy, for example, which certainly involve successions of images, and true imagination. Perhaps a better method of approach is found when we examine how the material dealt with in the imaginative process is built together. In the flight of fancy image follows image, and the transition from one to the next seems to be determined by something in the nature of each individual step of the whole chain, or by each individual act of imaging. Thus the train as a whole is very apt, to the outsider, to appear jerky, ill-connected, having little internal consistency, though from each step to the next the connexion may be more or less evident. The sequence presents the characteristics of what is now generally called free association. In imagination the bond is to be found in the whole imaginative structure considered in its completeness. A plan or programme is at work which cannot be found by any amount of analysis of any separate bit of the material dealt with. It is both interesting and important to try to understand the kind of links that may build together the material used by imaginative processes, whether this material consist of images or not. Such a quest may help to define significant differences between types of imagination, and may thus help to throw light upon the parts played by imaginative effort in the mental life of man.

1. In these studies, Bartlett presents people with 36 inkblot cards, face down. He asks them to turn one card at a time and say whatever comes to mind: "Here are a number of ink-blots. They represent nothing in particular, but might recall almost anything. See what you can make of them, as you sometimes find shapes for clouds, or see faces in a fire" (Bartlett, 1932/1995, p. 34). He describes how the subjects hold these cards at arm's length and try to make sense of them.

First, then, we may take a relatively simple and fundamental form which may be called assimilative imagination.

This is best characterized by illustration. At the beginning of his profoundly interesting book, *Long Ago and Far Away*,¹ W. H. Hudson tells how he came to write an autobiography:

I was feeling weak and depressed when I came down from London one November evening to the south coast: the sea, the clear sky, the light colours of the afterglow kept me too long on the front in an east wind in that low condition, with the result that I was laid up for six weeks with a very serious illness.

This was the beginning of a remarkable and protracted imaginative state of mind.

On the second day of my illness, during an interval of comparative ease, I fell into recollections of my childhood, and at once I had that far, forgotten past with me again as I had never previously had it. It was not like that mental condition, known to most persons, when some sight or sound or, more frequently, the perfume of some flower associated with our early life restores the past suddenly and so vividly that it is almost an illusion. That is an intensely emotional condition, and vanishes as quickly as it comes. This was different. It was as if the cloud shadows and haze had passed away and the entire wide prospect beneath me made clearly visible. Over it all my eyes could range at will, choosing this or that point to dwell upon, to examine it in all its details; or in the case of some person known to me as a child to follow his life till it ended or passed from sight; then to return to the same point again to repeat the process with other lives and resume my rambles in the old familiar haunts.

The vision stayed, and Hudson decided

to try to save it from the oblivion which would presently cover it again. Propped up with pillows, I began with pencil and writing-pad to put it down in some sort of order, and went on with it at intervals during the whole six weeks of my confinement, and in this way produced the first rough draft of my book.

In this case the materials for the imaginative reconstruction of the artist came from the treasury of his own early experiences. He took them as they came and shaped them afresh. But the material may just as well come from other sources. In *Years of Childhood*² Aksakoff records how, as a very young boy, he went with his mother to visit some friends, and there made his first acquaintance with *The Arabian Nights*. No other book, he says, had ever aroused in him such sympathy and interest. He read the stories whenever he could, and was always completely absorbed by them. Once his mother, having searched for him everywhere, at length found him in his bedroom, so carried away by what he read that he had neither eyes nor ears for anything else. He did not notice that she had come into the room. She went out and fetched somebody else, and still the young Aksakoff remained entirely unaware of their presence. He was, as he says, "lost in a world of dreams."

This kind of rare imaginative sympathy is sometimes produced by material of a very different order, as in the famous story of how Malebranche found a copy of Descartes's *De*

Homine on a second-hand stall. He read, and as he read his breath came fast, and his heart beat so furiously that for awhile he found that he must put the book aside.

There is indeed no limit to the kind of object upon which the assimilative imagination may foster. A picture, a poem, a stage-play, a work in marble, a building, religious belief, intellectual constructions, the human form or person, a scene of natural beauty—anything, given only the necessary conditions, may set the process going. And what are these necessary conditions?

