

# **Imagination and the Will**

Stefan Fabian Helmut Dorsch

University College London

PhD Philosophy

January 2005

## **Abstract**

The principal aim of my thesis is to provide a *unified theory of imagining*, that is, a theory which aspires to capture the common nature of all central forms of imagining and to distinguish them from all paradigm instances of non-imaginative phenomena. The theory which I intend to put forward is a version of what I call the *Agency Account* of imagining and, accordingly, treats imaginings as mental actions of a certain kind. More precisely, it maintains that imaginings are mental actions that aim at the formation of episodic representations, the content of which is directly determined by what we want them to represent.

My defence of this version of the Agency Account happens in two stages. On the one hand, I try to show that it is both extensionally adequate and explanatorily illuminating with respect to those mental states or projects which are clear instances of either imaginative or non-imaginative phenomena. And on the other hand, I seek to demonstrate that the most plausible alternative to the Agency Account - namely the *Cognitive Account* according to which it is distinctive of imaginings that they are non-cognitive phenomena and thus to be contrasted with perceptions, judgements, and so on - is bound to fail as a unified theory of imagining.

The dissertation contains five main parts. In the first, I specify in more detail what a unified account of imagining has to achieve and, in particular, which phenomena it is supposed to capture. The second part presents the Cognitive Account, thereby focussing on Brian O'Shaughnessy's sophisticated version of it; while the third part is reserved for the evaluation and rejection of the Cognitive Account. In the fourth part, I develop my version of the Agency Account of imagining. And the fifth and last part is concerned with the accommodation of potential counterexamples to it.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. A Unified Account of Imagining</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1. Two Desiderata	19
2.2. Central Cases of Imaginative and Non-Imaginative Phenomena	22
2.3. Imaginative and Cognitive Episodes	35
2.4. Candidates for Non-Central Cases of Imagining	41
<b>3. The Exposition of the Cognitive Account</b>	<b>47</b>
3.1. The Three Main Theses of O'Shaughnessy's Account	52
3.2. O'Shaughnessy's Argumentative Strategy	59
3.3. The Cognitive Constraints on Perceptions and Beliefs	65
3.4. The Non-Traditional Elements in O'Shaughnessy's Epistemology	72
3.5. The Specific Origins of Imaginings in the Mind	80
<b>4. The Assessment of the Cognitive Account</b>	<b>85</b>
4.1. The Explanatory Power of Negation Claims	86
4.2. Two Counterexamples to (Certain) Negation Claims	96
4.3. The Extensional Adequacy of Negation Claims	101
4.4. Representational Echo Theses	114
4.5. Other Echo Theses	122
<b>5. The Exposition of the Agency Account of Imagining</b>	<b>131</b>
5.1. Mental Projects	133
5.2. Cognitive Projects	143
5.3. Imaginative Projects: a First Proposal	145
5.4. Imaginative Projects: a Second Proposal	149
5.5. Imaginative Episodes as Simple Imaginative Projects	159

<b>6. The Defence of the Agency Account of Imagining</b>	<b>169</b>
6.1. Explanatory Power and Extensional Adequacy	169
6.2. Non-Representational Imaginings	176
6.3. Spontaneous Images and Thoughts	178
6.4. Daydreaming	183
6.5. Pictorial Experiences	194
<b>7. Conclusion</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>8. Bibliography</b>	<b>215</b>

## **Acknowledgements**

Writing this dissertation has been - despite my sole responsibility for the final product - the work of very many. Most of all, I would like to thank my parents Renate and Helmut Dorsch, my sisters Andrea and Kristina Dorsch, and my aunt Gertrud Dorsch, for their all-encompassing support of and unchanging belief in me. I have also been very lucky to have had in Malcolm Budd, Sebastian Gardner, Mike Martin and Lucy O'Brien highly committed and inspiring supervisors, who always have been very supportive and challenging and whom to work with has been a fantastic and very enjoyable opportunity. The very many discussions with Davor Bodrozic and Gianfranco Soldati have been equally full of philosophical curiosity and insight, as well as a friendly spirit; and their continuous encouragement during the time of writing has been immense. For reading the whole or parts of the dissertation and providing me with many valuable comments, I am very grateful to Jiri Benovsky, Davor Bodrozic, Malcolm Budd, Sebastian Gardner, Henning Hahn, David Harris, Sarah Heinzer, Frank Hofmann, Mike Martin, Lucy O'Brien, Gianfranco Soldati, Juan Suarez, and Gian-Andri Toendury. And finally, I would like to thank David Harris for making sense of my language; Richard Wollheim for inspiration and motivation; and all my family and friends for their mostly uncomplaining patience during the last couple of years.

# 1. Introduction

The primary aim of this dissertation is to present and defend what I call the *Agency Account* of imagining. The main claim of this theory is that imaginings are mental actions of a certain kind. Accordingly, imagining is something that we actively and voluntarily do.

The particular version of the Agency Account that I intend to put forward is thereby meant to provide a *unified account* of imagining. Such a theory is generally characterized by the fact that it captures the common nature of the central cases of imagining (e.g., visualizing, supposing, or daydreaming) and is able to distinguish them from the central cases of non-imaginative mental phenomena, notably cognitive representations (e.g., perceptions, judgements, or memories). The minimal goal of any theory which is intended as a unified account of imagining should therefore be to achieve extensional as well as constitutional adequacy: it should be valid for the paradigm cases of imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena; and it should correctly describe the nature of the former. The main theme of the discussion will therefore be the elucidation of the specific nature of primary examples of imagining which distinguishes them from other, non-imaginative mental phenomena. In particular, it will inquire whether it is possible to account for the particular character of these imaginings by identifying a set of features distinctive of them and responsible for their imaginative character. That is, it will focus on the possibility of specifying this character in terms of individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for something to be an imagining, at least with respect to paradigm cases.

The issue of formulating a unified account of imagining has often been neglected in the philosophical tradition. Many of the discussions of imagining in the past and the present have focused, not on the nature of imaginings, but on their role in our mental lives and our interactions with other people and the world. It has been widely acknowledged that imagining is very prominent in and significant for various parts of our lives, ranging from our emotional engagement with other people (e.g., Goldie (2000): 194ff.) and our moral evaluation of actions (e.g., Johnson (1993)) to the aesthetic appreciation of artworks (e.g., Walton (1990) and its many followers) and even the cognition of parts of the world.<sup>1</sup> And

---

<sup>1</sup> Although imaginings are typically held not to provide knowledge or epistemic support themselves (but cf. chapter 4 for an opposing view), it seems beyond doubt that they are often involved in other ways in the acquisition of knowledge. Cf. the discussions on thought experiments (e.g., Sorensen (1992)), the link between conceivability and possibility (e.g., Gendler & Hawthorne (2002)), the role of mental imagery in geometry (e.g., Giaquinto (1992)), or the project of trying to determine how many windows are in one's house (e.g., Pylyshyn (2002): especially 164).

the respective philosophical discussions have shed light on important aspects of many different kinds of imagining, such as sensory imaginings (e.g., visualizing a face), intellectual imaginings (e.g., supposing or imagining that it rains), affective imaginings (e.g., imagining an itch), or imaginative projects (e.g., imagining being a certain person in a certain situation). But the imaginative nature common to all kinds of imagining has typically remained uninvestigated.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, when philosophers have addressed the question of what it means for a mental phenomenon to be imaginative, they have usually concentrated exclusively on specific forms of imagining, notably on sensory or visual imaginings.<sup>3</sup> The neglect of the issue of what all imaginings have in common *as* imaginings may thus have often been closely related to the neglect of non-sensory or complex kinds of imagining. As a result, most discussions of imaginings have been concerned either with aspects of imaginings other than (though perhaps dependent on or otherwise linked to) their imaginativeness, or with the imaginativeness of only a certain kind of imaginings. Only a few philosophers have attempted to provide a satisfactory account of imagining in its (more or less) full variety.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Walton, who spends considerable time on specifying "a number of dimensions along which imaginings can vary", maintains that we have to be content with an "intuitive understanding of what it is to imagine", and that we cannot "spell out what they have in common" (Walton (1990): 19; cf. ch. 1 in general).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Collingwood (1958): chs. 9f., Sartre (2004), Peacocke (1985), Hopkins (1998): ch. 7, and, it seems, Wittgenstein (1984b): vol. II, sections 63-147, to name just a few of those who focus on sensory or visual imaginings. McGinn discusses sensory and intellectual imaginings as well as imaginative projects (i.e., daydreams), but does not (aim to) provide a unified account of them. Instead, he argues only that they form an "imagination spectrum" which extends from the most simple and temporally and conceptually prior imaginative phenomena (e.g., those involved in sensory representation) to the most complex and developed ones (e.g., those involved in creativity; cf. McGinn (2004): 13). Cf. the discussion of the five main forms of imagining in the next chapter for further references to accounts which focus on particular kinds of imagining.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Scruton (1974): ch. 7, Casey (1976), and O'Shaughnessy (2000): chs. 11f. for clear examples. Apart from Casey, however, none of the three discusses daydreams or similar imaginative projects in any detail. Whether other proposals (are intended to) constitute a unified account of imagining is less clear. Hume's account of imaginings as a certain kind of "ideas" may apply to all kinds of imaginative episodes as well. But it seems untenable since it treats the difference between sensory and intellectual representations, as well as between imaginative and cognitive ones, to be quantitative (i.e., a matter of "vivacity") rather than qualitative (cf. Hume's comments on the differences between "impressions" and "ideas", or between the "ideas" of belief, memory and imagination: Hume (2000): sections 1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.3; 1.1.1.5; 1.3.5.3; 1.3.7.7). Although Ryle discusses mainly sensory cases, his account of imagining as a form of "internal" pretending or pretending "in one's head" seems to capture cases of both sensory imagining (e.g., visualizing) and intellectual imagining (e.g., fancying; cf. Ryle (1963): chs. 7f., especially section 8.6; cf. also the brief discussion in section 4.5 below). White analyses both visualizing and intellectual imagining in terms of thinking of the possible (White (1990): 122f; 184; cf. also note 8 below), but does not explicitly connect the two analyses. And although Currie and Ravenscroft treat both sensory and intellectual imaginings as simulations of their respective cognitive counterparts (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11; 49; cf. also the brief discussion in section 4.5 below), their main concern is solely with the imagining involved in imaginatively adopting a perspective on the world different from one's current one (ibid: 8f.; 11).

Relatedly, it has been common in discussions about imaginings and their role in our mental lives to take for granted what it means to imagine something - as it is likewise often assumed that we have a good grasp of what it means to believe something or desire it. One particular difficulty with this approach is that imaginings - perhaps in contrast to beliefs and desires - do not seem to constitute a mental kind. Hence it is not obvious that there is a unity in imagining; nor, if so, what it consists in or comprises. This may lead to cases in which a certain kind of imagining is postulated or appealed to in the context of a promising explanation of a particular phenomenon; while the lack of further elucidation of the nature of the type of imagining in question may generate in others considerable doubts about its proposed role or even its existence.<sup>5</sup> Such complications, as well as more generally the prominent position of imaginings in our lives and interactions with each other and the world, provide sufficient motivation for the investigation of the possibility of a unified account of imagining. It may be helpful and illuminating to learn more about what it means for a representation to be imaginative, and how this relates to or influences the various forms of engagement involving imagining. The nature and unity of imagining is of great philosophical interest both in itself and in relation to many important aspects of our lives.

But the general interest inherent in the question of whether we can provide a unified theory of imagining, and the significant function of imaginings in our mental lives are not the only motivation for the search for such an account. The hope and belief that at least the central cases of imaginings share a common nature arises also from the perception of the need to explain two facts about our actual treatment of such representations. The first is simply that, even after discounting the less obvious cases, we do group together a large variety of mental occurrences in the class of imaginings, while excluding many others. Thus we accept visualizing, supposing, daydreaming, being engaged with fictions, empathizing, and so on, as paradigm instances of imagining, or at least as essentially involving such instances; but not seeing, judging, deliberating, or feeling an emotion or desire. If such imaginings had nothing in common with each other, but shared features with the non-imaginative phenomena, this tendency would be rather mysterious: there has to be something about the imaginative mental phenomena which causes us to treat them - but not other mental phenomena - as members of one and the same class (cf. Scruton (1974): 91f.). The second relevant observation is that our classifications are typically stable, and that we usually have a good grasp of whether - though not necessarily of why - a given mental state is imaginative or not. This means that we normally repeat the same classifications and do not

<sup>5</sup> Cf., for instance, the scepticism - expressed in Budd (1992b), Hopkins (1998): ch. 1, and Wollheim (2003) - about the existence of the specific form of imagining seeing something, which Walton refers to in his account of pictorial experience (cf. Walton (1990): ch. 8, and (2002); cf. also the discussion in section 6.5 below).

locate certain representations today on one side and tomorrow on the other; that it typically does not take us much effort or thought to come to an appropriate categorization; and that we are seldom unsure about how to treat a certain mental phenomenon (e.g., when confronted with an instance of an unusual or rare kind of representation). This fact too strongly suggests the existence of a certain kind of unity among imaginings to which we appear to have epistemic access (and which is still in want of further elucidation). Otherwise, it would be very difficult to explain the firmness and ease with which we classify the sometimes very different phenomena to be of the same kind, and why it is that they, but no other phenomena, count for us as imaginative. Any satisfactory analysis of imagining needs to provide an elucidation of this unity of the paradigm instances of imaginings.

The idea pursued in this dissertation is that the unity under consideration is due to some features shared by and distinctive of imaginings. This is the simplest and most straightforward explanation. And it is the one presented by any unified theory of imagining. It need not be the only possible account of the two facts and the corresponding unity of imaginings. One could, for instance, maintain that the grouping together of the variety of phenomena described is merely accidental. But such a claim would be highly implausible and difficult to support in view of the facility and assurance with which we usually categorize mental states as either imaginative or non-imaginative. Until it has been confirmed that such a strong form of scepticism is inevitable, the realistic hope for a positive theory of the common nature of imaginings should outweigh any doubts about the possibility of a unified characterization of imagining. It is hence reasonable to demand from a theory of imagining that it account for the fact that we classify a large variety of phenomena as imaginative; and the fact that this classification is not a mere coincidence. A unified theory of imagining promises to provide such an explanation by identifying the facts in question as an expression of the common nature of imaginings.

This raises the question of which proposals for a unified account of imagining are on offer and should be considered. When looking at the theories of imagining put forward in the philosophical tradition, two major recurring themes can be identified: the relationship (or lack thereof) of imaginative representations to the world, and their relationship to the will. These two motives identify the two broad alternative ways in which the distinctive nature of all central instances of imagining may be elucidated: either in terms of how they stand in relation to reality and to our interaction with it, or in terms of their connection to mental agency.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Although it might be possible to endorse a view which characterizes imaginings in terms of both their relationship to reality and their relationship to agency (without also tracing back one

A theory of the first kind specifies the difference between imaginings and cognitions by reference to the idea that only the latter concern reality - at least in some particular sense still to be specified. Our minds interact with the world by means of cognition and action. And both forms of interaction are at least primarily the domain of cognitive representations, such as perceptions, memories or beliefs. In accordance with this, the proposals of the first kind to be found in the literature typically identify a lack of cognitive concern with reality as the distinctive feature of imaginings (cf. section 3.1 for references). It is conceivable that a unified account of imagining may also be formulated in terms of their specific insignificance for our active engagement with the world. The idea is that imaginings - in contrast to, say, desires, intentions, beliefs or perceptions - cannot motivate us to act or guide us in our actions (e.g., by providing us with information about our relevant environment, or about appropriate means). But the claim that imaginings lack a guiding role in agency can presumably be traced back to the idea that they lack a cognitive concern with the world: they cannot guide us in action (if at all) because they do not provide us with knowledge about the relevant aspects of reality (i.e., the environment and the means). And the claim that imaginings cannot move us to act is not only controversial (cf. note 12 in chapter 2), but also cannot distinguish them from many other non-imaginative phenomena - such as perceptions or memories - which do not seem to be able to motivate us either. It is hence not very promising to formulate a unified account of imagining in terms of their seeming unimportance for our actions. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the focus in the literature on imagining has been on their apparent lack of a cognitive concern. The resulting view, which specifies imaginings - in contrast to cognitive states - in terms of their failure to play a role in cognition, may be labelled the *Cognitive Account* of imagining. And different versions of this theory may vary in how precisely they characterize the lack of a cognitive concern.

A theory of the second kind, on the other hand, proposes an element of mental activity as the characteristic feature of imagining. It maintains that imaginings are in a particular way intrinsically active; while cognitions are taken to be either passive, or at best active in a different way. The general idea is thus that imaginings constitute a special kind of mental action. Accordingly, this view amounts to the *Agency Account* of imagining already

---

characterization to the other), such an approach to imagining would seem to be over-complex. As will become clear in the subsequent chapters, reference to one kind of relationship will presumably suffice to account for the distinctive nature of imagining and, if necessary, for the other kind of relationship. The idea is that imaginings will turn out either to lack a cognitive concern with reality precisely because they are voluntarily formed by us; or instead to (be able to) be mental actions precisely because they are not cognitively constrained by how reality is.

introduced. Different versions of this theory may differ in how exactly they specify the active character distinctive of imaginings. The particular version of the Agency Account which I intend to put forward maintains that imaginings are mental actions which aim at the active and direct formation of mental representations with specific contents. The requirement concerning the representational specificity demands that the underlying motivational states (e.g., desires or intentions) determine which features are to be represented as being instantiated by which objects; while the directness requirement is meant to ensure that the motivational states end up determining the content of the formed representations without making use of epistemic or merely causal mechanisms of content determination (e.g., those mechanisms involved in the manifestation of mental dispositions, or in the formation of beliefs on the basis of evidence) as means.

My defence of this version of the Agency Account of imagining will be paired with a general rejection of the Cognitive Account. I will concentrate my discussion on these two proposals and will not consider further contenders for a unified theory of imagining.

One alternative proposal distinguishes imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena solely by reference to their extrinsic features, such as their causal origin or their mental context.<sup>7</sup> However, this view seems to be untenable in the light of the various intrinsic and phenomenologically salient differences between the two kinds of phenomena and, notably, between imaginative and cognitive episodes (cf. section 2.3 below).

Another approach tries to characterize imaginings in terms of the specific nature or use of the sub-personal cognitive mechanisms or modules involved in imagining, as they are studied by cognitive psychology or neuroscience. Someone following this line may propose

---

<sup>7</sup> Although Kant does not say much about imaginings (in contrast to the "imagination" as a cognitive faculty), he seems at least to suggest an account of them in terms of extrinsic differences. His main criterion for the empirical reality (or actual existence) of an object is its fitting into a causal network of persisting objects, as governed by the a priori "analogies of experience" and their specific determinations in the form of empirical laws of nature. And for him, perceptions (i.e., "empirical intuitions") and judgements (i.e., "empirical cognitions") are concerned with real objects: they either are directly related to such objects, or stand in appropriate relations to other (direct) mental representations in such a way as to ensure that their objects conform to the empirical laws of nature (cf. Kant (1998): A 374ff.; B 164f.; 272f.; 278f.; 520f.). In contrast, Kant claims that imaginings (as well as dreams and states of 'madness') are not concerned with objects that enjoy empirical reality in time and, perhaps, space. As a consequence, they are not related to real objects or other mental representations in the same way as perceptions and judgements (cf. Kant (1998): A 374; 376; B 278f.; 520f.). Kant thus seems to differentiate between imaginings and cognitions in terms of their different origins or mental contexts: that is, in purely extrinsic terms. In addition, some of his comments appear to suggest that he acknowledges that this difference need not - at least not always (e.g., for Kant, in cases of dreaming or madness) - be phenomenologically inconspicuous (i.e., given in "inner sense"; cf. Kant (1998): B 278f.; cf. Paton (1936): II 385f.).

that imaginings are sub-personally formed in a distinctive way - for instance, by means of certain "imaginative" areas or processes in the brain, or by means of certain "imaginative" ways in which the relevant mechanisms or modules are employed. But even if the postulation of the existence of such sub-personal phenomena were (assumed to be) empirically plausible, it could at best supplement a unified account of imagining (e.g., by showing how the difference between imaginings and cognitions in the relationship to the world or the will are implemented by the brain). For, as the considerations above about the stability and ease of our ordinary classifications of imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena have illustrated, the primary task of a unified theory of imagining is to investigate and illuminate those aspects of the common nature of imaginings to which we have access without having to empirically and scientifically study the workings of our brains. It would in fact be astonishing if our respective categorizations of mental phenomena turned out to be determined by some merely sub-personal factors. While the respective research into how our minds ultimately function may further support or complement a unified account of imagining, it should be considered as the main source for such a theory only if all other plausible alternatives - such as the Cognitive Account or the Agency Account - are exhausted.

A last alternative for a unified theory of imagining is to account for the distinctive character of imaginings in terms of the specific nature of their intentional objects. The central idea is that there is an ontological difference between objects which are perceived, remembered or judged to be a certain way and objects which are visualized or supposed to be a certain way. For instance, it may be said that, while the former refer to really and actually existing entities, the latter refer instead to merely possible or fictional entities.<sup>8</sup> However, the main

---

<sup>8</sup> It is not absolutely clear whether White defends such a view concerning intellectual imaginings, since it is not absolutely clear whether he takes them to be concerned with possibilities in general (including actualities) or with *mere* possibilities (excluding actualities), when he says that "to [intellectually - the author] imagine something is *to think* of it as possibly being so" (White (1990): 184). With respect to visual imaginings, however, he clearly seems to embrace the first option, given that he writes that "to visualize something is to think of what it does or would look like" (ibid: 122). Now, only if White has the second option in mind could he count as endorsing the view under discussion here. For if White were to adopt the first alternative (i.e., that imaginings are concerned with possibilities in general), he could not locate the difference between imaginings and cognitions in an ontological difference between their objects, given that cognitions concern possibilities as well (i.e., actualized ones). Instead, he would presumably have to assume that imagined objects appear to us differently from cognized ones: while the former appear to us as possible, the latter appear to us as actual. But this idea is highly problematic in itself, since we neither seem to be able to non-conceptually experience the modal status of objects or states of affairs, nor have to possess the concept of actuality or possibility in order to cognize or imagine something (thanks to Kevin Mulligan for suggesting some of these points).

Sartre and Wittgenstein, on the other hand, seem to go halfway towards the proposal under consideration by claiming that sensorily imagined objects are part of a different kind of space (or stand in different spatial relations to each other and further entities) than perceived ones (Wittgenstein (1984a): sections 622 and 628; Sartre (2004): 8ff.). But it is not clear whether they

consideration speaking against this position is that we in fact *do* seem to be able, by imagining something, to refer to real entities and also to represent them as having features which they really have. Although many instances of imagining do not refer to real entities, at least some seem to. If someone visualizes or supposes that a friend of his is at this moment sitting in the *Opera de Bastille* listening to *Wozzeck*, we say of him that he imagines something about real and cognizable entities (his friend, the opera house, Berg's composition), and not about some fictional or otherwise unreal ones.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, we can imagine objects as having features which they really have. I can visualize the green apple in someone else's pocket; and the visualized apple may share the greenness and the apple shape with the real apple (cf. Martin (2001): 275 for the example). Indeed, it seems to make perfect sense to say that imaginings can be veridical with respect to reality (cf. Peacocke (1985): 27, n. 12; O'Shaughnessy (2000: 345). If it happens that the friend of the imagining person is, at the moment of the imagining, sitting in that opera house in Paris and enjoying a performance of Berg's opera (and in the same way in which it is imagined), there is no reason to deny that the imagining matches the relevant aspect of reality, even if only accidentally. Hence, the idea that the difference between imaginings and cognitions consists primarily in an ontological difference between their respective intentional objects should again be considered only as a last resort, if all other plausible options have failed.<sup>10</sup> The prominence in the literature of the ideas underlying the Cognitive Account and the Agency Account seems thus to reflect the fact that these two approaches to imaginings are the main contenders for a unified theory of imagining. In accordance with these considerations, I will concentrate my discussion in the subsequent chapters on these two proposals.

The dissertation consists of seven chapters (including this introduction and a conclusion). I will in the next chapter further develop the idea of a unified account of imagining. The two

---

intend this observation to extend to supposed and judged objects; or whether this difference in space (or spatial relations) implies that we cannot sensorily imagine the very same objects which we can perceive. In fact, the latter implication seems to be implausible. Sartre, for instance, permits that we can see and visualize the same objects (albeit exemplifying different "types of existence" (cf. Sartre (2004): 180). And McGinn analyses the difference as one in the richness of spatial representations: sensorily imagined objects are represented as spatial objects (e.g., as extended), but not as spatially located (i.e., with a specific spatial location; cf. McGinn (2004): 58f.).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Sartre (2004); Casey (1976): 113; Peacocke (1985): 26f.; Walton (1990); Martin (2001): 275; O'Shaughnessy (2000): 166f.). It is also widely accepted that the referents of our visual imaginings are ultimately determined by our accompanying, desires intentions or thoughts about our visual imaginings: cf. Wittgenstein (1984b): vol. II, section 115; Ishiguro (1966): 162; Peacocke (1985): 26f.; Budd (1989): 114f.; Martin (2001): 275.