First there is something that seems most fitly called “a resonance of feeling.” A stretched string has its natural period, so that anything near by which is vibrating with that period can set it readily into sympathetic movement. Everybody knows how Helmholtz used this principle in the building of his famous theory of auditory perception. In the inner ear, he pointed out, we have an immensely complicated mechanism, the elements of which all have their natural periods and vibrate in sympathy with the movements of the external air, so giving us the world of sound in which we live. I think it not wholly fanciful to hold that we have with us larger systems of feeling, of memories, of ideas, of aspiration which move when the fit objects appear; and then we capture these objects complete by the assimilative imagination.

There is, however, no process of imagination which is not in some part intellectual, cognitive. In the assimilative imagination there is a cognitive attitude, a direction upon objects or material. This is not, as Hudson points out, arrested and held by particular outstanding detail only. It is directed, without effort of analysis upon a whole situation. It may indeed stay for a time with an item and then move to another, ranging over the whole, now rapidly and now at leisure. But there is no search to find out how the whole is built. There is no instructed picking out of this and rejection of that. The situation stands before the dreamer and he takes it all in. This is a type of cognitive attitude which psychology shows to be extremely fundamental, extremely primitive.

Further, in assimilative imagination there is a complete absence of criticism. The dreamer does not weigh and value the material with which he deals. He and it are for the time being in a kind of functional unity, so that there is no question of its doing one thing and his doing another. There is no part of him withheld from his material. He is, as we say, for the time “rapt,” “carried away,” and has no reserves. But this does not mean that the situation which awakens his dream is merely assimilated without change. There is nothing in human imagination, at whatsoever level, that is dead and changeless. It is altered, but the person who alters it is as surprised as anybody else to know what he has done. His *criticism* has not produced the change, but those deep-lying tendencies which are at the basis of his psychological life, and which work always, though he may not know what they are doing. This is beautifully illustrated by Aksakoff.

When the little Russian returned from his visit he continued to read the tales, with exactly the same immediate effect. But now he began to repeat them to his sister and his aunt:

With such burning animation and what may be called such self-forgetfulness that, without being aware of it, I filled out the narratives of Scheherazade with many details of my own invention; I spoke of all I had read, exactly as if I had been on the spot and seen it with my own eyes. When I had excited the attention and curiosity of my two hearers, I began, complying with their wishes, to read the book to them aloud; and then my own additions were detected and pointed out by my aunt, whose objections were confirmed by my sister. Again and again my aunt stopped me by saying: “What

you told us is not there. How's that? You must have made it up out of your own head. What a story-teller you are! It's impossible to believe you.” I was much taken aback by such an accusation and forced to reflect. . . . I was much surprised myself not to find in the book what I believed I had read there and what was firmly fixed in my head. I became more cautious and kept myself in hand until I got excited; when once excited, I forgot all precautions and my heated imagination usurped absolute power.

At this point assimilative imagination comes very near another and, as I would believe, a higher kind, and we get *creative interpretation*.

The singer, the musician playing the works of another, the conductor of a choir or an orchestra, the actor, the poet as he reads poetry, sometimes even the philosopher as he expounds another's thought, may all show a creative effort of interpretation. Here also is that resonance of feeling in which the interpreter and the interpreted are at one. The cognitive attitude is once again directed primarily upon the whole complex construction in which the interpreter is interested. The good actor, for instance, never merely says the single brilliant sentence, or does the single significant action. All his words and actions have the colour and weight of his whole part in all its intricacy of interweaving with other parts. The creative interpreter of another's music is not merely playing a sequence of notes, but is making alive the passion and meaning of the whole. It is the whole that he absorbs and in absorbing reshapes. And he does reshape. The lack of criticism has gone. He, the interpreter, is an integral and leading part of the whole imaginative effort. He now does not quite lose himself. He may even make of his material something greater than it ever was before he came upon it and gave it his stamp.