<sup>10</sup> Apart from this, any potential ontological difference between imagined and cognized objects would presumably be inseparably linked to - and perhaps even due to - some co-extensional difference in how imaginings and cognitions relate to the world or the will. The investigation of the latter might thus render the investigation of the former at best supplementary, and at worst superfluous.

main requirements in this context are to specify in more detail what a theory has to achieve in order to count as a unified account of imagining, and to clarify which particular mental phenomena are to be captured by such a theory and which not. First, I will formulate two desiderata for theories aspiring to provide a unified account of imagining: (i) that they have to be extensionally adequate with respect to both imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena; and (ii) that they have to show explanatory power with respect to the imaginativeness common to the former and lacking in the latter. But I will also point out what a unified account of imagining does not have to accomplish. In particular, it should not be expected to provide an analysis of our ordinary concept of imagining. I will then be concerned with the specification of those mental phenomena relative to which theories of imagining have to be assessed if they are intended to present a unified account. My chief concern will be with the introduction and description of five main forms of imagining which I take to be central cases: (i) sensory imaginings (e.g., visualizing something); (ii) affective imaginings (e.g., imaginatively feeling pain or jealousy); (iii) intellectual imaginings (e.g., supposing that *p*); (iv) internal imaginings (e.g., imagining having the experiences of another person); and (v) imaginative projects (e.g., daydreaming about something). But it also needs to be clarified which mental phenomena are paradigmatically non-imaginative. The most important examples are cognitive states and projects - there has been a long tradition of contrasting imaginative episodes with cognitive ones. The primary reason for the typical focus on cognitive phenomena in the traditional attempts to characterize imaginings seems to have been that the two kinds of phenomena show many similarities and close links - notably, that they can possess the same contents, and that what we can imagine seems to depend in some important way on what we can think (i.e., on our conceptual capacities) and on what we have already perceived. (I will return to this kind of dependency in section 4.5) It will thus be worthwhile to devote some time to the contrast between imaginative and cognitive episodes, and, especially, to two important differences between them, one in their phenomenologically salient attitude towards what they represent, and one in their typical functional role. The discussion will concentrate on the two facts that only cognitions, but not imaginings, make a claim about how things are; and that we normally rely only on cognitions, but not on imaginings, when we form or revise our beliefs and decide on or perform our actions. Finally, I will deal briefly with unclear, controversial or borderline instances of imagining (e.g., dispositional imaginings, or representations symptomatic of psychological disorders). My chief point will be to make it plausible that most of these cases should not play a significant role in the evaluation of the prospects of the various candidates for a unified theory of imagining.

The remaining four main chapters of this dissertation (excluding the conclusion) are reserved for the discussion of the two main contenders for a unified account of imagining, the Cognitive Account and the Agency Account. The third and fourth chapters will deal with the Cognitive Account, while the last two will turn to the Agency Account. In the third chapter, I will present the key claims of the Cognitive Account of imagining. As already mentioned, this theory takes imaginings to be non-cognitive by nature. It thus embraces the common strategy of contrasting imaginative phenomena with cognitive ones. The proposed non-cognitivity of imaginings is usually spelled out in terms of a lack of concern with reality. More precisely, it is claimed that imaginings lack a certain cognitive feature that cognitions possess and which is essential to their cognitive character and their cognitive interaction with the world. A main task of this chapter will therefore be to describe why proponents of the Cognitive Account assume such a constitutional difference between imaginative and cognitive episodes, and also why they think that this difference is sufficient to ensure that only the latter can play a role in cognition. The key idea seems to be that imaginings are brought about in ways which prevent them from being constrained by reality in the manner required for cognitive access to it. However, since postulating the *lack* of a cognitive concern with the world does not say much positive about the nature of imaginings, proponents of the Cognitive Account tend to supplement their theory with the further claim that imaginings are constitutionally or conceptually dependent on cognitions in some important way, which reaches beyond the already mentioned restriction on what we can imagine by our conceptual capacities and our past experiences. My exposition of the Cognitive Account will therefore focus on the two kinds of claims characteristic of this theory, the first (which I label "negation claims") maintaining that imaginings lack an important cognitive feature, and the second (which I call "echo claims") stating that imaginings are dependent on cognitions. Throughout the chapter, I will concentrate my discussion of the Cognitive Account and its main theses on the richest, most sophisticated and most developed version of this theory, the account of imagining presented by Brian O'Shaughnessy in *Consciousness and the World* (O'Shaughnessy (2000)).

The fourth chapter is devoted to the assessment and rejection of O'Shaughnessy's and other possible versions of the Cognitive Account, at least in respect of the issue of whether they could figure as a unified theory of imagining. The main issue will be whether the Cognitive Account can satisfy the two desiderata of extensional adequacy and explanatory power. To answer this question, I will discuss in turn each of the two kinds of claims distinctive of the Cognitive Account, and assess to which extent they can make a substantial contribution to a unified account of imagining - that is, whether they can capture all main forms of imagining,

and whether they can help to illuminate their imaginativeness. As I argue, both kinds of claims are significantly limited in their scope due to their characterization of imaginings solely in terms of, and in contrast to, cognitive phenomena. For certain forms of imagining - notably affective imaginings and imaginative projects - do not have cognitive counterparts, and hence cannot be specified by reference to them. On the other hand, accounting for imaginings instead in terms of both cognitive and non-cognitive phenomena threatens to lead to a disjunctive theory which would not live up to the requirement of providing one and the same account for the imaginativeness of all the various forms of imagining. In addition, I will try to show that it is difficult to make sense of the idea that imaginings depend constitutionally or conceptually on cognitions (or other phenomena). And I will aim to undermine the claim that imaginings are not cognitively concerned with reality by arguing that certain kinds of imagining can, under specific circumstances, provide us with knowledge about the world. In this way, I hope to establish that neither of the two kinds of claims - and hence not the Cognitive Account as a whole, whether it embraces claims of only one or of both kinds - are extensionally adequate and explanatorily powerful.

In the fifth chapter, I will develop my own proposal for a unified account of imagining, namely a specific version of the Agency Account. As already indicated, my key idea is that imagining aims at the voluntary formation of representations with specific contents determined by the respective underlying desires or intentions. In order to elucidate and motivate this thesis, I will develop an account of mental and, especially, cognitive and imaginative projects (a topic which has often been neglected in discussions of imaginings or the mind); and I will argue that actively formed episodic representations constitute, as episodes of mental agency, simple mental projects. My approach to the topic differs crucially, then, from more traditional approaches, including those endorsed by most proponents of the Cognitive Account. Their strategy has usually been to investigate the nature of (certain kinds of) imaginative *episodes* (e.g., visualizings or suppositions) and to compare them with and set them apart from cognitive ones. But one of the resulting problems has been that they fail to pay attention or do justice to imaginative projects (e.g., daydreams) - especially since these projects do not seem to have cognitive counterparts in terms of which they can be characterized. In contrast, the strategy which I will adopt is to begin with the discussion of imaginative *projects* and then, after having determined how to best account for their imaginativeness, to try to apply the resulting theory to episodic imaginings. Accordingly, it will first of all be necessary to spend considerable time specifying the nature of mental projects in general and of imaginative projects in particular. My hypothesis will be that imaginative projects are (typically complex) mental actions

aiming at the formation of representations with specific contents that are directly determined by their respective motivational states. I will thus have to clarify what it means for a content to be specifically and directly determined by what we want; and to make plausible that my resulting characterization of imaginative projects promises to be adequate. Once this is done, it remains to be seen how the theory can apply also to imaginative episodes. My idea will be that imaginative episodes should be understood as simple imaginative projects (i.e., imaginative projects which contain only a single episodic representation). Consequently, the central claim of my version of the Agency Account of imagining - which will, however, have to be further qualified - will be that imaginings are mental actions aiming at the formation of representations with specific contents.

Before I will bring this dissertation to a conclusion in the short seventh and final chapter, I will be concerned in the sixth chapter with the defence of the proposed Agency Account as a unified theory of imagining. This task will require not only giving an idea of how the various instances of the five main forms of imagining identified in this chapter conform to my theory, but also - and more importantly - showing that there are no imaginative counterexamples. There might be two kinds of counterexamples: non-representational imaginings and imaginings with passively or indirectly determined contents. If it is assumed that, say, certain feelings or moods are non-representational (e.g., feelings of pain or anxiety), it might be maintained that the respective affective imaginings (e.g., imaginatively felt, or imagined feelings of, pain or anxiety) are non-intentional too. My strategy to accommodate such cases of imagining will be to argue that they involve the representation of the corresponding non-imaginative mental episodes (e.g., real feelings of pain or anxiety). On the other hand, the three main candidates for imaginings which are passive with respect to the determination of what they represent appear to be spontaneously and passively occurring images and thoughts, freely associative daydreams which are not guided by a purpose to form certain representations, and pictorial experiences. What I will aim to render plausible is the idea that they should not really be classified as imaginative, despite all appearances. The respective considerations will conclude this dissertation. However, apart from potential imaginative counterexamples, there is also the possibility of non-imaginative counterexamples, that is, non-imaginative phenomena with an actively and directly determined content. In particular, it has been sometimes postulated that there are voluntarily formed judgements or beliefs, the content of which reflects what we want them to represent. But I do not have space in this dissertation to engage with the defence of the claim that cognitive (or other non-imaginative) states do not allow for the direct determination of what they represent by what we want them to represent. Instead, I will follow the orthodox view

and simply assume here that we cannot bring about perceptions, memories, judgements or beliefs with specific contents by merely willing to do so.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Indeed, most philosophers do not disagree about the truth of this claim, but only about how to best argue for it. Defences of this widely accepted view are put forward by, for instance, Williams (1970), O'Shaughnessy (1980): vol. I, pp. 21ff., Pink (1996): especially 195ff., Owens (2000): ch. 2, Noordhof (2001a), and Owens (2003). Most of the recently presented arguments against the possibility of deciding what to believe focus on the rational or normative nature of judgements or beliefs and identify therein some feature (typically their being aimed at truth or knowledge) which is incompatible with the influence of direct agency. A promising alternative approach is to highlight instead the (perhaps contingent) ways in which we experience judgements and mental actions, and to show that the two experiences are phenomenologically incompatible - an incompatibility which may then be explained via more fundamental features of judgements and agency (cf. Bodrozic and Dorsch (manuscript)). Besides, note that even some of the proponents of the idea that we can directly will judgements or beliefs into existence base their argumentation on examples which in fact seem to support only the claim that we can bring them about indirectly (e.g., Ginet (2001)). And most of those who have attacked some of the arguments in favour of the impossibility of forming beliefs by merely deciding to do so (or at least some of the essential premises in these arguments, such as those concerning the normative nature of beliefs) still endorse the view that this impossibility obtains, and sometimes even suggest other arguments in favour of it (e.g., Winters (1979), Bennett (1990) and Papineau (1999)).

## 2. A Unified Account of Imagining

For the assessment of the prospects of the two main candidates for a unified account of imagining, it is necessary to say first a bit more about what is required of such a theory. An important part of this task will be to clarify which phenomena should definitely be captured by a unified account of imagining, and which definitely not. Accordingly, the four sections of this chapter will be concerned with the particular demands on and the mandatory scope of theories of imagining. In the first section, I will specify two desiderata for a unified account of imagining: (a) extensional adequacy with respect to all central cases of both imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena; and (b) explanatory power with respect to the distinctive nature of imaginings. The next section will then outline the class of paradigm instances of imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena. In particular, I will describe the five main forms of imagining which any unified account has to capture: (i) sensory imaginings; (ii) affective imaginings; (iii) intellectual imaginings; (iv) internal imaginings; and (v) imaginative projects. And I will introduce the main candidates for clear examples of non-imaginative phenomena, notably cognitive states and projects. In the third section, I will zoom in on the specific contrast between imaginative and cognitive episodes, that has often been drawn in the philosophical literature and which will be important throughout this dissertation. The main focus will thereby be on the significant differences in phenomenological character and in epistemic or functional role. The fourth and final section will briefly discuss the status of unclear, controversial or borderline instances of imagining (e.g., dispositional imaginings, or representations symptomatic of psychological disorders) and their relative irrelevance for the assessment of potential candidates for a unified account of imagining.

### 2.1. Two Desiderata

But let me begin with the issue of what it means for a theory to constitute a unified account of imagining. As already noted, such a theory is concerned to characterize the imaginativeness common to all central cases of imaginings. And it fulfils this task by identifying a feature (or set of features), the exemplification of which is both necessary and sufficient for something to be a paradigm instance of imagining, and reference to which helps to illuminate the imaginative character of the respective phenomena. But the particular demands on a unified account of imagining can be formulated more precisely in terms of two desiderata which any candidate theory has to satisfy.

The first desideratum consists in the demand for *extensional adequacy*. Accordingly, the

theory has to be true of all central cases of imagining, and false of all paradigm instances of non-imaginative phenomena. This means that the class of mental phenomena delineated by reference to the set of necessary and sufficient conditions identified by the theory in question should contain all primary examples of imagining, but no primary examples of non-imaginative phenomena. In the next section, I will specify in more detail which mental phenomena should be taken to be central cases of imagining, and which not. But it should already be clear that a theory which focuses exclusively on a particular form of imagining (e.g., visualizing), cannot on its own constitute a unified account of imagining. At best, it may hope to make some contribution to, or figure as a starting-point for, the formulation of such a theory. Due to their (often deliberately) limited scope, this consideration applies to many discussions about the nature of imaginings found in the literature.<sup>1</sup>

The second desideratum for a unified account of imagining is that it should be *explanatorily powerful*. This desideratum has several aspects. First, it requires that the theory in question say something illuminating about why imaginings are imaginative. The task of the theory is thus to clearly identify and elucidate the feature (or set of features) responsible for - and perhaps identical with - the feature of being imaginative. In addition, it may - though need not - reveal some other important aspects of imagining. Second, a theory of imagining is explanatorily powerful only if it provides one and the same account for all central cases of imaginings. In other words, it has to be true of all imaginings for the same reason and in virtue of the same aspects of their nature. A theory which traces back the imaginativeness to some set of features with respect to one kind of imagining and to another set of features with respect to a different kind of imagining is not unified, since it does not concern the nature common to all paradigm instances of imagining, but instead provides two independent accounts for two distinct phenomena. And third, it is required of a unified theory of imagining that it identifies the most basic feature (or set of features) responsible for the imaginativeness which the respective phenomena have in common. I thereby take a property to be *responsible* for another if and only if the exemplification of the first, and nothing else, explains the exemplification of the second (as well as any immediate consequences of the exemplification of the second). I intend this characterization of explanatory responsibility to be compatible with various metaphysical relations which may hold between the two properties in question: they may be identical; the first may constitute the second in another way (e.g., by means of inter-level realization, as in the case of heat and average kinetic energy); the first may figure as the sole possible supervenience or emergence base for the second; and there may be other options. Hence, whichever feature explains the imaginativeness of the central cases of imagining, but is not explained itself by a more basic

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. note 3 in chapter 1.

feature, is the most fundamental feature which a unified account of imagining should identify.

The two desiderata specify what a unified account of imagining has to accomplish: it has to identify the feature (or set of features) of the central cases of imagining, which is responsible for their imaginativeness and distinguishes them from central cases of non-imaginative phenomena.<sup>2</sup> But it will be helpful also to mention what a unified account of imagining does not have to achieve.

First of all, a unified theory of imagining need not include the claim that imaginings form - or, alternatively, do not form - a natural mental kind. It may instead stay neutral with respect to whether the class of imaginings is something for us to discover in nature, or something that is delimited by our discourse about the mind. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how phenomena as varied as visualizings, suppositions and daydreams could constitute a natural kind (cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): 357ff.). The idea that imagining is a primitive mental phenomenon (as, arguably, desires or beliefs may be) seems to be as implausible as the idea that they are reducible to other mental natural kinds (if there are any).

Then, a unified account of imagining need not be able to provide an analysis of our ordinary concept of imagining. The set of necessary and sufficient conditions supplied by such a theory may perhaps be understood as demarcating some core notion of imagining. It may thus be concerned not only with what imaginings are or how they are constituted, but also with how we may conceive of them. It is, however, unrealistic to expect of a unified theory of imagining that it has the ambition to provide a full and satisfactory analysis of our *ordinary* concept of imagining. For not only does it in general seem doubtful whether ordinary concepts - at least if they do not capture a natural kind - allow for definition in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions;<sup>3</sup> but the many ambiguities and uncertainties in our use of the notion of imagining - as reflected in the existence of borderline or other unclear cases (cf. section 2.4 below) - suggest that this is especially the case with respect to how we commonly conceive of imaginings. Hence, a unified account of imagining should

---

<sup>2</sup> It is of course a further advantage of a theory of imagining if it is able to identify and elucidate also certain features of imaginings which some or all of them possess as a consequence of their imaginativeness (e.g., their specific way of referring to reality). And failure on this account might likewise undermine the plausibility of a theory of imagining. But such failure need not necessarily rule it out as a candidate theory, in particular if it is not immediately obvious how other accounts of imagining might be able to fulfil the task in question. Equally, it should not be expected that a unified account of imagining provide a theory of features of imaginings unrelated to their imaginative character (e.g., their being conscious, or their being representational).

<sup>3</sup> Cf., for instance, the attempts to define knowledge in terms of justified true belief; or Wittgenstein's idea of family resemblance concepts.

not try to aim at providing a definitional analysis of our ordinary concept of imagining. It should instead focus on the central cases of imagining and the clarification of how we may be able to conceive of them as imaginings. The core notion of imagining provided by such an account might thus comprise only certain aspects of our ordinary concept (and might perhaps deviate in others from it).

And finally, a unified theory of imagining need provide neither an account of the faculty of imagination (if there is any), nor an account of what it means for people to be "imaginative", say, in what they think, say or do. It may turn out that we possess a certain capacity which we employ just when we are engaged in imagining. In particular, if the Agency Account is correct and imaginings are really mental actions of a certain kind, it seems plausible to assume the existence of such an imaginative ability, namely the capacity to act in the required way. But it is not necessary that this ability should be taken to amount to a special faculty of ours (whatever that may mean). Instead, it may simply constitute the capacity to use, in a certain way, one or more of our mental faculties (e.g., to form mental representations). In any case, the question of whether there is a faculty or capacity involved in all and only cases of imagining need not be answered by a unified account of imagining.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, a theory of what it means to imagine something may lead to a better understanding of the "imaginativeness" exhibited by creative or inventive people. But again, it is not clear whether there is such a close link between the two kinds of phenomena. And again, a unified account of imagining does not have to address the issue of the "imaginativeness" of people. It needs to be concerned solely with states, acts and projects of imagining.

## **2.2. Central Cases of Imaginative and Non-Imaginative Phenomena**

One important issue that has been left open so far is which mental phenomena are actually paradigm instances of imagining, and which not. In this section, I will present my detailed answer to this question. Most of the phenomena concerned are mental representations. It is therefore helpful - before I begin to engage with the task just outlined - to clarify what I

---

<sup>4</sup> Besides, there has been a long tradition of assigning the "faculty of imagination" a particular role in our cognition of the world (cf. Hume (2000) and Kant (1998); for further discussions, cf. Strawson (1970), Warnock (1976): part I, and Sellars (1978)). But the faculty in question is not exclusively related to the formation of imaginative representations, but usually said to be involved also in the occurrence of, say, perceptions or memories. Hence, it cannot be interpreted as the faculty or capacity to imagine; and its discussion would reach beyond any theory of imagining. Cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): ch. 11 in general for the relationship between imaginative representations and the capacity to imagine.

have in mind when speaking of "representations". That a mental state is a *representation* - or *representational* - means that it is directed at or about certain entities and represents them as being a particular way, or represents them under certain aspects.<sup>5</sup> This notion of representational states allows for various *types of representation*, whether they are propositional or object-directed, conceptual or non-conceptual, sensory or intellectual,<sup>6</sup> visual or auditory, and so on. And it also permits that representations may involve a certain attitude towards what is represented (such as the attitudes of belief, desire, hope or fear, as well as the related directions of fit), or a certain affective element (such as a particular instance of emotional arousal). The proposed notion of representations is thus broad enough to cover all sorts of mental phenomena: perceptions, beliefs, emotions, desires, hopes, imaginings, and many others. In particular, it captures what is commonly labelled "intentional states" (cf. the *Fifth Investigation* in Husserl (2001); Searle (1983): ch. 1; Crane (2001): ch. 1).<sup>7</sup> But the outlined class of representations need not be exhausted by intentional states. It seems plausible to maintain that intentionality implies the possibility of genuine misrepresentation: that is, the possibility of representing an object incorrectly, while still representing it and perhaps even referring to it (cf. Dretske (1994)). And there might be mental representations which do not allow for this possibility of error. That is, there might be mental states that are about certain objects and ascribe certain features to them, but which cannot misrepresent or misrefer.

That a mental state is a representation implies that it possesses a *content*. Its content may be taken to consist in what it represents, that is, in the represented entities and features. Accordingly, the judgement that it rains, the supposition that it rains, the desire that it rains and joy about the fact that it rains all have the same content, while the judgement that it

---

<sup>5</sup> Representations may also have a referent, and be correct relative to whether how they represent entities as being satisfies a certain standard of correctness (e.g., the relevant facts in reality, or one's intentions). But I would like to stay neutral here concerning the issue of whether all types of representation can refer or be correct.

<sup>6</sup> My contrast between *sensory* and *intellectual* episodes is meant to track the basic difference in representationality between perceptions and judgements (or beliefs), given that they may be about the same objects and features. Although I would like to stay neutral towards the issue of whether the difference in question is one of degree or of kind, I assume that there is some distinction to be drawn, as it has been accepted in the tradition at least since Kant. In addition, I take this difference to be more fundamental than - but presumably overlapping and perhaps even co-extensional with some of - the various differences to be found in the more recent literature, which have been characterized in terms of the difference between conceptual and non-conceptual (e.g., Peacocke (1992): ch. 2; Crane (1992)), digital and analogue (Dretske (1981): ch. 6) or propositional and non-propositional (or object-directed) representation (O'Shaughnessy (2000): ch. 10).

<sup>7</sup> My notion of a "representation" is thus very close to Locke's notion of an "idea", Hume's notion of a "perception", Kant's notion of a "representation" (i.e., "Vorstellung"), or Husserl's notion of "intentional act". It is perhaps less close to certain contemporary uses of the term "representation", in particular to those employed in cognitive sciences.

snows has a different content. But we sometimes also refer to the type of representation in question when we individuate the contents of representations - for instance, when we note that the "visual content" of the perception that it rains differs from the "intellectual content" of the corresponding judgement. I will follow both usages of the term "content" and hope that the context will clarify which one I have in mind. In either case, the content of a mental representation strictly contrasts with any potential attitude towards what is represented (e.g., whether it is believed or desired), as well as with any affective element (e.g., any emotional feeling) possibly involved. Besides, I will understand the *representational element* of a mental representation as precisely that concrete aspect of it in virtue of which it possesses a certain content and is of a certain type of representation. Two representations, which represent the same entities and features and are of the same type of representation, involve the same representational element - for instance, a certain visual image, or the entertainment of a particular proposition.<sup>8</sup>

Now, that certain kinds of mental phenomena are *central* cases of imaginative or non-imaginative phenomena, respectively, means that their possession or lack of an imaginative character is not subject to serious disagreement, neither in daily discourse nor in philosophical debate. It is important to note, however, that whether something is an instance of imagining is not merely - and perhaps not even primarily - a matter of whether we label it as such. Our use of terms like "imagining" can vary greatly. And they are not always used to denote imaginative representations. For instance, the statement "could you really have imagined that" can, in some situations, question the *imaginative* skill of someone (e.g., in response to hearing a great story, or to the assertion of a person that she had no problem visualizing a complex scene); but in others, it can cast doubt on the capacity to have previously *believed* or *expected* something (e.g., a surprising turn of events). Hence, the agreement about the paradigms of imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena, that I have in mind here and aim at, concerns the nature of the respective mental phenomena, taken to be largely independently of how we refer to them.

There are very many mental phenomena which are clearly not imaginative. Most prominent among them (especially in discussions about imagining) are cognitive phenomena: on the

---

<sup>8</sup> My use of the term "visual image" (or of the related expression "visual imagery") is perhaps unorthodox, given that it is often reserved for visual memories and imaginings alone and not applied to visual perceptions (cf. Sartre (2004)). Besides, it is not meant to imply the presence of any kind of mental or internal "pictures", as they have been criticized by Sartre (1997): part 2, Sartre (2004): ch. 1, Wittgenstein (1984a): sections 620ff., especially 638 and 642, and Ryle (1963): ch. 8, esp. section 3. Perhaps some of the positions which endorse what I will call an echo thesis (roughly, the claim that imaginings depend on cognitions in such a way that they are both similar to and different from them) may be taken to embrace the idea that visualizing involves internal "pictures".

one hand, cognitive states, such as perceptions, judgements,<sup>9</sup> beliefs or memories; and on the other hand, cognitive projects, such as trying to come to understand another person, or finding the best answer to the mind-body problem. Other central cases of non-imaginative phenomena are desires, emotions, intentions, moods, inclinations, the projects of deciding on a course of action, or of calming oneself down, and so on. Any theory of imagining which cannot distinguish such cognitive and other non-imaginative phenomena from imaginative ones should not count as providing a unified account of imagining.