It is a difficult thing to state the nature of the criticism which is actively present in all creative interpretation. It may perhaps be said that such criticism has no reference to any supposed objective purpose or centre of the work which is being interpreted, but only to the personal experience of the interpreter. He alters, adds, omits, and if he is charged with these things he will say: “Yes, I did all this, though at the time I generally did not know.” But if you ask him for his reasons he is dumb, or merely invents. In a way he has no reasons. They are buried in his life.

Perhaps all that type of imagination which we are apt to call “visionary,” as, for example, in the work of Plato, the writer of the Book of Job, Vaughan, Blake, Coleridge, Shelley,³ is really creative interpretation of material, the stuff of which comes in the main from the life and experience of the interpreter himself. The things made by the visionary are like dreams, sometimes are dreams. He is an artist for the moment, and then often drops to the ordinary again like an actor when his play is done. His work is often fragmentary, episodic, the fire of his creation like a leaping flame. He resonates to what is in him, knows it all at once, reshapes it without guessing how, and very soon passes on, a perfectly ordinary being again.

Some, however, are not so. Their vision is not of the moment but of the years. They have the intellectual imagination. “To preserve Romance,” says Meredith, “we must be in the heads of our people as well as in the hearts.”

This is a very different psychological realm from that of assimilative imagination or creative interpretation. Resonance of feeling now plays but a small part, if any. Lack of analysis and of criticism have gone. We have, in fact, what I would like to call genuine *constructive imagination*. Plan, purpose, some kind of formulated objective aim, now comes to the front. An

idea, an aspiration, an interest towards an end achieves articulation, and thereupon ensues a period of hard and conscious endeavour, often long drawn out and alternating with periods in which little or no conscious effort is involved. The material to be dealt with is collected, analysed, evaluated, criticized, set together into its new forms. At this level of imaginative effort an actual sketch of proposed work is often set down by the author long before the final product is complete. Milton in 1643 entered in his notebooks drafts which show that already his plans for a great imaginative poem had set in the direction of *Paradise Lost*. Publication came twenty years later. Darwin began to keep notebooks on the general phenomena of evolution in 1832. Ten years later he made his first rough sketch of what was to become *The Origin of Species*. In 1844 this sketch was considerably expanded. Then for fourteen years he read widely, experimented and observed laboriously, and in 1859 the book was published. He was excessively critical throughout, spoke of his style as "incredibly bad and most difficult to clear," and so heavily corrected his proofs as, according to his own statement, almost to rewrite the book. In 1841 Adams, then an undergraduate at St. John's College, Cambridge, made a memorandum that he would investigate the explanation of the perturbations of the planet Uranus. In 1843 he graduated and began to put his plans into active operation. Two years later he had completed his calculations, which he sent to the Astronomer Royal, and which would, if they had been followed up, have resulted in the earlier discovery of the planet Neptune.

On the other hand, the gap between the articulation of a plan and its full achievement may be very small, as, for instance, in the case of Anthony Trollope. Some of his novels have all the marks of conscious, critical, intellectual imaginative effort. As is well known, he constructed a preliminary "lay out" for most of them, but having completed this, generally set to work on the story immediately and produced it at considerable speed.

The points of importance are: the adumbration of a scheme; the articulation of a plan; the collection of material, not only from past personal experience but notably from all kinds of sources through contemporary observation; the sorting and criticism of the material, and its relating to the central plan. The plan, preformed, shapes all that follows, though at the same time the plan itself grows, changes, may even become very different from what it was at the beginning. It is never in abeyance, however, and all that follows its articulation is significant in relation to it. This fact and the mode of collection of the material give to constructive imagination a cognitive, an objective, intellectual character which is only partially achieved by the other types. The criticism involved is not now that more than half-blind selective stressing, omission, changing of time, colour, balance of form and emotion of creative interpretation. It is dominated by the assignment of more or less definite values to the details of the collected material in relation to the general aim of the work.

In any long-continued effort of constructive imagination there are almost always moments, or stretches, of assimilative imagination and, it may be, of creative interpretation. Very often, indeed, the whole work takes its rise in just such a moment. These vital points can always be easily detected. They carry about them an excitement, an enthusiasm, an emotional quality, often an unexpectedness amounting almost to irrelevance, that are less marked in the main work. "Two things," says Kant, "fill the soul with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence: the starry sky above me and the moral law within me." Many sentences come from Kant with a sudden burst, as if they are warm with a life that is for the most part kept in

hiding. All masters of constructive imagination have these bursts. We say of them: "Here is insight," as if their makers are responding to something from within.

In general, however, the constructive imagination is awake to the outside world, collecting details from everywhere and constantly preoccupied, not so much with their character as detail for descriptive purposes as with their interrelations. Thus its scope is wider, its products as a rule vaster, and the architecture of its products generally to the forefront. It depends not upon the single presented datum, or upon the single completed work, but it utilizes a mass of material which it finds as detail and leaves as a completed structure.

What is it that determines to which of these types of imaginative work a man is bent? Very little systematic attempt has been made to answer this important psychological problem. I will hazard a few remarks, stating them with a dogmatism that is far from adequately representing my actual attitude.

The determination of type of imagination is far more a matter of temperament than of training. The assimilative type presupposes predominantly (a) a capacity for wonder and (b) a certain attitude of submissiveness. It is on the whole characteristic of childhood and of somewhat relaxed states of mind. It is of all imaginative work probably the most partial and specialized. Thus it raises in an acute form the vexed question of specialized inherited abilities and interests. It appears most probable that psychologists will have to admit a far more complete furniture of specialized interests operating or ready to operate at very early phases of individual mental life than they have been wont to do. These, combined with a certain readiness to be impressed and a marked degree of submissiveness, give us the temperamental setting of assimilative imagination.

Given the specialized interest, the capacity for wonder, and, instead of submissiveness, a certain active attitude of sympathetic co-operation, and for assimilative imagination we get creative interpretation. The first type produces the acceptor, the second the executor. The kind of "comradeship" attitude of the interpreter towards the material with which he has to deal is difficult to characterize, but it is undeniably of genuine psychological importance. It is an attitude by virtue of which a man is peculiarly reactive to hints, half-formulated or half-articulated desires and statements, filling them out, carrying them farther, putting into them what they mean, and not merely accepting as already in them what they actually say. There is in it neither arrogation of superiority nor acceptance of inferiority. Some people constantly display this attitude in their relationships towards their environment, both social and material. This class contributes the great executants of life in all realms. From it come the creative interpreters.

The third class has a far wider mental range. The capacity for wonder remains as fundamental as ever, but because it has a different temperamental setting it produces exceedingly different results. Submissiveness has gone, and there is less of an attitude of sympathetic fellowship with whatever is the source of the wonder than of mastery. The material dealt with is not simply accepted or interpreted, but is taken as a problem and a challenge; and thus it is used and changed. Dominance is the essential temperamental characteristic of the genuine constructive imagination. It gathers its own material wherever it can, often searching wide fields; and what it gathers it shapes. Sometimes the dominance is confined within its own somewhat specialized field, but more often it bursts out into expression in every part of a man's life, so that its owner is spoken of as "a man to be reckoned with." Thus of all types of

imagination, this is the one whose products arouse most opposition, not merely because they are the most original, but because they breathe a certain uncompromising aggressiveness.

1. London, 1918.
2. English translation by J. M. Duff. London, 1916.
3. Cf. Walter de la Mare: *Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination*, London, 1919, p. 13.

Commentary

TRACING BARTLETT'S IDEAS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CREATIVITY RESEARCH

Bartlett's text is interesting for various reasons. With reference to existing debates on imagination, he first proposes that imagination is not only visual (it is not only about "images"), and second, he goes beyond the idea that imagination can be either creative or reproductive, an idea durably present in psychology (James, 1890; Ribot, 1900/2007). Third, rather than judging types of imagination mainly based on their social newness of a creative process (e.g., as in later small-c and big-C) or product, Bartlett distinguishes them according to the prevalence in people's conduct, of inner motives, or the demands of social and cultural reality.