What I take to be central cases of imagining, on the other hand, is perhaps best illustrated by considering an example. Suppose I ask you to imagine that Rome is covered by a thick layer of snow. In case you intend to follow my instruction, it is quite likely that you will start to visualize how certain parts of the city might look, their appearance transformed by the masses of snow. You may thus picture the Piazza Navona, or one of the narrow streets in the old centre, as brightly white, and void of most of the people and all kinds of traffic. You may also auditorily imagine how the snow swallows and mutes the sounds, or how it makes a distinctive sound when pressed down by your feet while you start, in your imagination, to walk through the city. And you can imagine thereby feeling the resistance to your feet, the texture and thickness of the layer of snow, the harshness and freshness of the cold, how it slightly hurts your almost numb skin, and the pleasure and exhilaration at experiencing this rare and beautiful scenery. Or you may begin to imagine what you would like to do in such a situation, or where you would feel like going. But instead of, or in addition to, summoning up certain experiential qualities in your mind, you may also simply begin to hypothesize about the consequences of the highly unusual setting for the city's completely unprepared inhabitants, on the basis of imagining that the streets and squares of Rome have disappeared beneath large amounts of snow. Thus, you may wonder how they might cope with the unexpected situation and, in particular, how they might manage to move around and keep the basics of daily life running. You may imaginatively think through different options of dealing with the rare and surprising circumstances, and you may imagine how it would feel for the inhabitants of Rome to handle the situation, whether they would be taken up with the same enjoyment that you have imagined yourself to feel (or that you may actually feel while imagining), or instead would despair with or be annoyed by the unexpected disruption to their normal life which leaves them stranded in their homes. Finally, you may engage in imagining these things about Rome and its inhabitants, not in response to my invitation to do so, but in response to reading a work of fiction in which a scene is, in some detail,

---

<sup>9</sup> I will take occurrent beliefs (i.e., beliefs manifest in phenomenal consciousness) to be *judgements* as well. Moreover, apart from issues which bear on consciousness, I will assume that what I say about judgements applies also to beliefs; and vice versa.

described in terms similar to those used above.

This example of imaginative engagement on your behalf contains all five cases of imagining that I will consider paradigmatic: (i) sensory imaginings; (ii) affective imaginings; (iii) imaginative thoughts; (iv) internal imaginings; and (v) imaginative projects. Being a member of one of the five groups should not be taken to necessarily exclude being a member of another one. As will become clear, it is very likely that there are considerable overlaps between the five different types of imagining. In addition, this list is not necessarily meant to be exhaustive: it might not capture all cases we would agree on as central cases of imagining. But to my mind, there is no obvious candidate for a further central type of imagining. In particular, the list seems to be able to cover all the forms of imagining involved in the example just presented - each of which I will now discuss in turn.

First, there are instances of *sensory imaginings*: such as visualizing something and its counterparts in other sense modalities (including some forms of bodily sensation), such as hearing something in one's mind or imagining the texture of an object (e.g., cf. Casey (1976): 43ff.; Peacocke (1985): 22; Martin (2002): 403). While following my instructions, you may in your imagination have seen the snow in the streets, heard the sounds of walking on it, felt how it resisted but eventually gave way to your feet, and sensed the cold. Sensory imaginings possess a sensory content which is imaginatively entertained (whatever that may mean). But at least some sensory imaginings involve more, given that they amount to imagining an episode of perceiving (i.e., have a mental episode or experience as their intentional object). There is an ongoing debate about whether in fact all instances of sensory imagining are *internal* in the sense of having mental episodes as their intentional object.<sup>10</sup> But here I do not want to rule out the possibility of non-internal sensory imaginings: that is, of simple imaginative episodes which do not have perceptions or similar episodes as part of their contents.

Many discussions of sensory imaginings have focused on visual instances (e.g., cf. Peacocke (1985); Sartre (2004)), and I will mainly follow them in that respect. Instances of visualizing a face or a landscape will thus figure as paradigm cases of sensory imagining. Of course, there will be important differences between, say, visualizing something and hearing or

---

<sup>10</sup> This idea (Berkeleyan in spirit) is defended by Peacocke (1985) and, at least for some central cases, by Martin (2002): section 3 and Martin (2001): section 3. It comes under attack in Williams (1966), White (1990): chs. 13-15, Hopkins (1996): ch. 7, Noordhof (2002) and Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): section 2.2. Note that it may seem natural to describe visualizing as "imagining seeing" without making the commitment that seeing is part of what is imagined (cf. Wollheim (1973): 55; Hopkins (1998): ch. 7).

touching it in one's imagination, as there will be important differences between seeing it and hearing or touching it for real. But I will presume that these differences will not bear on the issues linked to the possibility of a unified account of imagining. Also, it is interesting to ask whether there are kinaesthetic or proprioceptive imaginings; whether these are similar in structure to cases like visualizing; and whether they amount to imagining kinaesthetic or proprioceptive experiences. But my hope is that they will not differ in important respects from the much more investigated examples of visual imagining. So far, there does not seem to be good reason to doubt that any unified account of imagining capable of capturing visual imaginings will also be able to capture other types of sensory imagining.

Let me thus say a bit more about the nature and varieties of visual imaginings - comments which I hope will likewise apply, to the relevant extent and with the necessary modifications, to instances of imagining in other modalities. One way of visualizing something - and presumably the easiest - is to stop seeing (e.g., by closing one's eyes) and to concentrate on the production of the visual image. But we can also visualize something while seeing (as well as thinking about) something completely different (cf. Wittgenstein (1984b): vol. II, section 65). For example, we may visualize, while walking down the street, the face of a friend whom we are hoping to surprise with something in the near future. However, this is usually more difficult than the first alternative (e.g., the result may be less rich in detail or in determinacy), and seems typically to require more effort - in particular, in that we have to sufficiently shift our attention from the perception (or the thinking) to the imagining.

Furthermore, there are cases in which the content of the perception provides us with the material for the sensory imagining. Visualizing a perceived face as it would look in old age, or when looked at via a distorting mirror, are examples. But the two episodes are still metaphysically independent of each other: each could occur without the other, and their contents are distinct. This remains true even if there is for us an explicit link between the objects of the two representations - for instance, if we think them to be spatially linked. This is the case, say, when we see a white wall before us and visualize how it would look like if a certain painting were hanging there. Again, the two representations and their contents are distinct and do not merge in any sense. In particular, we still see the whiteness of the wall exactly where we visualize the painting to be. The case would be different if we stopped seeing the white wall (e.g., by closing our eyes) and recalled its appearance in order to visualize it together with the painting. And also, certain kinds of experience (e.g., pictorial experience) might consist in a single mental representation which combines both perceived

and visualized elements. I will return to these issues in section 6.5. The last considerations are related to the sometimes endorsed idea that we cannot have a visualization with the same sensory content as a simultaneous seeing. For instance, Wittgenstein observes that:

Während ich einen Gegenstand sehe, kann ich ihn mir nicht vorstellen. [While I am seeing an object, I cannot (visually) imagine it - translation by the author.] (Wittgenstein (1984b): vol. II, section 63)

The idea is that when we already see the National Gallery in front of us we cannot also visualize it at the same time (and, presumably, from the same point of view). Likewise, the claim rules out the possibility of first visualizing the National Gallery and then coming to also and simultaneously see it (again, presumably from the same perspective). According to a possible way of understanding this thesis, it seems true: the sensory content involved in seeing the National Gallery cannot also be the content of visualizing this building; the two do not simply share a content. It may also be true in another interpretation: it may be that (as already suggested above) visualizing something while seeing something else requires sufficient attention to the task of visualization, and that we may lack this sufficient degree of attention when we, say, observe very carefully how the National Gallery really looks. But a third reading is at least questionable, if not false: namely that we cannot simultaneously have two independent visual episodes with the same content and point of view, when one is perceptual and the other imaginative. For if we can visualize a face while looking at the National Gallery, it should also be possible that we can instead visualize the building while continuing to have our perception.

The second paradigm case of imagining, which your imagining about Rome may have typified, is *affective imagining*: that is, the case of imaginative experiences of emotion or desire which are characterized by their involving an affective element (i.e., some form of emotional arousal or similar feeling), often coupled with a related content.<sup>11</sup> You may have imaginatively felt the pleasure of walking in the snow and looking at it, the annoyance that less relaxed inhabitants of the city might have in reaction to the sudden and heavy onset of winter, or the longing to walk over the untouched field of snow in a square, or to let yourself fall back onto it. Other examples of affective imaginings are the imaginative counterparts to bodily sensations, such as imagined or imaginatively felt itches and pains (cf. Martin (2002): 406f. on the former). Whether there are desire-like imaginings which have (episodes

---

<sup>11</sup> Although affective episodes may be picked out by the term "feeling" (and I will sometimes do this), it is important to have in mind that this does not mean that they comprise all consciously experienced or "felt" states (i.e., all mental episodes).

of) desires as their counterparts and do not merely consist in the imaginative thought that one has a certain desire is, however, highly controversial.<sup>12</sup> In any case, although it will become significant at certain points that affective imaginings do exist, I will not have much to say about them and assume that their nature is - apart from their affective character - not that different from sensory imaginings. This concerns, in particular, the issue of whether affective imaginings have to be always analysed as imaginings of affective experiences, or whether there can also be simple imaginative episodes which do not have real feelings or experiences as their intentional objects (i.e., which are not instances of internal imagining). It is important to note, however, that what are commonly known in the literature as "fictional" or "quasi emotions" are not affective imaginings. When we watch a horror movie and begin to feel fear and have some corresponding bodily reactions, thoughts and inclinations to act (though usually not the same as when confronted with real danger), our feeling of fear and the respective bodily changes (e.g., a rising heartbeat) or inclinations to act (e.g., to cover one's eyes) are real, not imagined - even though, typically, they are responses to imagined entities, are triggered by and perhaps also include imaginative representations. There is a debate about whether such "quasi emotions" should count as real emotions.<sup>13</sup> But it should not be doubted that the phenomenally conscious aspect of this state constitutes a real case of emotional arousal, and not only an imagined or imaginatively felt one. As the relevant discussions reveal, affective imaginings usually do not seem to play a prominent role in our emotional engagement with fictions.<sup>14</sup>

Third, your imaginings in the example are also likely to have included *imaginative thoughts*, such as the general assumption that Rome is covered in snow, or hypothetical thoughts about the possible consequences that this might have for the life of its inhabitants. Supposing, imagining-that and making-believe with a propositional content are also cases of intellectual imagining.<sup>15</sup> And although there presumably are cases in which we imagine intellectual episodes (e.g., we can imagine the experience of drawing a certain conclusion), intellectual imaginings do not usually seem to be of this kind. Intellectual imaginings have

<sup>12</sup> The postulation of such desire-like imaginings is defended by Velleman (2002), Currie (2002) and Currie & Ravenscroft (2002). For good objections to the arguments of the latter, cf. Carruthers (2003), Nichols (2004b) and Soldati (forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Walton (1997) and the other essays in Hjort & Laver (1997), especially in the first part.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the excellent survey in Levinson (1997): especially 22ff., Walton (1990): section 5.2. and ch. 7, Moran (1994), and the essays in Hjort & Laver (1997).

<sup>15</sup> Perhaps some or all of the four kinds of intellectual imagining are identical with each other. For supposition as imaginative, cf. Furlong (1961): chs. 2 and 3, Casey (1976): 42ff., Peacocke (1985): 20, and Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 33ff.. For making-believe as imagining, cf. Walton (1990): ch. 1, and O'Shaughnessy (2000): 342ff.. There are uses of "imagining", "assumption" or "supposition" which do not refer to intellectual imaginings (e.g., "he only imagined it", "everyone is assumed to be willing to pay for dinner" or "old people are supposed to become forgetful"; cf. White (1990): ch. 16, especially p. 136; cf. also Scruton (1974): 95); when I use the terms, I mean to denote only cases of intellectual imagining.

in common with other intellectual representations that they may be understood as relations to propositions and can stand in inferential relations (cf. Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11ff.). However, hypothetical or imaginative inferences (i.e., inferences which start off from at least one imaginatively entertained premise) differ from cognitive inferences (i.e., those involving only judgements or beliefs as starting-points) in one significant respect: the former cannot lead to judgements or beliefs, but only to intellectual imaginings (cf. Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 14). On the basis of supposing that Milan is the capital of Italy and knowing that the president of Italy resides in the capital, I cannot acquire the belief that the president of Italy resides in Milan (at least not, if I am rational and do not mistake my supposition for a judgement). That means there is a logical restriction on the conclusions that we can draw from imaginatively entertained premises. Relatedly, there seem to be important differences between isolated intellectual imaginings and those which occur in close relation to other (intellectual) imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena - say, in response to fictions, or in the context of story-telling, games of make-believe, thought experiments, hypothetical reasoning, and so on. For instance, we may encounter logical or moral restrictions on what we can imagine when we are engaged in building a system of rationally linked intellectual imaginings (cf. Wollheim ((1973): 69ff.) and Eco (1994) for the influence of logical and Gendler (2000) for the influence of moral forces). Furthermore, these differences may warrant the use of different terms for isolated and embedded intellectual imaginings (e.g., Gendler distinguishes between "supposition" and "imagination" (Gendler (2000): 80f.); and Velleman seems to suggest a similar distinction between "fancifully imagining" and "tentatively or hypothetically assuming" something (Velleman (2000): 183; 251f.)). But this does not undermine the fact that all the respective episodic representations are instances of intellectual imagining, whether they occur on their own or in conjunction with other episodes. Whether I simply assume that it rains or imagine it as part of reading or hearing a story does not seem to influence the basic category of mental episode to which the intellectual representation in question belongs, even if its formation may be constrained in different ways, depending on its mental context.<sup>16</sup>

The fourth central type of imagining is *internal imagining*: it captures instances of imagining which have mental episodes as their directly represented objects.<sup>17</sup> You may not

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. also Currie's and Ravenscroft's argument that the resistance to imaginatively adopt certain morally evaluative points of view (e.g., when engaging with particular stories) pertains not only to the respective intellectual imaginings, but also to connected desires or desire-like imaginings (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 34ff.).

<sup>17</sup> Internal imaginings are often described in terms of imagining "from the inside" (e.g., cf. Peacocke (1985): 21, and Walton (1990): 29f.). Referring to them as "experiential" imaginings also seems an option, but it may give the false impression that only such imaginings are experienced and phenomenally conscious.

have simply visualized the streets of Rome, but imagined yourself - or one of the inhabitants - seeing them from a particular point of view; you may have imagined feeling uncomfortable in the cold, or imagined having the feelings and thoughts of children playing in the snow. Internal imaginings contain the contents of the imagined episode(s) and hence involve sensory, affective or intellectual representations, depending on the nature of those contents. Imagining seeing something, for instance, involves having a visual image of it. But internal imaginings make essential reference in their content to the imagined type of episode. Imagining seeing something thus represents visual perception (or, even more specifically, veridical or hallucinatory visual perception). Thereby, the representational link may be intentional or relational, depending on one's account of internal imagining. In many (if not all) cases, internal imagining involves also an ascription of the imagined episode to a particular person; and it may even combine the imagined episode with other imagined episodes of (presumably) the same person. This is the case, for example, when we imagine being (or what it would be like to be) Napoleon as he watches the battle of Jena and thinks of Josephine, or about the next tactical moves (cf. Wollheim (1984): ch. 3, for an extensive discussion of such cases). Apart from such cases of imagining experiencing something or imagining being someone, internal imagining also includes cases of imagining doing something, assuming that it is imagined by means of imagining the respective experiences which one would have while doing it (cf. Peacocke (1985): 22; Budd (1989): 100; Walton (1990): 29f.). Internally imagining (the experience of) playing the piano will involve, for instance, imagining seeing some hands moving over the keyboard, imagining hearing the corresponding sounds of a piano, and linking the imagined episodes to each other and to oneself. It may also involve intellectually imagining that one plays the piano, but cannot be reduced to it (cf. the discussion of Walton's view on pictorial experience in section 6.5).

Sensory and, in particular, visual instances of internal imagining have been the subject of extensive discussions which have addressed at least two important issues: what it means to imagine an episode, and to imagine it to be of a certain kind and belong to a particular person; and whether it is possible to imagine an episode (especially if it involves a perspectival representation) without also imagining it as being the episode of a particular person (who, for instance, is imagined as occupying the respective point of view; cf. the references in note 10 above). For my purposes, it will not matter how these two (and other) issues about the exact nature of internal imagining are settled. But to make it easier for me to discuss internal imagining in what follows, I will assume an answer to the first question which I take to be unspectacular enough to have little impact on the issues to be addressed in this dissertation, and which I would be willing to give up if it turned out to be of greater import. The idea is that internal imagining involves an imaginative thought (or thought-like

element) which identifies the type of episode imagined and, if necessary, relates it to a particular person as its bearer, and to other imagined episodes.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, it does not seem to be easy to conceive of other ways in which we may imaginatively represent mental episodes.

Fifth, when imagining Rome in winter you will have combined some or all of the previous four types of imagining in more complex *imaginative projects*. You may have daydreamed about walking along the streets of the city; you may have imagined yourself to be in the position of its inhabitants, perhaps resulting in your empathizing with them, or in your imaginatively living through their experiences; or you may have imaginatively engaged with the fictional (or perhaps also historical) description of these or similar scenarios. This group of imaginative phenomena is presumably the most varied and comprehensive, in particular because there does not seem to be much of a limit to which, and how many, instances of the other forms of imagining we can combine with each other in imaginative projects (as well as non-imaginative episodes). Examples of such projects are daydreams or fantasies, the imaginative invention in one's head of a story or melody, empathy and similar phenomena, or our imaginative appreciation of representational artworks.<sup>19</sup> In addition, it seems fair to say that many instances of internal imagining constitute imaginative projects (cf. Peacocke (1985): 24ff.; Hopkins (1998): ch. 7); and, automatically, vice versa. Daydreaming about being Napoleon may consist simply in internally imagining being him in certain situations; or imagining the thoughts and feelings of another person may just amount to empathizing with her. But some internal imaginings might be too short or too simple to count as projects (e.g., when visualizing a tree is taken to be an instance of internal imagining; cf. Hopkins (1998): ch. 7). And many imaginative projects do not seem to involve any internal imagining, or at least not as their primary ingredient (e.g., inventing or imaginatively telling a story in one's mind). In any case, it is interesting to note that almost all discussions of imagining have focused exclusively on imaginative episodes and internal imagining, while neglecting imaginative projects, apart from those constituted by sensory instances of internal imagining. One of my goals for this dissertation is to counteract this neglect.

What all of the instances of these five types of imagining have in common is that they occur

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Peacocke's claim that all sensory internal imaginings involve such thought-like imaginings ("S-imaginings", in his terminology), which could not occur independent of visual images (Peacocke (1985)).

<sup>19</sup> I will not have much to say about the last three, but I will discuss the first in detail in section 6.4. For a good discussion of the last, cf. Walton (1990). And cf. Goldie (2000): ch. 6 for a detailed elucidation of empathy (which he understands, roughly, as internally imagining oneself as having the thoughts, feelings and emotions of another person) and its relatives (such as imaginatively putting oneself in the situation (or "the shoes") of another person).

in phenomenal consciousness. It may thus be helpful to consider for a moment what it means for mental phenomena to be *phenomenally conscious* (or occurrent), namely: (i) to be a constitutive and continuous part of the stream of consciousness; (ii) to have a specific phenomenological character (i.e., a what-it-feels-like aspect) which characterizes the way we consciously and subjectively experience the mental phenomena in question; and (iii) to be actually or potentially subject to attention and introspection.<sup>20</sup> But the elucidation of conscious mental phenomena and of their phenomenological characters should not stop here. First of all, the complexity or detailedness of the latter may differ. For instance, the experience of conscious thoughts may be less rich or less specific than the experience of visual perceptions (e.g., because of the type of representation involved). Then, phenomenological differences need not coincide with, or be as specific as, our distinctions of different types of mental phenomena. Disjunctivists with respect to perceptions, for example, claim that veridical and non-veridical perceptions are different kinds of states, despite their phenomenological indistinguishability (cf. Martin (2002): section 5). And two visual perceptions, one representing a car as blue and the other representing a car as red, are phenomenologically distinct but nevertheless - at least on some level - of the same type, namely visual perception (while on another level, they may be of different types, namely either blue- or red-experiences). Furthermore, there may be limits to the distinctiveness of phenomenological characters. It may be doubted, for instance, that there is any difference in how we experience the judgement that it rains and the judgement that it snows. In particular, it may be argued that there is no distinctive aspect which the phenomenological characters of, say, judging that it rains, supposing that it rains, and wondering that it rains have in common (as there is, say, a distinctive aspect shared by the phenomenological characters of visual red-experiences).<sup>21</sup> In addition, even if it is accepted that all instances of two kinds of mental phenomena have different phenomenological characters, it may still be maintained that this difference is not due to a distinctive way in which we experience all the instances of each kind. How we experience watching television may always differ from how we experience reading a book, but that does not imply that there need be a distinctive phenomenological aspect shared by all our experiences of watching television.<sup>22</sup> Similarly,

---

<sup>20</sup> It has been denied that there is any such thing as phenomenal consciousness (e.g., cf. Dennett (1988)). If this turned out to be true, my comments should be regarded as concerning the phenomenological characters that the respective mental phenomena *seem* to have. For characterizations of phenomenological character similar to mine, cf., for instance, Block (1994), Carruthers (2000): 13f., Siewert (2000): section 3.10, and O'Shaughnessy (2000): 534.

<sup>21</sup> Considerations in favour of such a position may be found in Wittgenstein's private language argument (Wittgenstein (1984c): sections 243-315; cf. also Budd (1989): ch. 3), or may derive from an externalist account of semantic content (as it can be found in, say, Putnam (1975) or Burge (1979)). For a defence of a distinctive phenomenological difference between judging that it rains and judging that it snows, cf. Soldati & Dorsch (forthcoming).

<sup>22</sup> Thanks to Gianfranco Soldati for this example.

there may be no such thing as a distinctive phenomenological aspect common to all visual representations - or even all visual perceptions - of cars. And the phenomenological character of a given mental phenomenon (and the related introspective evidence) may not always adequately reflect the nature of that phenomenon. For instance, it may seem to us that we are visually remembering a face of a long-forgotten friend, while we are in fact (partly) visualizing it. It may even be that some of the errors involved in how we experience (or introspect) the phenomena occurring in our stream of consciousness are of a systematic nature. Disjunctivists about perceptual experience, for instance, may have to say this about our experience of non-veridical perceptions, given that it seems plausible to say that it is part of our phenomenological character of perceptual experiences that the entities with which we are presented in perception are mind-independent, physical objects.<sup>23</sup>

Now, it is distinctive of *mental episodes* that they are the simplest distinct and self-contained units which can occur independently of each other in phenomenal consciousness. Many, if not all, episodes are mental states, such as thoughts, judgements, perceptions, feelings or sensations. Which aspects of mental episodes are phenomenologically salient is a matter of debate. In contrast, if a distinct and self-contained conscious phenomenon allows for an analysis into elements which could occur in phenomenal consciousness on their own, it is not episodic, but complex.<sup>24</sup> Such *mental complexes* unify in themselves a set of mental episodes. What precisely gives unity to particular mental complexes and distinguishes them from mere temporal series of episodes may depend on the kind of mental complex in question. One example of mental complexes are aesthetic or similar experiences which may involve many different episodes, stretch over a long period of time and even be interrupted (e.g., when we read a novel bit by bit, or explore a city over several days or months). Such experiences are presumably unified by their common object plus some other factors. Another, here more important type of mental complexes are mental projects, such as the imaginative ones discussed above. As I will argue in section 5.1, what seems to unify them is their purpose. In any case, mental episodes can temporarily overlap, occur simultaneously or form temporal series with other mental episodes without also thereby forming mental complexes, such as aesthetic experiences or projects.

---

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the first section in Martin (2002) for a defence of the claim about the phenomenological character of perceptions put forward; and the fifth section for a defence of the idea that disjunctivism (or any theory of perception, for that matter) has to assume some systematic error in how we experience perceptual experiences.

<sup>24</sup> There may be some unclear borderline cases between mental episodes and mental complexes - for instance, visualizing a moving object, visually imagining moving around, or the most simple instances of internal imagining (e.g., imagining seeing a static face). In most cases, however, it should be clear whether a given mental phenomenon can be further analysed into independent elements.

Applying these considerations to the five central forms of imagining identified above, we get the following results. The first three forms of imagining are - at least as long as they do not constitute instances of internal imagining - episodic in character. Intellectually imagining that it rains is a mental episode; as is visualizing a tree, imagining an itch or imaginatively feeling pleasure (at least if the latter three are not to be characterized in terms of imagining an episode). Imaginative projects, on the other hand, are mental complexes: they are unities made up of mental episodes. Internal imaginings are not so easily classified. The more sophisticated instances (such as the case involving imagining being Napoleon) are presumably mental complexes as well. They involve more than one imaginative thought, or more than one imagining of a mental episode. But whether elementary examples (such as imagining seeing a tree, or even visualizing a tree if the latter is to be identified with the former) are episodic or complex is less clear. This will depend in the visual case, for instance, on whether imagining seeing something is best understood in terms of a visual imagining and an imaginative thought-like element; and also whether both elements could occur independently of each other. But independent of how this dispute is to be settled, it is true that all the central cases of imagining put forward are phenomenally conscious.