Bartlett thus proposes a threefold typology of an imagination which can be visual, musical, sensory, or abstract, and that is organized on a continuum. For Bartlett, imagination always demands some form of thinking or cognition and some anchoring in personal and emotional experience; what varies is only the predominance of one over the other, and the assimilative versus a more active, accommodative, or intentional process, and on the inclusion of the demands of the world. "Assimilative imagination" is all absorbed in a person's experience and is mainly governed by emotional resonance between a situation and a person's life. "Creative imagination," where the idea of being creative rather than relatively passive appears, demands a new synthesis of given material with inner resonance and emotions, yet with some active engagement. Finally, "constructive imagination," which is probably the closest to what others would have called "creative imagination," is active, intentional, distanced from emotions; if it still draws on personal motives, it is now submitted to a larger plan.

It is thus worth highlighting the processes identified here by Bartlett: there is (a) an "idea, an aspiration, an interest toward an end" or "adumbration of a scheme"; this provides (b) "a plan for articulation"; then (c) material is collected from personal experience as well as from "contemporary observation," and criticized, reflected upon, organized according to the plan; (d) the plan is brought to completion, yet it may grow and change or be substantially transformed. As a whole, there might be a very long or shorter gap from the initial intuition to completion, extending to years, and the process may involve phases of the two other types of imagination. For Bartlett, it is first the "mode of collection" of the material which is specific in this type of imagination and which has a "cognitive, an objective, an intellectual character": we could say that this type of thinking process precisely creates distance from the initial personal experience predominant in the two other types. This distance is increased by two other components; first, as mentioned, it is "open to the outside world"; second, it is preoccupied with the "interrelations" between things—it is through these synthetic and creative acts that it gets a "wider scope."

Bartlett concludes the text with three paragraphs distinguishing types of people, following the statement "The determination of type of imagination is far more a matter of temperament than of training." Assimilative imagination thus demands a "capacity to wonder" and submissiveness; when submissiveness is replaced by "sympathetic cooperation" people engage in creative imagination; they may become creative interpreters, a type of "great executants." Constructive imagination demands the capacity to wonder, but neither submissiveness nor sympathetic cooperation, rather "dominance" and its related "uncompromising aggressiveness." Of course one can question this division between leaders and executants and this bossy and lonely model of the misunderstood and focused creator. Although this type of temperament may be taken for granted at this time (Bordogna, 2001)—William James (1907/1975) himself explained different philosophical works based on temperament—it is quickly stated and little supported in Bartlett's paper. It may even appear contradictory with Bartlett's later emphasis on human experience in constructive thinking processes. It is thus not really a surprise that already in *Remembering*, published four years later, Bartlett (1932/1995, p. 39) had a more nuanced hypothesis on this typology of people, writing:

The relatively set ways of reacting which are illustrated by a given "type" have for the most part, been acquired gradually. We have no right to regard them as psychologically innate, or as absolute psychological starting points, unless we have better reasons for this than mere classification itself.

Bartlett has mainly been remembered as a memory researcher (Van der Veer, 2001); it is only relatively recently that other parts of his work have come to researchers' attention, especially his work of thinking in general, which is now seen as displaying a cultural psychological sensitivity (Rosa, 1996; Wagoner, 2017a). However, his work on imagination and creativity is little discussed. Others after him have, however, proposed analyses that may be inspired by his work on creativity, or more likely, that reflect some part of his propositions.

A first group of studies could reflect Bartlett's interest for the processes involved in the three types of imagination. For instance Wolff (1947) tries to distinguish types of imagination, more or less based on subjective experience, drawing on different cultural material, more or less open to the social world; although he focuses on images, he attempts to identify the processes involved, yet only Bartlett's (1932/1995) *Remembering* book is quoted. Regarding the various types, in later work, the idea of "assimilative imagination" will be reduced to the idea of "absorption" in fiction and the arts (Nell, 1988) and usually dismissed for its passivity, with no idea of a continuum with other forms of imagination or creativity; recent studies in that field look for brain correlates (e.g., Calarco, Fong, Rain, & Mar, 2017). "Creative interpretation" has been examined, for instance, in the domain of music, where it has been argued that both listening and playing require creativity and imagination (Hargreaves, Hargreaves, & North, 2012; Hargreaves, MacDonald, & Miell, 2012; Hargreaves, Miell, & MacDonald, 2012), but it does not seem that these studies refer to Bartlett's work either. "Constructive imagination" is probably what has been recently most explored by creativity research, where current studies propose relatively similar understanding of the creative process: emphasis on an overall view, cultivation and critical examination of material, time for the process, openness to the world and subjective involvement, evolution of the project, etc. (Sternberg, 2016; Tanggaard, 2014). Here again it is hard to find any mention of Bartlett's work on imagination.