### **2.3. Imaginative and Cognitive Episodes**

The debates about imagining in the literature have focused primarily on the opposition between imaginative and cognitive phenomena.<sup>25</sup> Since this particular contrast will be of great significance in the following chapters - notably for the discussion of the Cognitive Account - it will be helpful to identify and elucidate two important differences between imaginative and cognitive phenomena, at least in their episodic form. The elucidation of these differences will also give further support to, and deepen the understanding of, the distinction between central cases of imaginative phenomena and central cases of cognitive phenomena, as outlined in the last section. The first difference is phenomenologically salient and consists in a difference in attitude, that is, in a difference in the stance which the episodes in question adopt towards their content. The idea is that only cognitive states - or *cognitions*, as I will also often say - involve a cognitive attitude: only they make a claim about how things are. The second difference is grounded in the different ways in which we typically treat imaginative and cognitive episodes when we are engaged in forming beliefs (or in acting): while we usually endorse cognitions in belief (and, subsequently, in action), we normally do not do the same with imaginings. The two differences differ themselves in

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Budd (1989): 100, Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11, and O'Shaughnessy (2000): 362ff. for the claim that the various kinds of imaginings have cognitive counterparts.

that the first is a strict difference (i.e., it separates all imaginings from all cognitions), and the second a typical one (i.e., it allows for exceptions on one or both sides).<sup>26</sup>

Let me begin by outlining the *difference in attitude*. It seems that imaginative and cognitive episodes need not differ in their type of representation. Both our imaginings and our cognitions can have visual contents, or intellectual ones, or involve some affective elements, and so on. Nor do they have to differ in what they represent. For instance, we can see or visualize a blue car, judge or suppose a car to be blue, have a real or an imagined itch, or perhaps can also really or imaginatively feel despair. However, representations can do more than be of a certain type and represent entities as having certain features. They can in addition take up a particular stance towards their content. To see what I have in mind, it is perhaps best to consider a specific example. Intellectually imagining that my car is blue represents the car as being blue. But it does not really claim that my car is blue: it makes no claim about how things are (cf. Scruton (1974): 97f.). And it is not necessarily to be evaluated in terms of whether my car is blue. In these respects, intellectually imagining that my car is blue is similar to wondering whether my car is blue. Asking this question to myself does not involve any claim about the specific nature of my car. In contrast, judging that my car is blue not only represents my car as being blue, it also claims that it is blue. It tells me how things are (i.e., which colour my car has). And it is to be evaluated with regard to whether my car is blue. Similar considerations apply to the corresponding sensory episodes (cf. Martin (2002): 391). Visualizing my car as being blue represents it as being blue, but does not make the claim that it is blue; perceiving my car as being blue, on the other hand, involves such a claim about the colour of my car.

This difference between imaginative and cognitive representations is, I want to say, a difference in their *attitude* towards their content.<sup>27</sup> More specifically, I will describe the difference in terms of a cognitive attitude: a mental representation involves a *cognitive attitude* if and only if it makes a claim about how things are. Accordingly, the two types of mental representation differ in that cognitive states involve a cognitive attitude, while imaginative episodes lack it. This remains true even if it turns out that there are some non-representational imaginings (cf. section 6.2 for a discussion of this possibility): since they

<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, there may be a close connection between the two differences. The phenomenological difference between cognitions and imaginings may be referred to in order to explain why we typically rely only on the latter. Or, on the other hand, the phenomenological difference may be taken to reflect the difference in functional role (cf. Martin (2002): 391f. on perceptions).

<sup>27</sup> O'Shaughnessy seems to be one of the few who do not assume that cognitions and imaginings differ in their phenomenological character or their attitude (cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): 345; 349; 355). But I will argue against this view in the following chapters (cf., for instance, note 10 in chapter 3, and sections 4.5 and 6.3).

would not have any content, they could not involve any attitude towards their content. In contrast, there should be no doubt that cognitions are representational. Otherwise, they could not play their actual role in cognition.

Furthermore, I take it that Husserl and Sartre intend to refer to the same difference when they say that only cognitive states involve a "thetic quality" (Husserl (2001): *Fifth Investigation*) or a "positing attitude" (Sartre (2004): ch. 1). Likewise, the cognitive attitude of cognitions seems to parallel the "assertoric force" involved in assertions: the latter also make a claim about how things are (cf. Williams (1970): 137). And just as cognitions can go wrong in this respect, assertions can as well. In the case of judgements, the involvement of a cognitive attitude can be described in many other ways - for instance, as purporting to be true, or as involving an endorsement or acknowledgement of its content (or the respective proposition) as true, or as being the case. With respect to perceptions, it is perhaps less straightforward to speak of them as being endorsed or acknowledging their content to be true, or of their purporting to be true (e.g., because their contents are perhaps non-conceptual or non-propositional). It seems better to simply take them to represent how things are, or to represent things as being a certain way. Another way of paraphrasing what I have in mind is to say that having a cognitive attitude means involving a commitment to how things are. But it is important to be clear about the fact that I do not intend to take the bearers of a cognitive attitude to be subject to some related norm. Making a commitment about how things are (or making a claim about it, for that matter) need not happen in relation or response to any norm. In particular, representations showing a cognitive attitude towards their content need not be governed by the norm that they ought to be true, or ought to be formed only if true (cf. Dretske (2000): 248f.).

Not all kinds of representation have to involve an attitude. And other types of representational states (such as desires or intentions) may involve other kinds of attitude, perhaps even in addition to a cognitive one. But we need not be concerned with these cases here, since this issue has no bearing on the way I have already differentiated imaginative and cognitive episodes. It may also be possible that there are one or more distinctive imaginative attitudes.<sup>28</sup> But I would like to stay neutral on that issue as well, and for the same reason. For the difference in the presence or absence of a cognitive attitude suffices to draw the distinction that I am after.

---

<sup>28</sup> As indicated in Sartre (2004): 12f.. Also, the distinction between isolated and embedded intellectual imaginings elucidated above may perhaps be read in terms of a difference in attitude: merely imagining (or thinking) something may be less committal than assuming it for heuristic purposes, or in the context of inventing or appreciating a story (cf. Velleman (2000): 183; 251f.).

Whether a phenomenally conscious mental state possesses a cognitive attitude towards its content is phenomenologically salient: it is part of the phenomenological character of that state (cf. Martin (2002): especially 391, on perceptions). This means that we can normally tell simply, on the basis of how we experience a mental episode, whether it involves a cognitive attitude. And this is crucial, for instance, for our ability to introspectively distinguish imaginative from cognitive episodes. We can usually tell whether we are currently perceiving a blue car, or instead visualizing one. And we normally do not have any problems in telling apart our conscious judgements and suppositions, even if they have the same content. As with other aspects of phenomenological characters, we may not always get the attitude of a given mental representation right. But this does not mean that we do not typically experience a difference between kinds of representation - such as imaginings and cognitions - which differ only in their attitude.<sup>29</sup>

The second difference that I would like to focus on is a *difference in the functional* - or, more precisely, *epistemic - role*: we typically rely on cognitive episodes, but not on imaginative episodes, when we are concerned with the formation of beliefs or the acquisition of knowledge (and, subsequently, the use of these beliefs in action). More specifically, while we are usually inclined to epistemically trust our perceptions, memories and judgements, we are not similarly disposed to follow our visualizings, suppositions or daydreams when forming beliefs. This difference in epistemic role is also reflected in a particular difference in practical role, given that we let representations which we epistemically endorse guide our actions instrumentally or via motoric feedback mechanisms. If I see a glass of milk on my table, I will be likely to form the judgement or belief that there really is such a glass; and if I have or develop a desire to drink milk, I will be likely to act on it and let my action be guided by one or more of those representations. For instance, my judgement or belief may tell me how to satisfy my thirst; and my perception may guide the subsequent deliberate movements of extending my arm towards the glass and grasping it. Equally, if I remember that there is a beer in the fridge, I will usually come to believe that this is the case; and my memory or the subsequent belief may influence my behaviour, assuming that I desire to drink a beer. And eventually, judging that my friend has some wine in his kitchen will lead me to come to believe that he has some wine in the pantry and may

---

<sup>29</sup> That we may make an error in introspection with respect to the nature of an introspected mental representation is compatible with the idea that we may not be able to make an error with respect to the kind of state which we take the introspected representation (rightly or wrongly) to be an instance of. For instance, we can very well mistake one of our visualizings for a visual memory. But it may be doubted that we can also be mistaken about the fact that we take the visualizing to be a visual memory, and not, say, a perception (cf. Sartre (2004): 4; Scruton (1974): n. 13, p. 100); cf. also the comments on the difference between the language games concerning seeing and visualizing in Wittgenstein (1984a): section 621, and (1984b): vol. II, section 63).

contribute to my going there, given that I know that he normally keeps his wine in the pantry. In contrast, visualizing a glass of milk on my table, or imagining (or imagining remembering) that there is a beer in the fridge, or some wine in my friend's pantry, will typically not influence the way in which I regard how things are and act accordingly. Hence, while we tend to endorse our cognitions in belief and action, we do not show the same tendency with respect to our imaginings. As a result, imaginings and cognitions usually play quite different epistemic (and practical) roles in our mental lives. And since our picture of the world (i.e., how we take things to be) is shaped by, and again shapes, our epistemic and practical interaction with the world, it is at least to a very large part constituted by our cognitions, and not our imaginings.

This does not mean that we cannot sometimes fail to endorse a cognition. This will happen, for instance, when we are in doubt about the epistemic appropriateness of the cognition or the circumstances of its occurrence. If I have some good reason to believe that my perception of the glass of milk or my memory of the beer are illusory or hallucinatory, I will normally not follow them in what I believe and do. And the same will usually apply to a belief the rationality of which I mistrust for whatever reason. On the other hand, the difference in epistemic role does not rule out the possibility that we may endorse some imaginings in belief and subsequently rely on them in action (I will discuss this possibility in more length in chapter 4). Hence, the claim put forward is just that imaginings and cognitions differ in the epistemic roles which they *typically* play in our mental lives. It does not identify a strict difference which separates all instances of imagining from all instances of cognition. One consequence of this is that, although there is presumably some important link between the attitude (or lack thereof) of a mental representation and the epistemic trust that we put in it,<sup>30</sup> the two can come apart. We may endorse in belief certain episodes which lack a cognitive attitude (i.e., which do not themselves endorse their contents); and we may fail to endorse in belief certain episodes which show a cognitive attitude.

Leaving sceptical arguments about knowledge aside, what this difference presumably presupposes is that our cognitions are reliable - and our imaginings unreliable - with respect to the acquisition of knowledge. In other words, the fact that there is such a difference in typical epistemic role suggests that many of our cognitions do cognize reality, while most of our imaginings do not. For it would be difficult to explain why we epistemically trust our cognitions if they did not reliably lead to knowledge (or, at least, to a correct representation of reality); and a similar link probably has to obtain between our lack of epistemic trust in our imaginings and their corresponding typical failure in cognition. When I talk of

---

<sup>30</sup> Cf., for instance, the discussion in Martin (2002).

representations as *cognizing reality* - or, alternatively, as *providing knowledge* - I intend to refer not only to representations that constitute knowledge, but also to representations that ground knowledge: that is, to states which are epistemically sound in the sense that if we appropriately form beliefs on their basis, they contribute to these beliefs' status as knowledge (or at least lead to their being states of knowledge). Accordingly, not only judgements and beliefs, but also perceptions and other non-intellectual states can cognize reality as instances of or grounds for knowledge. Significantly, not all cognitive states need to be cognizing; and vice versa.

In addition, it is important not to misunderstand the nature of the second difference noted between imaginative and cognitive episodes. This difference in their typical epistemic roles might be expressed by reference to the idea that cognitions play a role in cognition, or have the function of providing knowledge, while imaginings do not (and I will speak sometimes in these terms). But again, it has to be kept in mind that this allows for cognitions to fail and, maybe more importantly, for imaginings to succeed with respect to that role or function. In particular, even if imaginings cannot really be said to play a role in cognition, or to have the function of providing knowledge, they might nevertheless contribute to the acquisition of knowledge in the right kind of circumstances. Besides, talk of a typical epistemic role, or of the function of cognizing, is not intended to betoken a commitment to any claims about how, and why, the functional role typical for cognitions may be realized by them.

One prominent and plausible way of understanding this realization introduces the idea of an underlying evolved function of providing knowledge. Accordingly, perceptions and the like are said to possess, as part of and relative to a larger organism, the biological function of leading to cognition of reality. And they are also assumed to normally be able to fulfil this function, at least in the kind of environment in which they have acquired this function and which they are adapted to. The introduction of such a biological function may have many explanatory advantages. One is that it may help to explain why mental representations can represent and refer to reality in the first place.<sup>31</sup> More importantly for the current discussion, it may also provide an account of why cognitions reliably lead to knowledge, namely, because of their evolved function, which has helped our species to successfully interact with the world and survive in it. Compare again the analogy with assertions: that we usually trust the assertions of other people may be due to the fact that it is their underlying (social?) function to express reliable and sincere views which ensures that (or which the assertions

---

<sup>31</sup> Teleological accounts of mental representations are defended in, for instance, Millikan (1989), Papineau (1993) and Dretske (1997). They are challenged in, for example, Fodor (1990) and Braddon-Mitchell & Jackson (1997).

possess only if) they usually are trustworthy. If most or all people began to lie, assertions would lose both their trustworthiness and their (social) function to express sincere opinions. But the introduction of a biological function of cognitions also faces some difficulties, notably the problem of specifying precisely when a cognition fails to fulfil its function (e.g., which environments are relevant for the acquisition of the function). Hence, I want to stay neutral with respect to the issue of how the epistemic role of cognitions should be accounted for. And it is therefore important to keep apart the two notions of "function" introduced: the functional role (or function) typical for cognitions in our cognitive mental lives; and the underlying biological function of cognizing reality.

## **2.4. Candidates for Non-Central Cases of Imagining**

As noted, a theory of imagining should capture all the paradigm instances of imagining if it is to count as providing a unified account of imagining. However, there are many other kinds of mental states or complexes which have at one time or another been treated as imaginative, or as involving imagining, but never without controversy. I will therefore take them to be at best candidates for non-central instances of imagining. No unified theory of imagining is required to capture them. But it may nevertheless count as an advantage for a particular account of imagining if it can say something about the nature of these cases. Moreover, as long as the account is in general sufficiently plausible, it should not matter whether it shows the non-central candidates to be imaginative or not. After all, the cases in question are not clear cases of imagining and hence may very well turn out not to exist at all, or to be non-imaginative. But the theory in question may also end up classifying them as imaginings. Or it may end up not having to say anything about them. In any case, it will be helpful to clarify the extensional scope required of unified accounts of imagining by discussing what may be candidates for non-central instances of imagining. In this final section of the chapter, I will address in turn the possibility of dispositional imaginings and the possible imaginativeness of dream states, psychologically unusual or pathological cases, pretence, and states concerned with the non-actual in rather unrealistic ways (e.g., certain hopes, wishes, anticipations, or speculations).<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> I will discuss two potentially non-central cases of imagining in much more detail in chapter 6, namely pictorial experiences and spontaneous images and thoughts. The reason for spending more time on the former is that the postulated imaginativeness of pictorial experiences has been very prominent in recent discussions (cf. the impact of the theory expounded in Walton (1990)); while the reason for spending more time on the latter is that (as it will turn out) they seem to be very similar to imaginative phenomena.

However, I will not have the time to say anything about another important potential candidate for imaginativeness: namely the phenomenon (or cluster of phenomena) often referred to as "seeing-

While all instances of imaginative thought are episodic, they might not exhaust the class of intellectual imaginings. For instance, we can store the piece of information that Sherlock Holmes lives at 221b Baker Street without having to be constantly conscious of it. We may not have thought about Sherlock Holmes for years, but still be able to readily answer the question of where he lives. Moreover, when we do come to think that Sherlock Holmes lives at 221b Baker Street (e.g., because we are responding to the question), our thought is presumably imaginative: we do not really believe that Sherlock Holmes lives there and that we could take the underground to visit him. This may be taken to suggest that there is a mental state, storing the piece of information in question, which is not phenomenally conscious, but can become manifest in phenomenal consciousness in the form of an imaginative thought. Following common terminology, I will take such a state to be a *mental disposition* (though "standing state" may perhaps be a more appropriate label: cf. Martin (2001): p. 265, n. 10). Beliefs, desires, emotions, and so on, are typical examples of dispositional states. The question of whether the interpretation of the state under consideration as an imaginative dispositional state is appropriate will primarily depend on whether it should really be understood as a state which stores information about Sherlock Holmes and Baker Street, and not rather about the nature of the writings of Conan Doyle. If the first interpretation is to be preferred, it seems unavoidable to treat it as an imaginative dispositional state. But in the second case, the state in question will turn out to be a belief - for instance, the belief that the writings describe Sherlock Holmes as living at 221b Baker Street, the belief that they are such that the appropriate appreciation of them requires us to imagine that Sherlock Holmes lives at 221b Baker Street, or simply the belief that we ought to imagine that Sherlock Holmes lives at 221b Baker Street. In any case, since the postulation of dispositional intellectual imaginings is highly controversial, they should not count as paradigm cases of imagining.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, even if they turned out to exist, they would come into being presumably only in relation to some other existing entity (a story, an artwork, a game, a specific daydream, and so on) which determines what to imagine in certain contexts or circumstances. And they would come into being presumably only as a consequence of first having had the respective imaginative thought. At least, it is difficult to conceive of other cases in which we might be said to form (or to have reason to form)

---

as" or "seeing an aspect". It seems beyond doubt that the instances of this phenomenon involve some kind of agency. But it may be argued that the agency involved is closer to the activity of attention than to imaginative activity: that is, that it concerns less the active and direct formation of a representation with a specific content and more a shift of focus from one perceivable aspect of an object to another. The view that "seeing-as" or "seeing an aspect" involves imagining is defended by McGinn (2004): ch. 3, and Scruton (1974): 92; ch. 8. Cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): ch. 14, for an account of the active (and non-imaginative) character of attention.

<sup>33</sup> For instance, Nichols (2004a) argues against their existence; and Walton (1990): 17f. seems to be undecided, but with some sceptical undertones.

dispositional imaginings.<sup>34</sup> Hence, it can be expected that any potential account of dispositional imaginings would be dependent on an account of episodic imaginings; and that any unified theory of imagining capturing the latter would also be able to capture the former.

If there really were dispositional states like the ones just discussed, they should clearly be taken to be imaginative (though not paradigm examples of imagining). In contrast, with most other kinds of mental phenomena that might be taken to constitute non-central cases of imagining, it is very unclear, or even unlikely, that they should count as instances of imagining at all.

In some cases, this seems to be due to the fact that we do not have a clear grasp of the nature of the respective phenomena. One example is dream states. Although they seem to be similar to imaginings (and memories, for that matter), we do not really know what they are, or whether they can be compared in their non-cognitive character to the respective elements in our waking mental lives. In particular, since they seem to occur in a state of consciousness which is different from wakefulness, they lack a feature which all (central) instances of imagining have in common: the feature of (possibly) being phenomenally conscious (cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000) and (2000): 64ff.). This difference in how we "experience" imaginings and dream states seems already to be sufficient to distinguish them in nature (cf. Scruton (1974): 100f.).<sup>35</sup>

The other type of phenomena the imaginativeness of which is controversial because of their unclear nature are psychologically unusual or pathological cases, such as obsessive thoughts or images, delusions, instances of hearing voices or inserted thoughts, or the hallucinations<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Note that many cases that seem to be instances of dispositional imaginings are, rather, examples of occurrent imaginative thoughts which stay in the background of our consciousness or attention after having been formed in the foreground. When I am daydreaming that I am rich, I will continue to have the respective premise in mind, even if I do not constantly pay attention to it any more - just as my thought that I find the person opposite me very attractive will stay in my consciousness during the whole duration of my rendezvous with her, thereby perhaps alternately coming forward and receding (thanks to Kevin Mulligan for this example).

<sup>35</sup> O'Shaughnessy nevertheless defends the view that dreaming involves imagining, given that he takes non-cognitiveness to be distinctive of both (O'Shaughnessy (2000): 107 and ch. 11, and (2002)). Armstrong argues against a position like this by maintaining that dream states differ from imaginings in that they *are* actually cognitive (Armstrong (1968): 303ff.). And McGinn maintains that at least the intellectual states involved in dreams involve a cognitive attitude (McGinn (2004): ch. 7). In chapter 4, I will try to undermine O'Shaughnessy's idea that non-cognitiveness is distinctive of imagining.

<sup>36</sup> The term "hallucination" is often used in two very different ways: as denoting perceptual experiences which are not adequately caused by the respective aspects of reality (cf. Armstrong (1968): 297f.; Lewis (1980)); and sensory experiences which differ from perceptions in that they do not present themselves as concerning reality (and hence are not dissimilar to imaginings) and

induced by hallucinogenic substances. We often speak in these and similar cases of the people concerned as "imagining" something (e.g., when someone "imagines" that everyone around him is part of a conspiracy against him, or when someone "imagines" that the objects he "sees" become fluid). But it is not clear what we mean by this - for instance, that they make something up against their will, wrongly believe it, do not realize their own involved activity, or are simply in a state which is different from our normal thoughts, feelings, perceptions, judgements and memories. Indeed, some of the examples are often taken to constitute rather forms of belief than forms of imagining (cf. Bayne & Pacherie (forthcoming) on delusional beliefs). In contrast, other cases seem more likely to be imaginative - for instance in that they involve the active formation of representations which the subject does not fully acknowledge as the product of their own doing (cf. Roessler (2001) on inserted thoughts and similar examples), or which the subject cannot easily banish or terminate (cf. section 6.1). But because of their unclear nature and the controversial status of their potential classification as imagining, a unified account of imagining should not necessarily be expected to capture or classify these cases. I will nevertheless return briefly to them in chapter 6 and indicate which of them I take to be likely to be imaginative, and which not.

Likewise, I will not say much about pretence, apart from the observation that, at least with respect to one very reasonable way of classifying cases as instances of pretence, it seems implausible that it is imaginative. Examples of the cases I have in mind are: pretending to be someone else (e.g., in order to commit some fraud); pretending that one has forgotten another person's birthday (e.g., just to surprise her later on); or pretending to participate in the game of make-believe that tree stumps are bears (e.g., to make one's children happy).<sup>37</sup> One reason for the non-imaginativeness of these cases of pretence is that they typically, if not always, involve overtly behavioural elements (cf. Ryle (1963): section 8.5; Currie & Ravenscroft (2002: 32)), while imagining seems to be exclusively a mental phenomenon.

---

are symptoms for some psychological disorder, or the use of certain drugs or stimulants (such as magic mushrooms or LSD; cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): 346ff.; 479). I will typically use "perceptual hallucination" (or "hallucinatory perceptions") to refer to the first, and "hallucination" to refer to the second; but I also hope that the context will make clear which is intended.

<sup>37</sup> I will not attempt here to provide an intensional characterization of the notion of pretence that I have in mind. But this notion seems to be prevalent in Ryle (1963): section 8.5., Shorter (1970), White (1990): ch. 17, and Nichols & Stich (2000). Their examples are very similar to mine, e.g., pretending to be a bear or a corpse (Ryle (1963): 245); or pretending that a banana is a telephone (Nichols & Stich (2000): 117). Furthermore, I assume that participation in games of make-believe - but not pretended participation - requires imagining (or at least trying to imagine) according to the rules of the game (cf. Walton (1990): ch. 6, especially 209ff.). When Walton speaks of pretence as the verbal participation in a game of make-believe (Walton (1990): 220), he does not seem to claim that pretence should or has to involve imagining in general, but only if it becomes part of (and an expression of the respective imaginings involved in) one's participation in a game of make-believe.

The other and perhaps more important reason is that we seem to be able to pretend something without having to imagine anything at all (cf. Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 33; 153f.; cf. also section 7.3). For instance, I may pretend to be dead, or pretend to participate in the game of make-believe mentioned above and pretend that tree stumps are bears (e.g., call them "bears", run away from them, warn other people about them, and so on), without thereby having to imagine that I am dead, or that the stumps are bears. It seems that I just have to believe that, as part of my pretence, I have to lie completely still, or to treat tree stumps in a certain way. Similarly, someone pretending to be someone else and pretending to sign as that person in order to cash a cheque need not imagine that he is that person. These particular instances of pretence should not be taken to be imaginative - although this does not mean that other instances (perhaps even of the same kind of pretence) cannot involve one of the types of imagining outlined above. For instance, I may really enter the game of make-believe, imagine stumps to be bears and, as a consequence, get emotionally involved in the game (e.g., by feeling anticipatory fear). And imagining being another person may help one better pretend to be that other person (something which is perhaps exploited by method actors). Hence, pretence (as understood here) does not seem to be imaginative.<sup>38</sup>

A last group of cases which may be partly imaginative, or involve imagining, but surely do not constitute uncontroversial instances of imagining is made up of phenomena such as hoping that Switzerland will win the next European Championships in football while one knows that the chances are very slim, wishing to become the King or Queen of the United Kingdom, anticipating some terrible disaster, or freely speculating about why a friend has behaved or reacted in an unexpected way for which he does not seem to have any reason at all. These cases may be closer to imagining than to cognition in so far they may be concerned, not with "real" or probable possibilities supported by one's evidence, but with possibilities unlikely to be realized, or more or less unrelated to what one knows about reality. Perhaps these and other representations which are concerned with the non-actual (e.g., with events in the future) are, or involve, instances of imagining. But I do not intend to address this issue any further because they would not, in any case, count as paradigm examples of imagining. Moreover, if they turn out to be imaginative to some extent, then this may very well be due to the involvement of one of the five central forms of imagining described, notably intellectual imagining. Hence, they should not be referred to either in the evaluation of the different candidates for a unified account of imagining.

---

<sup>38</sup> I will discuss the plausibility of Ryle's proposal to account for imagining in terms of an *internal* form of pretence (i.e., one which concerns the imitation of mental actions or phenomena, rather than publicly observable ones) in section 4.5.

To recapulate, a unified account of imagining has to satisfy two important requirements: (i) it has to get the extension right with respect to the central instances of imagining and with respect to the paradigm cases of non-imaginative phenomena (notably cognitive ones); and (ii) it has to be able to elucidate the imaginativeness common to all imaginings. In the subsequent chapters, I will assess how the Cognitive Account and the Agency Account fare with respect to these two desiderata. I will begin with the exposition of the Cognitive Account and, in particular, of O'Shaughnessy's version of this theory of imagining.

### 3. The Exposition of the Cognitive Account

This and the next chapter will be devoted to the presentation and assessment of the Cognitive Account of imagining and, primarily, of one of its exemplary versions, the unified account of imagining developed by Brian O'Shaughnessy. I will postpone my evaluation of the Cognitive Account, and O'Shaughnessy's account in particular, until the next chapter. In this chapter, I will be concerned solely with the exposition of the main claims of the different versions of the Cognitive Account.

The main idea of the Cognitive Account is to characterize imaginings as non-cognitive in one form or another. This does not mean that all theories of imagining that assume episodes of imagining are different from cognitive phenomena are versions of the Cognitive Account. For the Cognitive Account goes beyond the thesis that imaginative episodes are not cognitive episodes, and imaginative projects not cognitive projects. What it also claims is that it is *distinctive* of imaginings that they are non-cognitive, and that their non-cognitivity is among the *basic* features in virtue of which they count as imaginative. Hence, any Cognitive Account of imaginings makes essential reference to their non-cognitivity: it assigns their non-cognitivity a central place in the specification of their nature (and not merely, say, in the specification of the implications of their nature). In addition, particular versions of the Cognitive Account often take the characterization of imaginings in terms of their non-cognitivity to be exhaustive. These specific variants of the Cognitive Account do not say much more about the nature of imaginings than that they are non-cognitive in one way or another. And, more importantly, they do not think that more could or should be said.

As already suggested, the Cognitive Account can come in various forms, depending on what is understood by the claim that imaginings are non-cognitive. But there are two main types of claim, either of which can - and one of which usually does in concrete cases - constitute the core of a Cognitive Account. For want of better (and still fairly neutral) terms, I will label the instances of the two types "negation claims" and "echo claims". What both kinds of claim have in common is that they characterize imaginings in terms of cognitive phenomena. However, they differ significantly in their structural features and, as a consequence, in the particular link between imaginings and the cognitive phenomena they focus on. But let me discuss the two types of claim in turn.

It is distinctive of *negation claims* that they characterize imaginings in purely negative terms: they say merely what imaginings *are not*, or *cannot* be. All theses about imaginings having this structural feature are negation claims. Here, I will focus exclusively on negation claims that describe imaginings as being non-cognitive in one form or another. Only such negation claims can be relevant for a Cognitive Account.<sup>1</sup> Possible examples for such cognitive negation claims are: the thesis that imaginings cannot cognize reality (i.e., cannot ground or constitute knowledge); the thesis that imaginings cannot cognize reality in the same way as cognitive states (e.g., cannot satisfy the epistemic requirements required of the latter); the thesis that imaginings lack a cognitive attitude; or the thesis that imaginings are neither cognitive episodes nor cognitive projects.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, the structural feature common to all *echo claims* is that they model imaginings on some cognitive counterparts: that is, take them to be *echoes* of certain cognitive phenomena. Claims of this kind involve at least two components: the idea of counterparts and the idea of dependency. The idea of counterparts is to assign to each kind of imagining a particular type of cognitive state on which it is modelled (cf. Budd (1989): 100; Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11). Thus, sensory imaginings are usually modelled on perceptions, intellectual ones on beliefs or judgements, affective ones on feelings or similar states, and so on, depending on the intended scope of the particular echo thesis to be formulated. What prompts the specific assignments are typically certain (perhaps not perfect) similarities holding between the respective relata: namely, typically, similarities both in content (i.e., which entities and features can be represented) and in type of representation (i.e., whether they are visual, intellectual, etc.; cf. also section 4.4). Indeed, one major motivation for proponents of the echo thesis is that they can explain why these similarities hold, without having to give up on the idea that there is an intrinsic difference between imaginings and cognitions: while the latter are said to be the "real thing", the former

---

<sup>1</sup> There may be other ways of negatively characterizing imaginings. But I take it that they will be likely to face difficulties comparable to those facing the cognitive negation claims (for these difficulties, cf. primarily chapter 4). Similar considerations apply to echo claims formulated in non-cognitive terms.

<sup>2</sup> The first (and hence also the second) claim is endorsed by Sartre (2004): 8ff., Wittgenstein (1984a): section 627, and O'Shaughnessy (cf. the discussion below). Hume seems to embrace at least one of the first two claims, given that the "ideas" of the imagination are not "impressions" (i.e., perceptions, sensations, feelings, etc.), do not adequately reflect the order of "impressions" (as memories do) and are also not directly linked to an "impression" (as beliefs are; cf. Hume (2000): 1.1.1.1; 1.1.3; 1.3.5; 1.3.7.7; and 1.3.7.15)). Many philosophers will endorse the last two claims (for an apparent exception, cf. note 10 below, and note 27 in chapter 2). I will assess these claims in the next chapter, in the sections 4.1-4.3.

are said to be only echoes of them. The idea of dependency, on the other hand, is that imaginings are dependent in some way on cognitions (which explains why they have to be elucidated in terms of cognitions). Echo claims may differ in whether they take this dependency thesis to apply to all or only to certain forms of imagining (e.g., sensory imaginings). And the various claims may differ in whether they postulate a causal, a constitutional or a conceptual dependency of imaginings, and in whether they take this dependency to be on types or on tokens of cognitions. Possible examples of echo claims are: the thesis that imaginings represent certain cognitive phenomena (i.e., are internal imaginings); the thesis that they imitate or simulate them; or the thesis that they have to have corresponding cognitive causal predecessors.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, imaginings can be said to be echoes of cognitive phenomena in many very different ways.

The endorsement of a negation or an echo thesis is often not meant to be part of the characterization of the distinctive features of imaginings responsible for their imaginativeness. But it equally often is so intended. In the latter case, the resulting views count as instances of the Cognitive Account; and they count as partial or pure instances of this theory, depending on whether they account for the nature of imaginings exclusively in terms of their non-cognitivity as specified by the respective negation or echo claims; or whether they specify imaginings also in non-cognitive terms. The different versions of the Cognitive Account may also differ in whether they involve one or more negation claims, or one or more echo claims (though this seems to be far less likely), or one or more claims of both types.<sup>4</sup> Maybe there are other ways of characterizing imaginings as non-cognitive. But they do not come easily to mind, and do not seem to be realized by any of the major existing theories of imagining.

Now, perhaps the most developed unified account of imagining presented recently is that found

---

<sup>3</sup> O'Shaughnessy endorses the first claim with respect to all kinds of imaginings (cf. the discussion below), while Peacocke (1985): 22, and Martin (2001): 273; (2002): 404, endorse it with respect to (central cases of) sensory imaginings (cf. also note 10 in chapter 2). Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 49, and Ryle (1963): 250ff., may be interpreted as embracing echo claims of the second kind. And Hume endorses the last, given that he takes imaginings to be "ideas" (cf. Hume (2000): 1.1.1.6ff. for the echo claim; and 1.3.7.7 for the characterization of imaginings). I will discuss these different proposals in the sections 4.4 and 4.5.

<sup>4</sup> As it seems, Wittgenstein embraces a negation claim without endorsing the Cognitive Account (Wittgenstein (1984b): vol. II, sections 63 and 627; cf. also note 3 in chapter 5). Sartre's account appears to be partially a version of the Cognitive Account (cf. Sartre (2004): ch. 1), while Hume (2000), Ryle (1963): ch. 8, and O'Shaughnessy (cf. discussion below) seem to put forward pure versions.

in O'Shaughnessy's *Consciousness and the World*.<sup>5</sup> As it happens, it is also a pure version of the Cognitive Account of imagining (and a particularly complex one, for that matter), given that it consists primarily of two negation claims and one echo thesis. Because of its richness and sophistication, and also because of its clear embrace of a unified theory of imagining, O'Shaughnessy's theory deserves special attention. Moreover, its discussion will reveal many important facts about the nature of imaginings. And most importantly, it can figure as a paradigm instance of the Cognitive Account of imagining. Many of the claims it endorses and most of the problems it faces are shared by other versions of the Cognitive Account. Accordingly, the assessment of O'Shaughnessy's theory in the next chapter will equally be an assessment of the Cognitive Account.

The main idea in O'Shaughnessy's account is to define imaginings in terms of their relation to, and contrast with, what he calls the cognitive prototypes of perception and knowledge. His theory consists primarily of three claims which are intended to apply to all, and only, instances of imagining: (A) no imagining can be an instance of one of the two cognitive prototypes; (B) all imaginings are non-intentional representations of one of the two cognitive prototypes; and (C) no imagining can cognize reality. He takes the first two claims to be necessary and sufficient to define imaginings, while he treats the third claim as a direct consequence of the first (together with the assumption that there are no other cognitive prototypes which imaginings might exemplify). And, as will become clear in the next section, while (A) and (C) are negation claims about imagining, (B) constitutes an echo thesis. Accordingly, O'Shaughnessy's account of the nature of imaginings is a pure instance of the Cognitive Account.

One particular problem in dealing with and presenting his account of imagining is that it is an essential part of the much wider project of accounting for the nature of "consciousness" (i.e., the state of being awake<sup>6</sup>), and for the nature of perception as its most important aspect. As a result, many of O'Shaughnessy's claims seem to be inseparably linked to his claims about "consciousness" and, especially, perception; and his discussion of imaginings continually relies on ideas and arguments presented elsewhere. Nevertheless, I will try to present his theory as

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): especially chs. 11 and 12. All page references in this chapter are to this book, if not otherwise stated.

<sup>6</sup> "Consciousness" in this sense has to be distinguished from what I have called "phenomenal consciousness", and which O'Shaughnessy calls "contemporaneous experience" (or simply "experience"), or "a stream of consciousness" (5; 37ff.). We are concerned with "consciousness" in O'Shaughnessy's sense of being wakeful when we say that a sleeping person "wakes up", or that a patient regained "consciousness", or "came to himself" (cf. 68ff.).

neutrally as possible with respect to his other - often rather controversial - views. In particular, I will attempt to steer away from his belief in, and subtle conception of, a sense-data theory of perception; and to present his view on imagining as non-committally in this respect as possible. I will, however, use footnotes to elucidate certain aspects of his underlying ideas about perception - whenever it seems that this might clarify his position on imaginings, or more generally might contribute to a better understanding of his picture of how the mind works.

Another presentational difficulty stems from the complex (and not always absolutely clear) structure of O'Shaughnessy's argumentation, which will be reflected in the complex structure of this and the following chapter. In the first section of this chapter, I will present the main ideas of O'Shaughnessy's account of imagining, notably the three key claims mentioned above; and I will illustrate that he really does have the general ambition to provide a unified account of imagining, which is, furthermore, a version of the Cognitive Account. The second section clarifies some important aspects of his strategy in arguing for his theory and, in particular, for theses (A) and (C). The key issue will be how the nature of the two cognitive prototypes has to be understood. The final three sections are concerned with presenting O'Shaughnessy's main argument for claim (A): the Argument from Origin. The main idea of this argument is that imaginings are prevented by their specific origins in the mind from satisfying certain cognitive constraints, and therefore from exemplifying the prototypes characterized in terms of these constraints. The first two of the three sections will clarify the proposed link between the prototypes and the cognitive constraints. One will focus on O'Shaughnessy's endorsement of certain traditionally accepted cognitive requirements on perceptions and beliefs (e.g., veridicality and reliability); while the other will introduce some further and rather uncommon epistemic demands, the postulation of which is closely linked to his belief that only waking subjects can cognize reality. The last of the three sections will then expound O'Shaughnessy's idea that imaginings cannot satisfy these constraints because of the ways in which they arise from the mind. This will conclude the expository part of my discussion of O'Shaughnessy's theory of imagining in particular, and the Cognitive Account in general. I will move on to the assessment of both in the next chapter. But let me begin with the presentation of O'Shaughnessy's main claims about imagining.

### 3.1. The Three Main Theses of O'Shaughnessy's Account

The main part of O'Shaughnessy's theory of imagining consists in a definitional project aimed at specifying necessary and sufficient conditions for being an imagining. The core idea of his definition is that imaginings are necessarily similar to, and modelled upon, perception and knowledge, but necessarily never amount to them: they are, in his words, only *quasi* the types of cognizing state in question:

[...] imaginings are imaginings [...] through satisfying the definition. That is, through instantiating the following character: being of necessity merely 'quasi' some cognitive phenomenon. (361)

Hence, whether something counts as an imagining is for him a matter of whether it conforms to this definition. O'Shaughnessy elaborates on how he conceives of the definition in the following passage:

Imagining is '*quasi*' some cognitive prototype which represents Reality as endowed with a certain character, it *is not* that prototype and is thus *merely* 'quasi', indeed it is *of necessity* merely 'quasi', and it is as such directed to '*unreals*'. These are all necessary conditions of being an imagining. (359)

He therefore defines imaginings as mental representations which are *quasi* an instance of a cognitive prototype, but necessarily never really instantiate that prototype. In addition to *quasi* exemplifying a cognitive prototype, O'Shaughnessy often speaks of them being *as if* that prototype, or being a *seeming* instance of it (362ff.). Furthermore, the quoted passage (as well as other parts of his text) may be interpreted as suggesting that he supplements his definition with two further conditions on imaginings, namely that they have to be *merely quasi* cognitive items, and that they have to be directed to "unreals" (359). But in fact, these conditions are already contained in his definition. That imaginings are *merely quasi* a cognitive prototype means that they only *quasi*, but not actually, exemplify such a prototype - which is already a consequence of the definition. And that imaginings are concerned with "unreals" means that they do not really, but at best only seemingly, represent the world, because they are not cognitively linked to it - which, again, follows from the definition (359; 363f.). In short, imaginings are for

O'Shaughnessy therefore necessarily only *quasi* some cognitive prototype.

As the last quote has shown, O'Shaughnessy takes the satisfaction of this definition to be necessary for something to be an instance of imagining. Before addressing the issue of why he takes this also to be sufficient, it is indispensable to come to a better understanding of the definition by clarifying which cognitive prototypes O'Shaughnessy has in mind, and what it means for a mental state to exemplify one of them only *quasi*. The cognitive prototypes to which he refers are perception and knowledge (361; 363; 366). I will say more about his view on these prototypes in the next following sections. For the time being, it suffices to note that O'Shaughnessy maintains that there are no other cognitive prototypes involved in imagining. Here is how he describes the fact that imaginings have to be defined in terms of either one or the other prototype:

[...] the imagining phenomenon is (at the very least) a *function* of that mental item, insofar as its essential description makes reference to that item. [...] imaginings are necessarily functions uniquely of mental phenomena. More, they are of necessity functions *uniquely and only* of the fundamental mental cognitives - *knowledge and perception*. (363)

This quote makes clear that, for O'Shaughnessy, all imaginings are to be elucidated by reference to either perception (and its modal variants) or knowledge (and its variants, such as self-knowledge, etc.). However, it also suggests that he thinks that there are no other cognitive prototypes than these two: after all, they are "the fundamental mental cognitives". This is in line with the fact that O'Shaughnessy does not mention in his book the existence of any other cognitive prototype. But even if there were other prototypes, they would not - according to what O'Shaughnessy claims - be relevant for imaginings: the latter pertain "uniquely and only" to perception and knowledge. His definition of imaginings thus expresses the view that all instances of imagining are related to one or other of the two prototypes. And the relation in question is that of *quasi* or *seeming* instantiation (363).

For O'Shaughnessy, there seem to be two aspects to this relation of *quasi* exemplification. The first is that, although imaginings resemble their cognitive counterparts in many respects, they cannot really instantiate perception or knowledge. As O'Shaughnessy notes, there are certain similarities (or a certain "resemblance", as he calls it) between instances of the relevant two kinds of mental state (cf. 363-6). While sensory imaginings are like perception, intellectual

imaginings are like knowledge. For not only are both the imaginings and the cognitive prototypes representational, but the imaginings can have the same intentional objects and be of the same types of representation as the respective prototypes (166f.). Thus, both sensory imaginings and perceptions represent perceivable objects and features relative to a certain modality; and both intellectual imaginings and states of knowledge involve concepts and take propositions as their objects (cf. 365f.). Imaginings "imitate and are like" their cognitive prototypes - and may hence also sometimes be mistaken for them (365). Nevertheless, O'Shaughnessy maintains that imaginings necessarily differ from, and do not fully amount to, their cognitive prototypes (359ff.). Given that the similarity claim does not play a very significant role in his account,<sup>7</sup> it is this negation claim about imaginings which constitutes the first important part of what O'Shaughnessy means when he says that imaginings are only *quasi* the cognitive prototypes, but never the "real thing" (361). This negation claim can be specified as follows:

(A) No imagining can be an instance of one of the two cognitive prototypes.

The other aspect of the relation of *quasi* exemplification is that imaginings constitutively depend on the cognitive prototypes by taking them as their immediate objects. More precisely, imaginings have types of perception or knowledge as their immediate, non-intentional and necessary objects (not unlike sense-data in the case of perception). But this does not deprive imaginings of their less immediate intentional objects (cf. in general 166f. and 363ff.):

[...] the intentional object of imagination must be distinguished from the (so-called) 'immediate object' of imagination, which is to say from the cognitive prototype or *that which is being imagined* - for example, in the case (say) of visual imagining from the visual perceiving of an object. [...] the distinction [is] between intentional object content and 'immediate object' content of imagining [...]. [...] the event of imagining is 'filled' by a perceptual experience which is posited as being intentionally directed to the very same object as the imagining itself. (363)

---

<sup>7</sup> Apart from elucidating the representational nature of imaginings, the similarity claim's primary significance is that it may give some support for the endorsement of thesis (B) to be introduced below. The idea is that only (B) - the claim that imaginings have cognitive prototypes as their directly represented objects - can explain why the similarities hold. I will return in section 4.4 to the issue of how strong a support this provides for (B).

This quote reveals two interesting aspects of O'Shaughnessy's picture of imaginings as "second-order functions", "shadows" or "replicas" of the cognitive prototypes (363-5). First, he takes the content of imaginings to involve two objects (or, if one prefers, to have two contents involving different objects). The first object is an imagined type of mental episode (e.g., a visual perception), while the second object is some other imagined entity (e.g., a visible object in the world) which is taken by the subject to be the intentional object of the imagined type of episode. Accordingly, O'Shaughnessy assumes that all sensory and intellectual forms of imagining are instances of internal imagining: they consist in imaginings of types of mental episodes (cf. also 359). What he has in mind is that we imagine something by imagining our relevant cognitive access to it: that is, we visualize a face by imagining seeing (or "seem seeing") one, or we make-believe that it rains by imagining believing (or "seem believing") the corresponding proposition (363f.). Second, the imaginings and the imagined cognitive prototypes share the same intentional objects and, presumably, represent them as having the same features (e.g., as being a green apple). In addition, O'Shaughnessy understands the relation between imaginings and the imagined prototypes as non-intentional (363; 371). And he also maintains that imaginings of a certain kind (e.g., auditory imaginings) could not exist if the corresponding kind of prototype (in this case, auditory perception) did not exist (364; 377). Consequently, imaginings are said to be "functions" of the cognitive prototypes in two senses: the former have to be described in terms of the latter (as indicated in the quote above); and the former are constitutively related to the latter. In my terminology, this implies that imaginings are echoes of the cognitive prototypes. The second aspect of the relation of *quasi* exemplification consists in this specific echoing relationship between imaginings and the respective prototypes. It can be captured by the following echo thesis:

(B) All imaginings are non-intentional representations of one of the two cognitive prototypes.

As illustrated above, O'Shaughnessy takes it to be necessary for imaginings to be necessarily only *quasi* instances of the two cognitive prototypes. This means, in particular, that he takes (A) and (B) to be necessary for imaginings, since they specify what it means to only *quasi* exemplify the prototypes. But O'Shaughnessy intends to provide a full definition, that is, one which also specifies sufficient conditions for imaginativeness: he is "looking [...] for the *defining marks* of being an imagining" (342). Although O'Shaughnessy is not explicit about when sufficiency is reached, he thinks that his definitional project is completed once the relation of *quasi* exemplification is understood in the manner just described: adding the conception of

imaginings as imaginings of cognitive prototypes to the necessary conditions mentioned earlier "[concludes] the analytical characterization of imagining" (366). Hence, it seems reasonable to assume that, for O'Shaughnessy, the satisfaction of his definition of imagining is both necessary and sufficient for something to be an imagining *if* the relation of *quasi* exemplification between imaginings and the respective cognitive prototypes is understood in terms of (A) and (B). This interpretation is in line with the fact that all of O'Shaughnessy's comments, which emphasize the fact that the conditions so far specified by him are only necessary, *precede* his introduction of the non-intentional representational link between imaginings and the cognitive prototypes (359; 362). And this reading gets further support from the fact that O'Shaughnessy argues that imaginings are unique in being constitutively linked to other mental phenomena by having them as their non-intentional objects: "such a measure of dependence of one psychological phenomenon upon another is without precedent in the mind" (371). In contrast, higher-order thoughts, intentions or desires take mental phenomena at best as their intentional objects; and their identity as distinctive types of mental phenomena does not depend constitutively on the mental phenomena they may represent (363; 371f.). As a result, O'Shaughnessy aims to satisfy the first desideratum for a unified theory of imagining, which requires full extensional adequacy with respect to all central cases of imagining as well as all paradigm instances of non-imaginative phenomena.

But he also takes his theory of imagining to satisfy the second desideratum demanding explanatory power and, in particular, explanatory fundamentality. His envisaged theory is meant to provide not only a definition of the concept of imagining, but also an explanation of how the different types of imagining do indeed satisfy this definition in virtue of certain properties that they instantiate (339ff.; 357ff.; 362). Accordingly, he is also concerned with the issue of whether their conforming to the definition may be traced back to certain intrinsic or relational features of the respective mental representations. As will become clear, O'Shaughnessy argues at length that one reason why all imaginings (but not, say, perceptions or judgements) satisfy his thesis (A) is that they arise entirely from the mind, without any influence from how things are in reality (cf. his sections 11.2 and 11.4). However, he also tries to show that different forms of imagining do so in virtue of different specific origins: some because they are voluntarily produced, and others because they are the result of some breakdown in the usual causal pathways leading to perceptions or beliefs. Hence, there is for him no unified way in which imaginings come into being. In addition, O'Shaughnessy maintains that there is a further reason for why (A) applies to sensory imaginings in particular: namely their specific constitutive

differences from perceptions (354ff.).<sup>8</sup> I will discuss his arguments for (A) in more detail in the subsequent sections. At the moment, it suffices to stress that (A) is an essential part of O'Shaughnessy's definition of imagining; and that he therefore concludes that different kinds of imagining conform to the definition for different reasons: some because of their origin in the will, others because of their origin in some mere mental causes, and some in addition because of their constitution (359ff.; 367). Accordingly:

[...] the property of being an imagining is neither a relational nor constitutive property, even though relational and/or constitutive properties determine its existence. What matters is that a certain necessity is binding, namely that imaginings cannot exemplify their cognitive prototype. (361)

This means that, for O'Shaughnessy, being an imagining - that is, satisfying the definition of imagining - cannot be reduced to, or explained in terms of, a more fundamental feature shared by all imaginings: there is no feature common to all imaginings, over and above their satisfaction of the definition in virtue of which they count as imaginings. In particular, there is no imaginative essence: the class of imaginings does not constitute a mental kind (cf. 361; 368ff.). Moreover, his conclusion that there is no underlying intrinsic or extrinsic feature common to all imaginings, which can account for their imaginativeness, has the consequence that O'Shaughnessy takes the property of satisfying the definition of imaginings to be explanatorily fundamental. Given that it is also explanatorily illuminating because it tells us in substantial terms what imaginativeness consists in, his theory of imagining is designed to satisfy the second desideratum for a unified account of imagining as well.

However, O'Shaughnessy does not stop here. For him, his analysis of what it means for something to be an imagining entails that imaginings cannot cognize the world - even though they otherwise resemble cognitive states in many respects. His main idea is that the imaginings

---

<sup>8</sup> O'Shaughnessy adopts the same strategy to pictorial experience, which he takes to involve an imaginative experience of what is depicted. For him, pictorial experience (or at least its imaginative element) satisfies his definition because of both its origins and its constitution (346ff.). In what follows, I will not discuss his treatment of pictorial experience, mainly because it parallels that of sensory imaginings. I take it that he succeeds in showing that his claim (A) is true of pictorial experience. But as I will argue in the next chapter 4, I do not think that this is sufficient to show that they are really imaginative, or that they conform to (B) (i.e., involve the imagining of perceptions of the depicted: cf. 349). Besides, I am not sure whether (C) has much plausibility for pictorial experiences, given that they seem to manage to inform us about what is depicted (cf. note 8 in chapter 4).

cannot cognize reality because they cannot really exemplify their respective cognitive prototypes. Indeed, he links the failure of imaginings to exemplify the two cognitive prototypes with their failure to be able to cognize reality by identifying the same cause for both, namely, the specific origins of imaginings in the mind (cf. 345; 359). In addition, O'Shaughnessy also does not seem to think (as already illustrated above) that there are any other cognitive prototypes which imaginings might instantiate. For him, there do not seem to be more than two "fundamental mental cognitives - *knowledge and perception*" (363). Accordingly, he concludes with respect to all forms of imagining:

The fact that the mind acts [...], not as a representative of Reality but in direct opposition, guarantees that imaginings must be cognitively void. [...] failure to realize the [cognitive] prototype emerged as a universally necessary feature of imaginings. (359)

And concerning intellectual imaginings (which he calls "propositional imaginings"), he writes:

No propositional imagining can be a knowing. [...] Propositional imagining is as such out of the cognitive circuit. (345)

Hence, he does not take imaginings to possess the capacity to cognize reality. This aspect of his theory, which is not part of his definition of imagining but presented as a consequence of it, can be expressed by the following negation claim:

(C) No imagining can cognize reality.