A second group of studies explores not the process but the typology of people imagining, or personality components. A rare mention of Bartlett's 1928 paper can be

found in a study on mental economy in imagination (Havelka, 1968). More frequently, types of imagination are further distinguished (Hunter, 2013) or personality types are examined in links to creative performances (Barron & Harrington, 1981), yet without reference to Bartlett. However, the role of personality in creativity has become less important in research (Runco, 2004), with, of course, exceptions (e.g. Liang & Lin, 2015).

A third potential development of Bartlett's work regards his methodological choices. As head of an experimental laboratory, Bartlett gave quite a bit of attention to methodological techniques; he himself devised a wide range of methods, some of them, such as the guided reproduction, are currently revalorized in cultural psychology (Wagoner, 2009; Wagoner & Gillespie, 2014; Wagoner & Jensen, 2015). Bartlett (1950) seemed to have privileged experimental studies later in his life, as a programmatic paper for the study of intelligence suggests. The original demonstration made in 1928, that is, the use of autobiographic novels, letters, and diaries, has, however, not been explicitly highlighted. It is therefore interesting to note that Bartlett first engaged in experiments to trigger people's imagination (inkblots), identified interesting variations, and only then expanded his first intuitions and exemplified them through autobiographical and literary material used as qualitative data. The fragmented aspects identified in local experiments thus become part of a more meaningful whole through these richer, case-study-based materials. To my knowledge, this specific methodological move, and its implicit abductive quality, has not been highlighted sufficiently. Even more, it may be that even authors who have analyzed the creativity of specific artists and scientists through their work (Gardner, 1993) or through interviews with creative people (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) have first undertaken case studies, then turned their analysis into dimensions to be more systematically tested. Other studies made the more explicit choice to focus on autobiographical material to access processes of thinking and imagination (Gillespie & Zittoun, 2010; Valsiner, 2014; Zittoun & Gillespie, 2012, 2016; Zittoun et al., 2013)—yet here also, with no explicit mention of Bartlett.

NEW DIRECTIONS OF RESEARCH BASED ON THESE HISTORICAL INSIGHTS

Bartlett's work has been largely discussed, his work on memory and thinking valorized (Wagoner, 2017a), and his theory of schemes criticized (Van der Veer, 2001). Little has so far been said on his explorations of imagination and the creative process (see, e.g., Wagoner & Glăveanu, 2016). It might be that this was a side issue for the author, or that his treatment of the question was anecdotal. Based on the reading proposed here, however, two lines of reflection are worth pursuing.

The first concerns the continuum that allows articulating what Bartlett calls types of imagination. Instead of considering as different or specific phenomena absorption in fiction, creative interpretation, and actual creation, it may be much more productive to see these as variations of the same processes or variations in configuration along various dimensions, such as emotional commitment, distantiation through critical analysis, openness to the social and material reality, etc. This would allow researchers, as proposed elsewhere, to pursue the project of more integrative understanding of the human mind and the role of imagination and creativity within (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2016). It might also give further means to support people's creative commitment (see also Sternberg, 2016) and thus counter the idea that modalities of creativity depend on genetic or personality predispositions.

Second, as mentioned earlier, interesting methodological choices were made by Bartlett throughout his work on imagination—experimentation preceding more complete analysis of richer data, itself allowing expanding and enriching a theoretical sketch. This

move itself might be worth analyzing and may inspire variations of ideographic or case studies, allowing generalization at the level of the processes (Marková, 2016; Molenaar & Valsiner, 2008; Zittoun, 2016, 2017)—obviously a more constructive move than attempts to generalize typologies of people.

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PART EIGHT

Creativity in Art and Design