To conclude, these three claims (A), (B) and (C) adequately reflect O'Shaughnessy's account of imagining: while the negation claim (A) and the echo thesis (B) constitute the two main ingredients of his definition of imagining, he takes the negation claim (C) to be one particular consequence entailed by this definition. For him, these three claims apply to all imaginings; and there are no non-imaginative mental phenomena of which all three claims are true. Accordingly, he takes imaginings to be precisely those mental phenomena of which these three claims are true. Since O'Shaughnessy thinks that certain entailment relations hold between the three claims, his theory can presumably be presented in a simpler form (e.g., by reference to only the first two theses, or to his own statement of his definition). But it will become clear below that - partly due to some apparent ambiguities in O'Shaughnessy's notion of the cognitive prototypes -

it is better to keep these three aspects of his account apart. In any case, this theory of imagining is meant by him to satisfy the two desiderata for a unified theory of imagining, notably the demands for extensional adequacy and explanatory fundamentality. Moreover, as it stands, the account can also reasonably hope - in particular due to thesis (B) - to elucidate the nature of imaginings. And finally, due to the nature of the three main claims involved, O'Shaughnessy's theory is a version of the Cognitive Account: its key idea is to characterize imaginings as non-cognitive in various ways.

### **3.2. O'Shaughnessy's Argumentative Strategy**

After presenting the key ideas of O'Shaughnessy's account of imagining, I will in this section discuss how he aims to argue for two of his claims, namely (A) and (C). I will postpone the discussion of his arguments for (B) until the next section.

Let me begin with thesis (C), according to which imaginings cannot cognize reality. As already indicated, O'Shaughnessy seems to derive (C) from two premises. The first consists in thesis (A), which claims that imaginings cannot exemplify either of the two cognitive prototypes. And the second premise is that there are no further cognitive prototypes which imaginings might be able to instantiate. Taken together, these two premises seem to entail the following claim:

(C\*) No imagining can be an instance of a cognitive prototype (of whichever sort).

And it appears that O'Shaughnessy takes this claim (C\*) to imply - if not even to amount to - thesis (C). Now, the main problem with the derivation of (C\*) - and, therefore, of (C) - is that O'Shaughnessy does not explicitly provide any argumentative support for the second premise. While he tries to show in detail why imaginings cannot constitute perception or knowledge, and hence why (A) is true, he does not concern himself with the issue of the possibility of other forms of knowledge which imaginings might be able to instantiate. That this issue arises is best illustrated by the possibility of cognizing sensory memories. These cognitive states should presumably count as exemplifying a cognitive prototype (at least if there is indeed an assumed entailment relation between (C) and (C\*)). But it is difficult to see how they could be said to instantiate the prototype for perceptions or the prototype for beliefs. In any case, there seem to

be only two options for O'Shaughnessy in order to establish the claim (C) that imaginings cannot cognize reality. Either he provides an elucidation of how memories can satisfy the cognitive constraints on perceptions or beliefs, after all, and do not need their own cognitive prototype, thus enabling him to rule out the existence of additional cognitive prototypes and therefore to establish the second premise in his argument for (C\*). Or he provides a different argument in favour of (C\*). The idea here might be that his Argument from Origin in favour of (A) also supports - or at least can be easily modified to support - thesis (C\*). Accordingly, it might be hoped that the specific origins of imaginings prevent them, not only from exemplifying the two cognitive prototypes for perceptions and beliefs, but also any other possible prototypes. But it remains to be seen which of the two alternatives (if any) O'Shaughnessy may be able to choose. I will return to this issue in section 3.5.

For the time being, I will turn to O'Shaughnessy's argumentative support for (A): that is, for the idea that no imagining can be an instance of one of the two cognitive prototypes. As noted above, O'Shaughnessy thinks that imaginings conform to this claim either because of their constitution, or because of their specific origins, or because of both. And, in relation to this, he presents two arguments: one arguing for the idea that all imaginings cannot instantiate the prototypes because of their roots in the mind (the Argument from Origin); and the other identifying a constitutive difference between sensory imaginings and perceptions which likewise prevents them from exemplifying the respective cognitive prototype. However, there is still an open question about the precise nature of the cognitive prototypes O'Shaughnessy has in mind. And the particular answer which he seems to give to this question - namely that their instantiation requires being a perceptual experience or a belief - raises some serious issues about whether the argumentative strategy he adopts concerning the defence of (A) is really as he presents it. To get clear about how he intends to argue for (A), it is therefore necessary first to get clear about how he conceives of the two cognitive prototypes. Now, although O'Shaughnessy does not (as far as I know) explicitly address the question of whether mental representations, in order to be able to exemplify one of the two cognitive prototypes, have to be perceptual experiences or beliefs, there are three at least three pieces of textual evidence which speak in favour of a positive answer.

The first is simply that he uses the term "perception" to describe the sensory prototype (e.g., cf. 361; 363; 366). Hence, it seems very straightforward to conclude that something has to be a perception in order to exemplify this prototype. However, there are some unclarities about his

employment of the term "perception" in this context. First of all, he ascribes to the sensory cognitive prototype exactly the same role in the definition of imagining as to the intellectual form of knowledge. Moreover, he treats both prototypes as cognitive ideals, for which perceptual experiences and beliefs (or judgements) always "strive", and which they can and sometimes do instantiate. This parallel treatment can be illustrated by the following sample of quotes in which O'Shaughnessy specifically identifies the perceptual prototype, not with the perceptual experiences *per se*, but with what they have the possibility to become, namely a sensory form of knowledge:

For remember what is the function of perception. Every perception is not a *mode* of knowing, it is as such a *way* of knowing. Every perception must have the capacity to generate knowledge. (551)

[...] visual experience is 'aspirational' in allowing for the possibility of its coinciding with its own visual prototype [...]. (366)

Belief is the essence of knowledge, it 'aspires' to the condition of knowledge, and constitutes a core phenomenon which can find itself redescribed as knowledge. (368)

Accordingly, just as beliefs have the "function" of constituting knowledge, perceptual experiences have the "function" of grounding knowledge. And both fulfil their "functions" if they instantiate their respective prototypes. This parallel between the sensory and the intellectual cognitive prototypes and the corresponding parallel between them in their roles in the definition of imaginings strongly suggest that O'Shaughnessy has two forms of knowledge in mind when he speaks of these prototypes. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the two cognitive prototypes to which O'Shaughnessy refers are in fact perceptual and intellectual knowledge (rather than simply perception and belief). However, the comparison with belief - which is, after all, said in the quote to be constitutive of intellectual knowledge - suggests that O'Shaughnessy likewise takes veridical (and epistemically sound) perceptions<sup>9</sup> to be the only possible instances of sensory knowledge. Hence, the original support for this idea provided by his use of the term "perception" appears to survive, even if in a slightly modified way.

The second piece of textual evidence is that he actually provides an argument to the effect that

---

<sup>9</sup> I will stick with the more common label "veridical perceptions", even though it would be more appropriate to speak of "veridical and epistemologically sound perceptions", to distinguish them from accidentally veridical perceptual experiences: that is, from what Lewis has called "veridical hallucinations" (Lewis (1980)).

perceptions and sensory imaginings differ constitutively; and he takes this argument as evidence for his claim that sensory imaginings cannot instantiate the perceptual prototype. His main idea in the argument is that only the former involve attention and allow for the distinction between what is present to consciousness in the perceptual field (but perhaps unnoticed) and what is actually noticed by the perceiver (354ff.). The details of the argument need not interest us here. But what is of importance is that O'Shaughnessy embraces its conclusion about an intrinsic difference between sensory imaginings and perceptual experiences; and that he takes this to prevent the former from becoming instances of the respective cognitive prototype:

[...] perceptual imaginings generally are not merely causally guaranteed not to be their prototype, they are in addition constitutively incapable of being the prototype, since they are [...] essentially different experiences from the prototype experience. (360)

However, O'Shaughnessy can endorse this entailment claim only if he additionally assumes that only perceptual experiences can exemplify the sensory cognitive prototype. For otherwise, the intrinsic difference between sensory imaginings and perceptions would not suffice to prevent the former from instantiating that prototype.

The third piece of textual evidence in favour of the general idea that the prototypes require, respectively, perception or belief can be found in the quote above about beliefs as the "essence of knowledge". This indicates that O'Shaughnessy embraces the traditional picture of knowledge according to which belief is a constitutive part of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> It seems therefore reasonable to conclude that he believes that only perceptual experiences and beliefs can hope to exemplify the two cognitive prototypes.

---

<sup>10</sup> This appears to be in tension with O'Shaughnessy's idea that there are certain (imaginative) beliefs which cannot constitute knowledge: "Propositional imaginings can be *real* beliefs [...]. And yet it is clear that their truth must be *accidental*. No propositional imagining can be a *knowing*" (345). But what he should have in mind is simply that (non-imaginative) beliefs cannot constitute knowledge under certain circumstances: namely when they are based either on imaginative visual hallucinations which are phenomenologically indistinguishable from perceptions, or on dream experiences. First of all, O'Shaughnessy's prime example of such a "delusional" belief (344) - "Macbeth's belief that Banquo [is] at the table" (345) - could constitute knowledge, given that Macbeth could form exactly the same belief on the basis of veridically perceiving Banquo at the table. Then, treating this and similar beliefs as imaginative would be incompatible with thesis (B). And finally, O'Shaughnessy does not have any good reason to take these beliefs to be imaginative. It is at best controversial (and at worst false) that the underlying experiences should count as imaginative (cf. sections 4.5 and 6.3). And the nature of beliefs does not seem to be affected by the nature of the experiences on the basis of which they are formed. In particular, I will argue in the next chapter that beliefs that are conceptualizations of visual imaginings can sometimes constitute knowledge.

But this interpretation raises two important questions about O'Shaughnessy's overall argumentative strategy. The first concerns the role of claim (B), according to which imaginings are representations of one of the two cognitive prototypes. This claim seems already to entail that imaginings differ constitutively from their cognitive counterparts. For, as shown above, the claim involves the thesis that the prototypes are part of the non-intentional content of the imaginings. But if imaginings really involve types of (veridical) perceptions and (knowledge-constituting) beliefs as part of their contents, they cannot instantiate them. Instances of perceptions do not have other perceptions as their objects. And instances of belief can have other beliefs at best as their intentional objects. Besides, intellectual imaginings and higher-order beliefs (or judgements) seem to differ clearly in their nature. Hence, assuming that imaginings are imaginings of cognitive prototypes already seems to imply that imaginings cannot be perceptual experiences or beliefs. And, together with the idea that the exemplification of the prototypes requires being a perception or a belief, this implies directly thesis (A): that imaginings cannot exemplify these prototypes. In other words, assuming that O'Shaughnessy accepts this requirement on the instances of the cognitive prototypes, his claim (B) entails his claim (A). The question is thus why O'Shaughnessy does not make any use of this straightforward argument. Given its simple nature, it is not very likely that he has simply overlooked it. The second issue is why O'Shaughnessy provides a lengthy argument, the Argument from Origin, which traces back the truth of (A) for all imaginings to the specific ways in which they arise from our minds. The main idea of this argument is that imaginings cannot exemplify the two cognitive prototypes because they occur in ways which do not involve their causal or rational determination by reality (cf. section 3.5 below). And, as will become clear below, he does not - and does not have to - presuppose in this argument that only perceptions and beliefs can exemplify the prototypes. In fact, given that O'Shaughnessy seems to think (and given that it is plausible to think) that imaginings differ intrinsically from perceptions and beliefs, such a presupposition threatens to render the whole Argument from Origin superfluous, or even wrong. For if exemplifying a cognitive prototype presupposes being a perception or a belief, and if imaginings cannot be perceptions or beliefs, it seems that how imaginings are produced is completely irrelevant to whether they can exemplify the cognitive prototypes. Again, the simple argument for (A) just sketched seems to be preferable. Hence, the question arises of why O'Shaughnessy spends so much time on an argument, the Argument from Origin, he does not really seem to need.

However, if the idea that the exemplification of the two cognitive prototypes requires being a perception or belief is given up, the two questions about O'Shaughnessy's argumentative strategy can be answered. The core idea of the proposal is that the two cognitive prototypes mentioned in (A) are to be specified completely independently of the notions of perception and belief (but instead, say, in terms of reliability or other epistemically relevant properties). This will mean that the issue of whether a mental representation is a perception or a belief is completely irrelevant to the issue of whether it can or does exemplify the two cognitive prototypes. As a consequence, mental representations different from perceptions and beliefs may come to instantiate these prototypes as well. Now, the first issue can be resolved by slightly modifying (B): namely by assuming that it takes imaginings to be representations of types of (veridical) perception or types of (knowledge-constituting) belief. Claim (B) would thus no longer make reference to the two cognitive prototypes, as newly understood. But this would still be in line with O'Shaughnessy's claims about the similarities and differences between the imaginings and the imagined types of representation. And although it would mean that his definition of imagining would become slightly more complicated (the involved claims (A) and (B) would make reference to different types of cognitive phenomena), it would still preserve its key ideas: that imaginings cannot exemplify the cognitive prototypes; and that they have cognitive phenomena as their direct objects. More importantly, however, dropping the idea that only perceptions or beliefs can exemplify the prototypes makes it impossible to straightforwardly derive (A) from (B) in the manner sketched above, given that this idea has been a crucial premise for that derivation. Hence, it can be explained why there is still a further argument needed in support of the thesis (A) that imaginings cannot exemplify the respective prototypes. Reference to the idea that they cannot instantiate them because they differ intrinsically from perceptions and beliefs is not an option anymore. But this also automatically resolves the second issue. For O'Shaughnessy may simply be taken to think that the need for a further argument can be satisfied (only) by the Argument from Origin. Hence, giving up the idea that he believes that being a perception or a belief is necessary for the exemplification of the two cognitive prototypes could thus account for some of the important strategic moves which O'Shaughnessy is making, and which otherwise would seem to remain unexplained.

Of course, this does not show that O'Shaughnessy really does not endorse the view that only perceptions and beliefs can exemplify the two cognitive prototypes. Indeed, in the light of the textual evidence mentioned above, it may very well be that he in fact believes in these conditions on the instances of the prototypes - perhaps in the form of an underlying assumption

that is not always made explicit in his argumentation. However, he also never seems to explicitly endorse the idea that only perceptions and beliefs can be instances of the prototypes. And this would be a bit surprising if it really were crucial for his claim (A) about the impossibility of imaginings to exemplify the two cognitive prototypes. In particular, the role of his main argument for (A), the Argument from Origin, is difficult to comprehend if it is assumed that O'Shaughnessy takes the exemplification of the two cognitive prototypes to be possible only for perceptions and beliefs. Hence, I will generally not make this assumption when presenting this argument in the remainder of this chapter, nor when assessing it in the next chapter; although I will return to this issue whenever it becomes important in the subsequent discussions.

### **3.3. The Cognitive Constraints on Perceptions and Beliefs**

At one place, O'Shaughnessy summarizes his Argument from Origin as follows:

Thus, we saw in the case both of propositional [i.e., intellectual - the author] and direct-object [i.e., sensory - the author] imaginings generally, that causes alone ensured they could not realize their prototypes. All imaginings arise from the subject's mind in such a way that the constraint of Reality is necessarily inoperative, whether through substituting one's will for Reality or through confusing 'subjective Reality' with Reality itself. (359)

This argument consists of two chief claims. The first links the capacity to cognize the world (i.e., to exemplify one of the cognitive prototypes) to the capacity to satisfy certain cognitive constraints (or 'Reality constraints', in O'Shaughnessy's terminology). The satisfaction of these constraints is necessary - and perhaps also sufficient - for the exemplification of the respective cognitive prototypes. The second thesis of the argument states that imaginings cannot satisfy the respective cognitive constraints because of their special origin in the mind. Cognitions, by contrast, possess this capacity since they can and typically do originate in the world in the way required for that potential satisfaction. His overall strategy is thus to derive the difference in cognitive capacity from a difference in origin, thereby making essential use of the idea of cognitive constraints. In the last section of this chapter, I will present O'Shaughnessy's defence of the second thesis concerning the specific origins of imagining. In this and the following

section, I will discuss his first claim, according to which cognizing representations have to satisfy certain cognitive requirements.

From what O'Shaughnessy says, one can distil the idea that the constraints on cognitive states, which aspire to exemplify their respective prototypes, consist minimally in three demands: (i) that the state in question represents reality; (ii) that it represents reality correctly; and (iii) that it does so in a reliable way. The first demand requires that the candidate states are intentionally linked to objects. This presupposes that they can be correct or incorrect in respect of how they represent objects as being, and that they can genuinely misrepresent objects (i.e., misrepresent them without ceasing to represent and refer to them: cf. Dretske (1994)). The third demand, on the other hand, requires a suitable link to or origin in reality, or evidence about it. Among the significant features of the cognitive prototypes (and their instances) are thus intentionality, veridicality and reliability. Accordingly, it appears that O'Shaughnessy's picture of knowledge and its acquisition is fairly standard. Now, to illustrate that he really endorses a view like the one just sketched, I will turn to what he has to say about visual perceptions and beliefs as possible grounds or instances of knowledge. In particular, I will focus in this section on the differences in the third demand on each type of state, which are due to the different kinds of representation in question (and, ultimately, their different links to reality). It is here that certain aspects of O'Shaughnessy's analysis of the nature of perceptions, beliefs and the respective cognitive prototypes become relevant. I will then, in the following section, address the issue of whether his account of perceptual and intellectual knowledge also involves some non-traditional elements which reach beyond the three elements of the standard view just sketched.

Let me begin with the sensory form of knowledge (or the sensory form of epistemically sound representation if one disputes the use of the term "knowledge" in this context). O'Shaughnessy's general analysis of the concept of perception is extensive, stretching over most of his book. And it is also controversial regarding some of its main aspects, such as its embracing a version of a sense-data theory (chs. 17f.), the identification of phenomenal consciousness with attention (ch. 7), the interpretative activity of attention involved in perception (chs. 8f., 14 and 20), and the related conception of perceptions as essentially non-propositional (ch. 10). For the current purposes, however, it is possible to set aside these parts of his account, as well as the general issues concerned. Instead, I would like to focus on several features of perceptions in general, and of veridical perceptions in particular, which seem to be less controversial. The first is that perception is "intentionally directed to mediated physical objects (people, sky, trees, and the

public occurrence of secondary qualities)" (16; 19; cf. 166f.). Furthermore:

A material object can come to visual attention only if one of its qualities does - for no physical item can be 'just' seen. (537)

Consequently, perceptions always represent external objects as being certain ways. And they can do so either correctly or incorrectly: the perceptions can "agree" or "disagree" with reality (328). O'Shaughnessy thereby distinguishes between "internal" and "external" objects of perception. The "internal object" is what is part of the content of the perception: it is the object which appears to us in perception and which is the result of the "interpretation" of the given sense impressions (i.e., the configuration of colours and shapes in the two-dimensional visual field) by the activity of attention (557f.). Accordingly, the "internal object" is the intentional object as it appears in perception (e.g., as a mountain). The "external object", on the other hand, is the physical object in the environment that is perceived (the real mountain). If it exists, it is the object that is perceived. Accordingly, the "external object" is whatever the perception refers to (if anything). And if it exists, it is the intentional object as it really is.<sup>11</sup> Then, O'Shaughnessy thinks that it is essential to perceptual experiences that they can be veridical perceptions (and perhaps also that it is their cognitive function to cognize reality; cf. also 362):

[...] visual experience is 'aspirational' in allowing for the possibility of its coinciding with its own visual prototype [...]. (366)

O'Shaughnessy describes the "natural" veridicality of perceptions (in contrast to the possible accidental veridicality of hallucinations) as "the natural correspondence between the internal [object] and the outer object" (566), or as "a general matching correspondence between the internal object [...] and the outer [...] material object" (567), or as the fact that we "harbour internal objects which naturally so match up with the physical environment" (568). This means - in the light of what O'Shaughnessy takes "internal" and "external objects" to be - that he treats perceptions as veridical just in case how they represent their intentional object to be reflects how it really is - which presupposes, of course, that there is an "external object" at which the

---

<sup>11</sup> For O'Shaughnessy's complex account of perception and, in particular, the relationship between "internal" and "external objects" of perception, cf. the chapters 16 and 19f. (especially pp. 454ff., 466f., 479, 536ff., 549f., 559 and 569). Note that the sense-datum (or "sensation") is among the (necessarily) perceived "external" objects; and that it is not to be mistaken for one of the corresponding "internal objects" contained in the respective perceptual content (467; 569).

perception is intentionally directed. In the case of veridical perception, there is a match between the content of the perceptual experience and the represented reality. Furthermore, the "natural" veridicality of perceptions is the result of its reliable causation by the perceived object in the world (cf. also: 567):

Perception has the function [...] of generating knowledge of the physical here-and-now. Now perception can discharge that function only if the *internal objects* of the perceptual experience tend in general to match the outer objects. (565)

[...] in seeing the colour and contour of the light and thereby also of the object, and in that way experiencing the visual appearance of that object, we are dependent upon a reliability that is situated, not just within our perceptual apparatus, but externally to our bodies in the environment. (450)

For O'Shaughnessy, the reliable link between the perceived object and our visual experience which represents it as being a certain way is realized by "suitable causal links" between the two items (451). What he presents is thus a causal theory of perception which promises to tackle an important issue for any such theory, namely to "take due note of 'deviant' and 'non-deviant' physical causal chains both within and without the perceiver" (450).<sup>12</sup> Thus, O'Shaughnessy's general picture of perception (though not its details) seems to be fairly standard (cf., e.g., Lewis (1980) for a similar view). In accordance with these considerations, the cognitive prototype of sensory knowledge has to be characterized minimally in terms of the complex property of being a representation which is intentionally directed at an object, represents it correctly (and thereby refers to it), and does so in a reliable manner. It is one part of this cognitive constraint on perceptual states that, if something is to count as an exemplification of the perceptual cognitive prototype, it has to be due to an appropriate external causal determination. Perceptions that do not satisfy the condition of being constrained by reality in this way cannot play the cognitive role of perceptions (e.g., of grounding judgements or beliefs that count as knowledge). More generally, perceptual experiences are subject to the cognitive constraint of being suitably causally linked to external objects and of correctly reflecting the nature of these objects (if this is not already ensured by the intentional and the suitable causal link). And perceptions exemplify their cognitive prototype (i.e., constitute veridical perceptions) only if they satisfy this requirement - which means, the three demands of representationality, veridicality and

---

<sup>12</sup> For O'Shaughnessy's causal theory of perception and its reliability, cf. chapters 16 and 20 (especially pp. 451ff., 537ff., 542ff., 549ff. and 565ff.).

reliability.

Now, moving on to intellectual knowledge as the cognitive prototype for beliefs, it is first important to note that O'Shaughnessy takes belief to be constitutive of intellectual knowledge. His picture is that, while some beliefs do not count as constituting knowledge, others do. Moreover, he takes it to be the epistemological function of beliefs to constitute knowledge:

Belief is the essence of knowledge, it 'aspires' to the condition of knowledge, and constitutes a core phenomenon which can find itself redescribed as knowledge. (368)

It seems that whether a candidate belief constitutes knowledge or not is for O'Shaughnessy primarily a matter of whether it is non-accidentally true and reliably formed (or sustained). The first feature is necessary to distinguish beliefs that amount to knowledge from intellectual imaginings (or "propositional" ones in O'Shaughnessy's terminology) which are true by mere chance. For instance, I may imagine that my friend is sitting in the Opera Bastille and listening to a performance of Berg's *Wozzeck* because I know that my friend is in Paris and that the opera is on there; while unbeknown to be, my supposition happens to be true (indeed, I might even believe that he hates operas and would never listen to one). In a similar vein, O'Shaughnessy observes:

[...] propositional imaginings can be true. [...] And yet it is clear that their truth must be *accidental*. No propositional imagining can be a *knowing*. (345)

Accordingly, beliefs (or other intellectual representations) have to be non-accidentally true in order to count as knowledge. However, O'Shaughnessy also believes that the ways in which we form (and sustain) beliefs typically lead to knowledge: that is, they are reliable. And although he is not explicit about this, it seems reasonable to assume that this reliability ensures that most true beliefs are non-arbitrarily true. Interestingly, O'Shaughnessy sees the reliability of our ways of forming beliefs to be an essential part of "consciousness" (i.e., the state of wakefulness). According to him, what distinguishes "conscious" people from those who are asleep, in a trance, or "unconscious" (i.e., knocked out or anaesthetized) is precisely that only the former are in direct contact with reality (cf. in general: 1ff.; 68ff.; 113ff.):

To be in the state consciousness is to be in the experiential condition of being aware of

the World. As we say of the conscious, they are 'in touch' with Reality as those lost in a trance or dream are not. (1)

[...] consciousness is not a mode of epistemological success - as if the world was an object. Rather, consciousness is *correct epistemological posture* on the part of an experiencing subject. (117)

For O'Shaughnessy, being awake (i.e., "conscious") is thus necessary for coming into epistemic contact with reality and acquiring knowledge about it by means of perceptual or similar experiences (cf. also 119). Moreover, wakefulness involves the possession of the usually successfully employed capacity to form beliefs in a reliable way:

[...] if consciousness is to exist [...] a cognitive sensitivity to perceptual experience must inhere, and of the right kind. This cognitive sensitivity, and the mode of belief-formation concerning the environmental realities, are I suggest intrinsic to consciousness, which requires in general that beliefs be well-formed [...] indeed, should normally lead their owner to Reality. Thus, in the conscious the mode of belief-formation out of veridical perception should be such as normally to make *knowledge* of that belief. (85)

Hence, he assumes (given that we are usually awake) that our ways of forming beliefs reliably lead to knowledge; and, furthermore, that typically most of our beliefs constitute knowledge (157). For O'Shaughnessy, the feature of wakefulness responsible for the reliability of our belief formations is rationality. Thus, waking people are said by him to differ from dreaming or hypnotized ones with respect to the presence of a rational integration of their occurrent mental episodes with their underlying picture of the world. And among waking subjects, normal and sane people differ again from people with unusual psychological conditions with respect to the degree of rational coherence among their cognitions (cf. chapter 3, section 4; cf. also 86). For O'Shaughnessy, the rational consistency with other beliefs and with the occurrent perceptions and judgements is therefore part of what turns beliefs into knowledge (142ff.; 157f.). Here is how he describes the way in which we may come to acquire new knowledge about the world on the basis of our actual veridical perceptions:

[A belief-system will] 'unlock' the veridical incoming data, whereupon the Physical World will stand forth in all its glory [...] when the [belief-system] is for the most part a veridical [knowledge-system] which is internally rationally consistent, when sense-intake

is veridical, and the experiencing subject in a state such that the principle of admission for novel members of the [belief-system] which is operative at the moment is that the putative novel member is rationally consistent with incoming data and the prevailing [belief-system]. [...] reason plays a decisive part on the fulfilment of epistemological function [...]. [...] reason is the unique guide to [truth]. (157)

According to this quote, when we veridically perceive something, the respective belief will enter our net of beliefs about the world only if it rationally coheres both with the already existing and largely true beliefs and with the veridical perceptions on the basis of which it is formed. But the quote also specifies that, if the new belief satisfies these conditions and becomes a part of our picture of the world, it is likely to amount to knowledge itself (to "unlock" the veridical information contained in the perceptions). Hence, O'Shaughnessy seems to present the following minimal condition for beliefs to constitute knowledge (whether they are newly formed or already existing): they have to be rationally consistent both with other beliefs and judgements (most of which should be true) and with any occurrent perceptions (again, most or all of which should be veridical). In addition, it is reasonable to assume that O'Shaughnessy requires the respective belief to be true itself. And he likewise endorses the view that beliefs are intentionally directed at their objects and can be either true or false (19; 84ff.; 328). Therefore, O'Shaughnessy seems to accept the core part of a fairly orthodox view of knowledge: namely the claim that intentional beliefs constitute knowledge only if they are true and rationally linked to other (largely veridical) beliefs and perceptions. For him, any belief has to satisfy this cognitive constraint in order to exemplify its cognitive prototype (i.e., in order to be knowledge).

To sum up, both perceptions and beliefs are subject to cognitive constraints that are structurally similar in that both demand representationality, correctness and reliability. But since the two kinds of representation are linked to reality in different ways, their reliability is established in different ways: for perceptions, by the appropriate causal origin in the world; for beliefs, by the appropriate rational connection to other mental representations. Nevertheless, the satisfaction of the three demands - and hence of the cognitive constraints - are necessary for the respective representations to count as cognizing the world.

### 3.4. The Non-Traditional Elements in O'Shaughnessy's Epistemology

This raises the question of whether O'Shaughnessy thinks that intentionality, veridicality and reliability (or rational consistency in the case of judgements and beliefs) are also enough for the provision of knowledge<sup>13</sup>: that is, the issue of whether his account of epistemically sound perceptions and knowledge-constituting judgements or beliefs really conforms to the traditional conception of sensory and intellectual forms of knowledge. In this section, I will try to give an answer to this question. It appears that O'Shaughnessy's claims about perception and knowledge reach beyond the traditional conception according to which knowledge can be analysed in terms of belief, truth and reliability (or justification) alone. For, as I have already mentioned, he maintains that knowledge of the external world requires the establishment of a contact with reality; and that the latter requires, again, wakefulness. But for O'Shaughnessy, wakefulness seems to be irreducible to the features traditionally employed in the analysis of knowledge, notably rational consistency among one's beliefs. Hence, he does not seem to take the satisfaction of the three requirements of representationality, correctness and reliability to be sufficient for knowledge. It is not necessary to engage here with all details of O'Shaughnessy's account of what it means for someone to be awake.<sup>14</sup> Instead, it should suffice to identify two aspects of wakefulness which are said by him to be necessary for the establishment of a contact with reality, but which cannot, it appears, be traced back to the ingredients in the traditional analysis of knowledge.

The first is that wakefulness requires the presence of a stream of consciousness (or of "experience"; 5; 82f.; 123; 142). It seems plausible enough to maintain that a person not enjoying any mental episodes should not count as being awake. As O'Shaughnessy points out, it seems that only completely unconscious people (such as those who are anaesthetized or in a coma) lack phenomenal consciousness altogether; and they are clearly not awake. On the other hand, he illustrates the fact that the presence of phenomenal consciousness is not sufficient for wakefulness by reference to dreaming and hypnotized people who experience phenomenally conscious states as well (119; 123). It seems plausible to assume that O'Shaughnessy's idea, that

---

<sup>13</sup> With the general qualification that, say, Gettier-style examples or similar cases have to be somehow dealt with.

<sup>14</sup> At some points, he seems to suggest that presence of a belief system and some conscious episodes and rationality are both sufficient and necessary for wakefulness (e.g., 152; 167). At others, he stresses also the importance of self-knowledge (or "insight") and practical self-determination (e.g., 107f.; 121; 142).

epistemic contact with reality presupposes wakefulness and therefore phenomenal consciousness, should not be taken to imply that unconscious people cannot have any memories or beliefs which may constitute knowledge. This would be an absurd view, given that we usually do not lose our memories or beliefs during periods of unconsciousness. Rather, it should be understood as meaning that unconscious people have no conscious access to their memories or beliefs and hence cannot actually use them (e.g., by manifesting them in consciousness) to get into contact with reality.<sup>15</sup>

The second relevant aspect of wakefulness is that it involves what O'Shaughnessy calls "awareness of the outer world".<sup>16</sup> He distinguishes this form of awareness from perceptual awareness of reality. In particular, he takes it to be present even when a waking subject has no actual perceptions or similar episodic representations of his environment. He takes it thus to be prior to and independent of any actual perceptual link to reality (cf. also 117; 152):

[...] waking consciousness is consistent with the perceptual awareness of *absolutely nothing* in the ('outer' sector of) (the real) world. Nevertheless, such a perceptually empty consciousness, since it is awareness of the *world*, continually *orients* to the world: it carries the real world with it all the time, as the framework within which to site anything it happens perceptually to encounter. (119)

Now 'awareness of the outer world' does not mean awareness of the present facts of the environment. (152)

[Awareness of the outer world] is not the *perception* of anything, and in particular is not the perception of the contents of [reality]. Rather, it *precedes*, and enables where possible, the perceptual and cognitive '*reading*' of the data indicative of those contents. (155)

But, as these two quotes suggest, O'Shaughnessy nevertheless assumes that there is an important link between "awareness of the outer world" and perception. His idea is that the former facilitates perceptual contact with concrete aspects of the world ("awareness of the present state

---

<sup>15</sup> Strictly speaking, this seems to put a limitation on O'Shaughnessy's account of knowledge. For wakefulness seems to be a necessary condition only on *available* knowledge (i.e., knowledge that can be used to get into contact with reality), but not on knowledge in general - at least not if one wants to allow that temporarily inaccessible memories or beliefs may nevertheless continue to constitute grounds or instances of knowledge. But it is not clear whether O'Shaughnessy really has such a limitation in mind.

<sup>16</sup> He also speaks of "realistic", "linked" or "connective awareness" (119; 122; 155f.); of "w-consciousness" (117); and of "being in touch" or "contact with Reality" (1; 124).

of the world": 86; 118; 121) and any subsequent acquisition of knowledge (84ff.; 122; 142ff.; 156f.). As he writes, it is this aspect of wakefulness that enables us to be in a "state [of mind] 'apt-for' closing the epistemological gap" between mind and world (152). O'Shaughnessy's view seems to be accordingly that wakefulness puts us into a suitable epistemic position - thereby enabling us to get cognitively in touch with the world - primarily because it involves "awareness of the outer world" (cf. also 86). His primary motivation for introducing an additional element in the establishment of a perceptual link to reality is that he thinks that there is a particular epistemological gap between mind and world which cannot be bridged even by non-arbitrarily (or reliably) veridical perception:

The perception of present physical realities *as* what they are [...] that non-accidentally identifies its object and apprises one of its existence [...] and manages veridically to site its object in a continuous sector of spatio-temporal reality which in turn it also perceives and identifies, is still insufficient. [...] something more [is required] if we are to be credited with contact with the outer world, and with perceptual experience which reflects that contact. (123f.)

The main reason why O'Shaughnessy assumes that non-arbitrarily veridical perception is not sufficient for epistemic contact with reality is that somnambulists or hypnotized people - and, to a lesser extent, dreaming subjects - may enjoy such perceptual experiences, or at least very similar ones, without thereby being in a position to acquire knowledge about reality (cf. 118ff, especially 123f.). His view is that such people may reliably and veridically perceive the objects in their environment (e.g., where they are located, or which shape and size they have), but nevertheless are bound to fail to form knowledge-constituting judgements about them. This failure may manifest itself in various ways: in the fact that they do not correctly interpret what they perceive (e.g., they may take the table in front of them to be an automobile because the hypnotist says so (122f.)); in the fact that they do not take the perceived objects to be part of reality (but instead, say, of some unreal world which is dreamt (120), or imagined in response to the instructions of the hypnotist (123)); or in the fact that they do not properly connect the perceived objects to the rest of reality (e.g., in the case of a somnambulist or a hypnotizee who can cognize only small and disconnected parts or regions of reality (120; 122)).

In contrast, waking people can - as long as they are not in a psychologically unusual or abnormal state of mind (e.g., when intoxicated or mentally disturbed) - overcome each of the

obstacles and subsequently acquire knowledge about reality by means of perception. They then enjoy what O'Shaughnessy calls "realistic" perception or awareness: the perceptually based contact with reality which locates its particular objects in reality (119; 122; 124; 155), links them to other parts and objects of reality (122; 124; 156), and enables us to acquire knowledge about them under many different interpretations or conceptualizations (124; 156). It is hence not surprising that O'Shaughnessy concludes that there has to be an intimate link between wakefulness and perceptually grounded knowledge about reality. He observes that what is missing in all the cases of dreaming or trance - and what is present in the case of wakefulness - is the establishment of a (sufficient) rational consistency between how things are perceived to be and how they are believed to be. Accordingly, he takes the location of perceived objects in reality, the interpretation of them in the light of what one believes and the discovery of their relationships to other parts of reality to be a matter of rationality: they occur due to the rational integration of one's perceptions into one's already existing picture of the world (119; 124; 152). Here is how he describes the necessary and sufficient conditions for a "full and proper awareness of the outer world" - that is, for a "realistic" and hence successful epistemic contact with the world on the basis of perception:

Then a full and proper awareness of the outer world will typically be dependent firstly upon a [belief-system] [...] pervaded by the property of rational consistency.

And secondly [...] *occurently the subject finds himself in such a state that* his occurrent cognitive attitudes are rationally determined by the relevant parts of the above belief-system [...]. If all of this is fulfilled then a full and proper awareness of the outer world, and so also a wakeful consciousness, must obtain [...].

Here we have a statement of the conditions needed for a 'full and proper awareness of the outer world'. (152)

Now, the specific aspect of wakefulness which is responsible for the difference in the epistemic position between waking and non-waking people is, of course, identified by O'Shaughnessy as the involvement of "awareness of the outer world": it is this aspect which equips occurrent perceptions with the potential to lead to knowledge (119; 155f.). In accordance with these considerations, O'Shaughnessy seems to understand the property of being "aware of the outer world" as involving three different things. First of all, it appears to involve having a sufficiently rich and rational system of background beliefs about the world which we can readily apply to what we perceive. It seems in this sense that the form of awareness under discussion "is

awareness of the world [and] carries the real world with it all the time, as the framework within which to site anything it happens perceptually to encounter" (119; cf. also 156). Consequently, if we perceive something while being awake, we perceive it as part of the reality and are disposed to describe the perceived entity in accordance with our picture of the world. As O'Shaughnessy writes, "the perceived item brings an entire world with it, as mental 'back-drop'" (156).<sup>17</sup> Then, to be "aware of the outer world" appears also to mean to be rational in certain ways: namely to be rationally responsive to newly occurring perceptions or similar experiences of the world; and to possess the capacity to establish rational consistency between them and one's underlying picture of the world (119; 152). And finally, being "aware of the outer world" seems likewise to involve striving for contact with reality and, hence, being inclined to actually use the capacity for rational integration in the concrete case of an occurring perception. At least this is what O'Shaughnessy appears to have in mind when he describes a waking person whose stream of consciousness is devoid of all perceptual and similar representation of his environment, but whose mind is nevertheless "aware of the outer world" and strives to establish epistemic contact with it:

A man could suddenly surface from deep unconsciousness to an alert wide-awakeness in which all is black and silent and devoid of 'feel' of any kind, and his mind at that instant be straining beyond itself in an effort to epistemologically make contact with its surroundings. Is he not conscious at that moment of the presence of the reality lying beyond his mind? (As a dreamer is not.) (152)

If, however, this "awareness of the outer world" which pertains to the waking mind as a whole (i.e., this set of underlying beliefs, capacities, inclinations and enabling conditions) is indeed accompanied by an actual perceptual experience, it may - and usually will - come to pertain to that particular instance of perception as well. According to O'Shaughnessy, the result will be "full and proper awareness of the outer world" - or, in other words, perceptually grounded knowledge of reality. By contrast, the capacity and tendency to access one's beliefs in order to

---

<sup>17</sup> What seems to be assumed here by O'Shaughnessy is that perceptions involve not only a phenomenologically salient claim about how *things* are (i.e., a cognitive attitude), but also a phenomenologically salient claim about how things are *in reality*. In other words, he seems to presuppose that perceptions present their intentional objects as real (cf. also 155). Moreover, this aspect of the conscious perceptual contact with reality appears for O'Shaughnessy to be due to the rational integration of the respective perceptions with our picture of the world. That perceptions locate their objects in reality thus seems to mean that we take these objects to be part of reality in the light of our beliefs about the world (cf. 124; 155f.).

rationally integrate one's perceptions with them is missing in people who are not awake. Hence, they fail with respect to the acquisition of perceptually based knowledge. It should now be clear why O'Shaughnessy highlights the importance of wakefulness in general - and "awareness of the outer world" in particular - for the establishment of epistemic contact with reality. For him, wakefulness involves "awareness of the outer world", which again makes possible and is typically accompanied by a sufficient rational integration of what one perceives and believes. And this rational coherence enables us to bridge the epistemological gap between mind and world and acquire knowledge on the basis of perception.

It is now time to turn to the issue of whether - and if so, in which respects - O'Shaughnessy's view on knowledge differs significantly from the traditional position already mentioned. Presumably, proponents of the orthodox account can easily incorporate into their own theory the requirements on cognizing subjects which O'Shaughnessy identifies (i.e., having phenomenal consciousness and being "aware of the outer world" in the sense described). Indeed, it seems reasonable to assume that they often more or less implicitly assume that cognizing subjects have to satisfy these or very similar conditions, and that normal waking people typically do satisfy them.

However, O'Shaughnessy's view appears also to have consequences for the cognitive constraints on perceptions and beliefs. The general upshot seems to be roughly that, for him, the two kinds of state can provide knowledge only in close connection with each other: while beliefs appear to constitute (available) knowledge only if they are part of a waking and sufficiently rationally consistent mind which includes (or at least can include) conscious perceptual or similar experiences of the world, perceptions seem to ground knowledge only if they are rationally integrated with the underlying system of beliefs. But for O'Shaughnessy, the idea that perceptions and beliefs can cognize reality only in cooperation seems to entail further conditions on the epistemological soundness of perceptions and beliefs.

With respect to perceptual grounds of knowledge, consider again his quote above on the insufficiency of reliability to bridge the epistemological gap between reality and perception indicates (cf. 123f.). It indicates that O'Shaughnessy intends the requirement that perceptions have to be rationally integrated with one's picture of the world to be a condition on the epistemic appropriateness of *perceptions* - and not merely a condition on the epistemic appropriateness of *beliefs* acquired by means of perceptions. "Something more" than non-

arbitrary veridicality and reliability "is required if we are to be credited with with contact with the outer world, and with perceptual experience which reflects that contact" (124). Moreover, as this passage also indicates, this further requirement on cognizing perceptions resists reduction to the requirement that they have to be reliable and non-arbitrarily veridical - at least as long as one is convinced by O'Shaughnessy's examples of somnambulists and hypnotizees which are meant to illustrate the respective difference in epistemic standing. For him, the subjects in these examples do not really perceive reality, that is, are aware of objects as part of the real world, even if their perceptual experiences are reliably formed and non-accidentally veridical. Consequently, O'Shaughnessy takes rational consistency to be an additional aspect of the cognitive constraint linked to the cognitive prototype for perceptions. His account seems thus to reach beyond the more traditional picture, according to which a perception is already epistemically sound if it is non-accidentally veridical and reliable. This more orthodox view is compatible with the additional claims that our perceptual *beliefs* are epistemically appropriate only if they - or the respective perceptions - rationally cohere to a sufficient degree with our other beliefs; and that we endorse our perceptions in belief only if we do not recognize them as not being rationally consistent with what we otherwise believe (i.e., only if there are no respective defeaters). But it is not necessarily part of the more traditional position that the epistemic soundness of *perceptions* depends on their rational relations to our beliefs. In fact, it may be denied that perceptions can stand in rational relations (cf. n. 18 below); and maintained that their appropriateness is purely a matter of the way in which they are brought about. Therefore, O'Shaughnessy's theory of perceptual grounds of knowledge seems to make a substantial addition to the customary view of the epistemic soundness of perceptions.

His position on the cognitive demands on beliefs appears also to be more complex than the orthodox proposal, mainly because the latter usually does not address the issue of the importance of wakefulness (e.g., in connection with Cartesian dream arguments). The traditional picture requires cognizing beliefs to be true and justified (plus perhaps to satisfy some further conditions in order to rule out Gettier-style cases). This usually involves that they should be rationally consistent with other beliefs and one's current perceptions and be rationally responsive to one's potential perceptions or judgements.<sup>18</sup> But O'Shaughnessy demands in

<sup>18</sup> It has been controversial whether perceptions can stand in rational relations and hence be (prima facie) reasons for beliefs (cf. Davidson (1989) for a sceptical view). But in more recent debates, it seems to have become more of an orthodoxy to assume the rational status of perceptions (cf. Pollock (1999): chs. 4f.; Martin (1992); Pryor (2001) on "modest foundationalism") - although sometimes only in conjunction with the claim that the content of perceptions is conceptual (cf. McDowell (1995)).

addition that the believing subject is awake, that is, in a position to have perceptual experiences of the right kind - namely, perceptual experiences which become rationally integrated with one's background beliefs and which hence indeed present objects as being located in the real world. This seems to be one aspect of what he means by claiming that beliefs (and, presumably, also memories) can provide knowledge about the external world only in conjunction with, and because of their link to, actual or potential perceptions. The other aspect seems to be the empiricist claim that all kinds of external knowledge have to be ultimately based on perceptual access to reality - a claim which, again, does not appear to be a necessary part of the orthodox view on knowledge. Accordingly, O'Shaughnessy seems to understand the cognitive constraint on beliefs as involving two requirements over and above the traditional demand for their rational integration with one's other cognitive states: they have to occur in a waking subject; and they have to be ultimately based on perceptual access to reality. In fact, the two requirements appear to be closely related, given that O'Shaughnessy assumes that only waking people can get into perceptual contact with the world. Nevertheless, his view on knowledge-constituting beliefs does not seem to be necessarily inconsistent with the traditional analysis. O'Shaughnessy's requirement that cognizing beliefs about the world have to be generally linked to wakefulness and, hence, to the presence of phenomenal consciousness and perceptual experience can be easily accommodated, given that it is satisfied by the beliefs of normal cognizing subjects (with the exception of the states of knowledge or memory which are part of temporarily unconscious or non-waking minds and which constitute available knowledge during periods of wakefulness). And the orthodox picture seems also to be compatible with the empiricist idea that all knowledge about the external world is ultimately based on our perceptions.

To conclude, O'Shaughnessy seems to add two further requirements to the traditional account of the cognitive constraints on perceptions and beliefs in terms of intentionality, veridicality and reliability (including rational consistency in the case of beliefs). The first is that both perceptions and beliefs (and, presumably, also other kinds of cognitive states, such as memories) have to be rationally integrated with one's picture of the world. And the second additional demand is that all kinds of knowledge are ultimately based on perceptual contact with reality. Besides, both of O'Shaughnessy's further requirements have in common that they can be satisfied only by cognitions which occur in or are part of a waking mind.

### 3.5. The Specific Origins of Imaginings in the Mind

After clarifying O'Shaughnessy's view on how the exemplification of the two cognitive prototypes is inseparably linked to the satisfaction of certain cognitive constraints, I will move on to the second part of the Argument from Origin: O'Shaughnessy's defence of the claim that imaginative representations cannot satisfy these cognitive constraints. As already suggested, he takes this fact about imaginings to be the consequence of their specific origins in the mind:

All imaginings arise from the subject's mind in such a way that the constraint of Reality [i.e., the relevant cognitive constraint - the author] is necessarily inoperative, whether through substituting one's will for Reality or through confusing 'subjective Reality' with Reality itself. The fact that the mind acts here, not as a representative of Reality but in direct opposition, guarantees that imaginings must be cognitively void. By contrast, while a mind reasoning on empirical matters is a causal force in the engendering of its own cognitive attitudes, the rationality of the process ensures that mind and Reality act here in consort. It is precisely not so in imagining. Here the mind operates genetically in such a way that the mental products are guaranteed not to realize their cognitive prototype, and Reality is simply short-circuited out of the causal transaction. (359)

What seems most important in this quote is that O'Shaughnessy emphasizes the causal role of reality: the suitable causal determination of mental representations by the relevant aspects of reality - either in a direct way (as in the case of veridical perception), or mediated by evidential representations and rational mechanisms (as in the case of knowledge) - is crucial to the acquisition of knowledge. The problem with imaginings is thus not that they are causally determined by the mind (as O'Shaughnessy notes, the mind is causally involved in the formation of cognitions as well); but rather that they lack any suitable causal link to reality. In other words, all significant causal impact on imaginings (e.g., determining what they represent) comes from the mind. Now, the quote also suggests that this may happen in two ways: either the will takes over the role of reality in determining the representations; or the representations occur passively due to some other causal factors in the mind and are (perhaps because of sharing this passivity with some cognitions) to some extent mistaken for their cognitive counterparts. But let me discuss the two ways in which imaginings can arise from the subject's mind in a bit more detail.

On the one hand, the formation of an imagining may be due to activities of the will, which is directed (e.g., by means of intention) at producing an imaginative representation. In other words, the will is the active starting-point of the process of bringing about the imagining, and the result is the "substitution of one's will for Reality" (359). The products of this process are, at least to some extent, subject to the will. Even though we sometimes cannot influence their occurrence, we have at least control over their persistence. Furthermore, the resulting imaginings are "selfconscious" in the sense that we are aware of, or experience, them as imaginings and as presenting their objects not as real (i.e., as not making a claim about how things are; cf. 358f.), and consequently do not trust them or let them have an impact on our view of the real world. O'Shaughnessy's prime examples of will-susceptible imaginings are engagement in make-believe and active visualizing (343f.; 346; 351ff.).

On the other hand, the formation of an imagining may involve a "weakening of one's sense of reality" (352.). What he seems to have in mind here is that we come to be unsure (or "disturbed": 352) about what is real; and that we may even begin to mistake things, which are not part of reality and normally recognizable as such (e.g., imagined or hallucinated entities), for parts of reality - hence the "weakening" of our sensitivity. Although O'Shaughnessy is not very explicit about the origins of imaginings of this second kind, he seems to think that they are not due to the will, but (at least in the case of sensory hallucinations) to an event in the mind which involves, or effects, the absence or breakdown of the suitable causal processes which, if undisturbed, would lead to cognitive states (352f.). This interpretation is specifically in line with his further claim that the resulting imaginings (including intellectual ones) are impervious to the will (cf. 340f.). Hence, the imaginings involving a "weakening of one's sense of reality" seem to be in general due to the causally induced absence or breakdown of the suitable causal chains coming from reality which typically result in the formation of cognizing representations. The will has no role to play in bringing them about or sustaining them. Now, the involuntariness of these imaginings and the involved "weakening" of one's sensitivity concerning what is real are closely related to the fact that such imaginings are at least to some extent "unselfconscious": they do not fully involve the awareness of what is imagined as "unreal" (352f.; 358f.).<sup>19</sup> As a consequence, the subject in question can distinguish her imaginative representation from its

---

<sup>19</sup> It is not always clear what is presented as "unreal". The passages referred here seem to concern the represented external entities, while other passages seem to concern the directly imaged cognitive prototypes (cf. 349).

cognitive counterpart less clearly than in the case of actively formed imaginings. And this unclarity comes in degrees, as his example of three different kinds of passive visual hallucinations illustrates:

[...] visual hallucination [...] can be conveniently grouped into those hallucinations experienced with belief (such as Macbeth's hallucination of Banquo), those which leave one in doubt (like Macbeth's hallucination of a dagger), and those one knows to be illusory (say, in the first stages of mescaline intoxication). (349)

[...] to the extent to which self-awareness is absent, to that same extent imaginings are experienced, not as imaginings, but as what is being imagined, namely as the cognitive prototype, given as directed to 'reals'. (359)

Hence, although in many cases, the subject still notices a phenomenological difference between her imaginings and her perceptions, beliefs or judgements, there are extreme cases in which she cannot anymore distinguish her imaginings from her cognitions. His main examples for imaginings of this extreme kind are certain visual hallucinations (such as Macbeth's vision of Banquo: cf. 341; 345.; 349) and, perhaps, certain dream experiences (344f.).<sup>20</sup> O'Shaughnessy's view on these examples implies, in particular, that it must be possible that we sometimes experience our imaginings as possessing a cognitive attitude (i.e., as making a claim about the truth or reality of the imagined content). Otherwise, we (or Macbeth) could not fail to phenomenologically distinguish them from perceptions. And we would not - as O'Shaughnessy claims - endorse in such extreme cases our imaginative hallucinations in belief and action, without the endorsed representations thereby losing their imaginative character (349; 352f.). Of course, this last element of O'Shaughnessy's account is in contradiction with my initial assumption that there is always a phenomenologically salient difference in attitude between imaginings and cognitions. But the examples he has provided - visual hallucination indistinguishable from perception and, perhaps, similar dream experiences - are not central cases of imagining: their classification as imagining is not uncontroversial (cf. sections 4.5 and 6.3). In particular, it seems plausible to treat visual hallucinations that are phenomenologically indistinguishable from perceptions as perceptual experiences (though perhaps of a different kind from veridical perceptions; cf. Martin (1994) and (2002)). And moreover, as I will argue below, O'Shaughnessy's main reason for treating these examples as imaginative - their lack of the capacity to cognize reality (due to their specific origin) - is not a good reason: it does not

<sup>20</sup> His intellectual examples are the "imaginative beliefs" discussed in note 10 above.

capture the nature of imaginings. Hence, it is presumably reasonable to take these extreme examples to be genuine cases of cognitions.

Now, O'Shaughnessy is not really explicit on why exactly the origin of imaginings in the mind in either of the two ways specified implies that their formation and representationality cannot be cognitively constrained by how the real world is. But it seems to be plausible to extrapolate from his premises and conclusions - and with the help of the considerations about the cognitive constraints on perceptions and beliefs - the following ideas. According to O'Shaughnessy, the cognitive constraints consist at least partly in the requirement that certain epistemically sound processes of formation - as mediated by suitable causal (and perhaps also rational) links - precede the occurrence of the representations in question. Hence, the will-impervious imaginings of the second kind cannot satisfy the respective cognitive constraints because they emanate from the breakdown of exactly these formation processes. In the case of passive sensory imaginings (such as hallucinations), the normal causal determination by external entities does not obtain; and in the case of passive intellectual imaginings (such as dream-beliefs), the same is true of the usual rational impact of other mental representations of the world. Consequently, neither kind of will-impervious imagining can realize a cognitive prototype. Similar considerations apply to imaginings originating in the will. O'Shaughnessy's idea seems to be here that the causal determination of the imaginative representations by the will, which is already sufficient for their occurrence or persistence, prevents them from being causally (and rationally) determined in the appropriate ways by either aspects of the world or evidential representations about it. That is, representations cannot derive both from the will and from reality in the fashion required for the provision of knowledge: with respect to will-induced imaginings, the epistemic processes involved in the normal formation of perceptions or beliefs are simply not involved.

Hence, O'Shaughnessy concludes that both ways in which imaginings can occur rule out the possibility of their satisfying the respective cognitive constraints. The problem is thereby not that imaginings cannot be representational or veridical; as already mentioned, O'Shaughnessy assumes that they can be both (166f.; 345; 363). Likewise, the worry is not that imaginings cannot occur in a waking mind; they obviously can. Instead, the problem is that imaginings are formed in ways which cannot ensure that they are reliable, rationally integrated with our picture of the world or ultimately based on our past or current perceptual experiences. Now, since it is essential to instances of the cognitive prototypes that they do satisfy those constraints,

O'Shaughnessy can infer his claim (A): imaginings cannot be such instances.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, although he puts so much emphasis on the ways in which imaginings can be produced, he does not take their origin to be constitutive of them. For O'Shaughnessy, imaginings are imaginings because they satisfy his definition (i.e., the claims (A) and (B)), and not because they arise from the mind in specific ways. His main reasons for assuming this are the impossibility to unify the various origins which imaginings can have and, in particular, to bridge the division between voluntary and involuntary cases (sections 11.5 and 11.6); and the fact that some imaginings *are* imaginative (i.e., satisfy his definition), not only in virtue of their origin, but also in virtue of their constitution (359f.). But for O'Shaughnessy, the specific origins of imaginings nevertheless explain why thesis (A) is true of them: why they cannot exemplify the two cognitive prototypes.

This concludes my exposition of O'Shaughnessy's version of the Cognitive Account of imagining (apart from the presentation of his arguments in favour of (B) in section 4.4). In the following chapter, I will move on to the assessment of his account and its main claims and will thereby also consider the general prospects of a unified theory of imagining formulated partially or purely in cognitive terms.

---

<sup>21</sup> To ensure that (A) can make a substantial contribution to a unified account of imagining, O'Shaughnessy has to presuppose that there are no entirely voluntary cognitions and, especially, no purely actively formed beliefs or judgements. If cognitions could be determined exclusively by the will, instead of at least partly by reality or evidence about it, they would not differ in this respect from will-induced imaginings and hence would be subject to O'Shaughnessy's Argument from Origin as well.

## 4. The Assessment of the Cognitive Account

In this chapter, I will investigate the prospects of the Cognitive Account - and, in particular, O'Shaughnessy's version of it - of providing a unified theory of imagining. As noted at the beginning of the last chapter, the main idea of the Cognitive Account is to characterize imaginings as non-cognitive phenomena. And it can do so by means of one or more negation claims which take imaginings to lack certain important features of cognitive phenomena; or by means of one or more echo claims which, principally, take imaginings to be conceptually, constitutionally or causally dependent on cognitive phenomena; or combinations of both. In addition, it may be supplemented by other theses specifying imaginings in non-cognitive terms. Accordingly, there are many possible ways of formulating and defending a version of the Cognitive Account of imagining - among which can be found O'Shaughnessy's view.

What I shall try to do in this chapter is to undermine the plausibility of the idea of providing a unified account of imagining in terms of negation or echo theses that characterize imaginings by reference to cognitive features or phenomena. It is important to note that my primary aim is not to discredit these claims *per se*, but rather to question their capacity to make an essential and substantial contribution to a unified account of imagining. One guiding idea is thereby that many of the difficulties for the claims stem from their respective general structural features: that is, either from their negativity, or from their postulation of a particular echoing relation. In particular, I will argue that the negativity seems to be inseparably linked to uninformativeness (i.e., it always points only at what imaginings are *not*); while the echoing relation often remains unilluminating or mysterious. In addition, it will hopefully become clear that the focus of the claims on cognitive features or phenomena prevents them from capturing certain central cases of imagining; while any attempt to widen their scope by also allowing for the characterization of imaginings in terms of non-cognitive features or phenomena renders them unsuitable for the formulation of a *unified* (i.e., non-disjunctive) account of imagining.

Here is what I will do in the five sections of this chapter. In the first, I will investigate the explanatory power of negation claims and will find them wanting, mainly because of their negative character. The next two sections will deal with the extensional adequacy of negation claims. In the first of these two sections, I will produce two counterexamples to such claims, both of which involve instances of visual imagining, and both of which (as I will argue) should count as cognizing reality; while in the second section, I will try to refute

some objections to the counterexamples, and to show how their status as grounds for knowledge affects the different negation claims about imagining which may be put forward. The extensive discussion of the counterexamples is further justified by the fact that I will return to them during the discussions in the subsequent chapters. The fourth section will focus on the prospects for representational echo theses (i.e., theses which maintain that imaginings are representations of cognitive phenomena) of revealing important aspects of the common nature of imaginings; while the fifth and last section will assess echo claims postulating a different kind of dependency of the imaginings on the respective cognitive phenomena. Just like negation claims, echo theses seem to be unable to capture all central forms of imagining and often remain uninformative, this time primarily because what they say seems to resist further elucidation. Hence, my conclusion will be that the Cognitive Account is highly implausible as a unified theory of imagining.

#### **4.1. The Explanatory Power of Negation Claims**

In accordance with the two desiderata outlined in section 2.1, negation claims may fail to make a substantial contribution to a unified account of imagining for two reasons: first, they may be extensionally inadequate; and second, they may be explanatorily unilluminating. That they may be extensionally inadequate means, primarily, that they may fail to be true of all central cases of imagining. As a result, any theory of imagining which aspires to be unified and which contains them will simply be false. An example of an extensionally inadequate negation claim is the thesis that imaginings are non-affective: after all, we can have imaginative feelings, or imagine experiences of feelings. Whether negation claims are true of central cases of non-imaginative phenomena matters only if they are meant to establish a unified account of imagining on their own. Only if they are put forward with this particular ambition might they fail to be extensionally adequate by also being true of non-imaginative phenomena. For example, the idea that imaginings are not moods seems to be true of all instances of imagining. But it cannot by itself provide a theory of imaginings, given that it is equally true of many cognitions. At best, it can fulfil the less demanding ambition to contribute, together with other claims, to a true theory of imagining. Indeed, it seems to be true that negation theses are not of the right kind to be able to establish a unified account of imagining on their own. This is due precisely to their negative character: that is, the fact that they tell us what imaginings are not, instead of informing us about what they positively are. As a consequence, there is a limit to the explanatory power of negation theses: none of them is able to reveal (fully) the distinctive nature of imaginative

phenomena. Hence, if one or more of them are meant to be at the core of a unified account of imagining, they need to be supplemented by some further positive claims in such a way that the resulting theory discloses what imaginings actually are.

But independently of this general limitation to their explanatory power, particular negation theses may fail altogether to be illuminating with respect to the common nature of imaginings. Consequently, they may fail to add anything to a unified account of imagining - even if they are true of all central cases of imagining. First of all, they may lack explanatory power because they may focus on features the absence of which is not particularly distinctive of imaginings. The thesis that imaginings are not moods, or comparably, that they are not tables, tells us nothing interesting about what imaginings are or are not, even though both are presumably true of all imaginings. The main reason for this is that many non-imaginative phenomena lack the specified features as well: no mental state is a table; and most are not moods. Accordingly, the lack of the respective features is not distinctive of imaginativeness. Then, negation claims may be unilluminating with respect to the purpose of providing a unified theory of imaginings because they describe different kinds of imagining in terms of different kinds of features (or, rather, lack thereof). To say that visual imaginings are not seeings, intellectual imaginings not judgements, and affective imaginings not real feelings, has precisely this result: it does not tell us about the nature of imagining since it does not identify a single feature the lack of which characterizes all kinds of imagining. As a result, such a negation claim may be true and illuminating with respect to particular forms of imagining; but it will not be able to say anything about what imaginings have in common and what renders them imaginative. And finally, negation claims may fail to have proper explanatory power because they do not pick out the most fundamental feature(s) the lack of which is distinctive of imaginings. The idea that imaginings are not tables is unilluminating in this respect, given that it is merely a consequence of the fact that imaginings are not entities in the external world (which again may perhaps be traced back to another negation claim, or the positive idea that imaginings are mental phenomena). In the remainder of this section, I will first introduce different initially plausible negation claims - among them those put forward by O'Shaughnessy - and then investigate their explanatory weaknesses. In the following two sections, I will go on to query their extensional adequacy.

O'Shaughnessy puts forward two different negation claims about imaginings: (A) imaginings cannot be instances of one of the two cognitive prototypes; and (C) imaginings cannot cognize reality. The latter thesis identifies a single feature which all imaginings are said to lack: the capacity to provide knowledge. As a result, thesis (C) seems to be fairly

illuminating (with the limitation mentioned above in mind): if true, the idea that imaginings cannot cognize reality would inform us about an important aspect of the nature of these mental states. One worry about the explanatory power of (C) is, however, that there may be a more fundamental feature in terms of which the lack of the capacity to provide knowledge can be elucidated. This more basic feature may be either a property which all imaginings lack and which is necessary for the provision of knowledge, or a property which all imaginings possess and which prevents them from providing knowledge. I will return to the first possibility after the discussion of thesis (A). At the end of this chapter, I will suggest that it is indeed possible - and advisable - to pursue the second line, at least with respect to those imaginings of which (C) is indeed true; and to trace back the absence of the capacity to cognize to the *presence* of another feature, namely their active character.

Moving on to thesis (A), it seems very doubtful that it describes the nature of imaginings by reference to the absence of a single feature (or set of features). The worry is that the cognitive prototypes mentioned may have no significant aspect in common; and that therefore sensory and intellectual imaginings are said to fail to instantiate distinct and independent properties (i.e., distinct and independent types of cognitive phenomena). As indicated at the end of the last chapter, O'Shaughnessy believes that sensory imaginings cannot exemplify the respective prototype because they cannot be reliable and rationally integrated in the same *particular* way as perceptions; and that intellectual imaginings cannot exemplify the respective prototype because they cannot be reliable and rationally integrated in the same *particular* way as judgements. In other words, the instances of the two kinds of imagining are said to fail to realize the prototypes because they fail to satisfy the respective cognitive constraints on perceptions and beliefs. But these specific constraints - that is, the *particular* ways in which perceptions and beliefs are reliable and rationally integrated - are distinct (e.g., perceptions need not be rationally supported themselves, while beliefs need not be nomologically dependent on aspects of one's immediate environment). Hence it follows that (A) identifies different missing features for each of the kinds of imagining. Indeed, as the discussion in the last chapter has revealed, O'Shaughnessy's Argument from Origin does not appear to be able to establish any stronger claim, given that it does not address the issue of whether there are or can be any further prototypes which imaginings might realize. Accordingly, there is still the possibility that imaginings can be reliable and rationally integrated with one's picture of the world in a different way, so that they may nevertheless count as cognizing. I will elucidate and defend this possibility in more detail in the section 4.2 and 4.3 below. Now, since the endorsement of (A) seems to amount to nothing more than taking different types of imagining to lack different properties, this

negation claim cannot be of much relevance for a unified theory of imagining. For such a theory aims, by definition, to provide an account which captures the *common* nature of all instances of imagining, instead of merely highlighting the *particular* characteristics distinctive of the various forms of imagining. As a consequence, (A) may very well be true and informative about the specific nature of sensory imaginings, or of intellectual imaginings; but it does not appear to reveal anything of interest about the nature of imaginings in general.

Nevertheless, it may still be possible to identify a single feature which characterizes the cognitive prototypes (whether there are two or more) and which all instances of these prototypes have to possess. This means a shift in focus from the particularities of the related cognitive constraints to their commonalities. As a result, it may be possible to specify a single feature (or set of features) responsible for the failure of all kinds of imagining to exemplify cognitive prototypes. It seems that O'Shaughnessy sometimes has a view like this in mind - for instance, when he stresses that imaginings remain "cognitively void", whatever may happen to them (359). In particular, his apparent willingness to endorse (C) and, relatedly, (C\*) - that is, the idea that imaginings cannot exemplify any cognitive prototypes (of whichever sort) - might be traced back to the acceptance of the idea that all imaginings fail to realize such prototypes for one and the same reason. As already noted in the last chapter, it seems difficult to motivate the claim that cognizing sensory memories satisfy the same particular cognitive constraints as cognizing perceptions or beliefs. It therefore appears more plausible for O'Shaughnessy to formulate specific epistemic requirements for such memories. But this will mean that he should also accept the existence of more than two particular forms of knowledge. Hence, to rule out the possibility of a further cognitive prototype that imaginings might exemplify, O'Shaughnessy should indeed aim to find a single property the lack of which prevents imaginings from realizing any possible form of knowledge. And, presumably, the resulting negation claim will be explanatorily more fundamental than (C) and (C\*).<sup>1</sup> For it will identify a specific feature in terms of the absence of which it is expected to be able to elucidate why imaginings lack the capacity to cognize reality and to exemplify cognitive prototypes.

The property (or set of properties) in question has to satisfy two conditions: it has to be necessary for the occurrence of all forms of knowledge; and it has to be absent in the case of imagining. Only then can it account for the assumed fact that imaginings cannot exemplify

---

<sup>1</sup> I will stay neutral here with respect to the issue of whether (C\*) identifies a more basic feature than (C), or whether the capacity to exemplify a cognitive prototype is (for O'Shaughnessy) identical with the the capacity to provide knowledge.

cognitive prototypes and therefore cannot provide knowledge. Now, in the light of the preceding discussion of how O'Shaughnessy conceives of the nature of the cognitive prototypes and the related cognitive constraints (cf. sections 3.3 and 3.4), there seem to be three candidate properties which O'Shaughnessy can be interpreted as taking imaginings to always lack: (i) being reliable; (ii) being rationally integrated with our picture of the world; and (iii) being ultimately based on perceptual contact to reality. Since it might not be absolutely certain which of the alternative specifications of the cognitive constraints O'Shaughnessy actually has in mind, and also because of their general plausibility independently of what O'Shaughnessy thinks, I will assess the prospects of all three resulting negation claims.

But it will also be worthwhile to consider other possible negation claims which O'Shaughnessy does not seem to endorse. The thesis that imaginings lack the right kind of origin is not very promising. If this claim is to be understood as stating that sensory imaginings do not come about in the same particular way as perceptions, and that intellectual imaginings do not occur due to the same specific factors as judgements or beliefs, it remains as unilluminating with respect to the general nature of imaginings as thesis (A). If, on the other hand, it is interpreted as referring to the common aspect of how cognizing cognitions are generated, the difficulty arises of specifying what this common aspect is. For, as the discussion of O'Shaughnessy's position in the last chapter has illustrated, different kinds of cognizing states come about in different ways: while, say, cognizing perceptions are suitably caused by the respective parts of the environment, knowledge-constituting judgements or beliefs are often formed in response to evidence and on the basis of a desire or intention to come to a conclusion with respect to a certain subject matter. It might be possible to group together all the various origins of cognizing cognitions by reference to a single feature common to all these cognitive states. Accordingly, the various origins might be characterized in terms of the property of bringing about representations that are reliable and rationally integrated, or that are constitutively linked to reality, and so on. But this would simply be to fall back on a feature other than origin. And the result would be a different and more fundamental negation claim. It is equally unsuccessful to describe imaginings in terms of their general non-cognitivity: that is, in terms of the fact that they are neither cognitive episodes (perceptions, beliefs, memories, and so on) nor cognitive projects (i.e., mental projects aiming at knowledge; for more on cognitive projects, cf. chapter 5). In order to render the proposal more substantial than the uninteresting claim that imaginings do not belong to the class formed by these cognitive phenomena, it would be necessary to identify a common feature of the latter which

imaginings do not possess. And again, this would lead to the endorsement of a different negation claim. More promising is perhaps to maintain that it is constitutive of cognizing representations that they are relationally (and not merely intentionally) linked to the aspects of the world which they represent<sup>2</sup>; while it is not part of the nature of imaginings - or other non-cognizing representations, such as non-veridical or epistemically unsound cognitions - to stand in such a relation to reality. In other words, the cognitive feature lacked by imaginings may be: (iv) being constitutively linked to reality. In addition, there are at least three other features which all imaginings seem to lack and which may be thought necessary for cognition: (v) having a cognitive attitude; (vi) being *prima facie* reasons for belief; and (vii) having the aim or function of cognizing reality (or at least of being true).

Each of the seven resulting negation claims seems to be illuminating, to at least some extent. For each of them promises a plausible and substantial explanation of why imaginings do not appear to play a role in cognition. But there are nevertheless two significant limitations on the explanatory power of these claims - as well as on that of (C) and (C\*). I have already mentioned the first: that none of these claims can fully reveal the common nature of imaginative phenomena, given that they do not tell us anything positive about what imaginings are. Therefore, if they are really intended to form an essential part of a unified account of imagining, they should be supplemented by some positive claims about what it means to be imaginative. One particular - though perhaps not very promising - way of doing this might be simply to add the thesis that imaginings are episodic mental representations. Accordingly, imaginings would be characterized as precisely those representational episodes lacking the respective feature(s) linked to cognition. This option is, however, not available if that cognitive feature is the property of being partly constituted by a link to aspects of reality. For, if there really are such links, non-veridical and epistemically unsound perceptions, memories or judgements will presumably lack them too, and hence satisfy the negation claim concerned. In addition, it seems doubtful that we cannot say anything more

---

<sup>2</sup> The claim that cognizing perceptual experiences, memories or beliefs differ in nature (though not necessarily in phenomenology) from non-cognizing perceptual experiences, memories or beliefs (e.g., non-veridical, illusory or hallucinatory ones) in that only the former are constitutively linked to reality is central to Williamson's "non-conjunctive" account of knowledge (cf. Williamson (1995): cf. especially 47f.), as well as to the view known as "disjunctivism" - a position that has been defended, with respect to different kinds of cognitive states, in, for instance, Evans (1982), McDowell (1982), McDowell (1986), McDowell (1995), Martin (2002) and Martin (2004). The idea that cognizing states are constitutively linked to reality implies the idea that they are *factive* (i.e., that, if they represent something to be the case, it is really the case). It is, however, important to note that O'Shaughnessy's account of perceptions is not of this kind. Although he assumes that perceptions are necessarily related to their most immediate "external object" (i.e., the respective "sensation" or sense-datum; cf. O'Shaughnessy ((2000): 350f.; 454ff.; 479); cf. also note 11 in chapter 3), they are only intentionally related to the represented objects in the external world (e.g., O'Shaughnessy (2000): 124; 166f.; 363).

positive about imaginings than that they are *merely* mental, episodic and representational. And finally, the proposed supplementary claim does not really add much to the elucidation of the nature of imagining, given that the specified features are not particularly distinctive of imaginings (e.g., most cognitions are mental, episodic and representational as well). A more promising option is to combine the negation claim(s) in question with an echo thesis, such as (B). Indeed, it seems plausible to conjecture that the negative character of the theses (A) and (C) is one of O'Shaughnessy's main motivations for embracing (B) as well. In any case, no additions of further claims can prevent the negation claims under consideration from being seriously limited in a second way, namely, that they are not very illuminating if they are true, not only of certain kinds of imaginings, but also of their non-imaginative counterparts. Among the five central forms of imagining, which I identified in section 2.2, there are at least two kinds of imagining to which this limitation applies: affective imaginings and imaginative projects.

With respect to many affective imaginings, negation claims remain largely unilluminating because the respective non-imaginative affective states lack the cognitive properties in question as well.<sup>3</sup> The affective imaginings concerned correspond either to non-imaginative episodes which are non-representational (e.g., certain moods or bodily sensations, such as anxiety or orgasm), or to non-imaginative episodes the representationality of which is not concerned with cognition (e.g., feelings of desire or hope, or of object-directed emotional feelings, such as love). It may be denied that there are non-imaginative affective states of the first kind (cf. Crane (2001)); but the existence of instances of the second kind should not seriously be doubted. Now, none of these non-imaginative episodes seems to be a good candidate for the possession of any of the cognitive properties listed above. For instance, episodes of feeling anxious or of longing for a cigarette cannot really be said to be able to cognize reality, be reliable in their representation of it, be epistemically integrated as reasons for belief with our picture of the world, be constitutively linked to reality, possess a cognitive attitude, be *prima facie* reasons, or have the function or aim of cognizing reality. And the reason for this is precisely that they lack the kind of representationality linked to cognition and the instantiation of properties related to cognition: they are not putatively cognitive representations, and their representationality (if they possess any) is not concerned with cognition.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the discovery that the corresponding affective imaginings - such

---

<sup>3</sup> In addition, the negation claims remain unilluminating with respect to the non-cognitive affective aspects of those affective imaginings which have partially cognitive counterparts (such as felt emotions which involve a belief about an actual situation).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Searle's idea of a difference in "direction of fit" (Searle (1983): 7f.); and Velleman's distinction between "regarding as true" (a putatively cognitive representationality) and "regarding as to be made true" (another kind of representationality) (Velleman (2000): 248f.; cf. also 182). The affective states under discussion may, however, be integrated with our mental life in other

as imagined feelings of anxiety, orgasm, longing, hope, love, and so on - always lack these cognitive properties as well will not be very informative. Given that longing for a cigarette cannot cognize aspects of the world, it is not surprising that imaginatively longing, or imagining the feeling of longing, for a cigarette cannot play a role in the cognition of reality either. Hence, although the negation claims may be true of the affective imaginings under consideration, they cannot provide much insight about the distinctive nature of these imaginings, given that they will also capture the nature of the non-imaginative counterparts of these imaginings. The underlying explanation of this fact is presumably that the affective states discussed - whether imaginative or not - are simply not of the right kind to allow for the instantiation of the cognitive properties concerned. The issue of whether they play a role in cognition - and if not, why not - does not seem to arise because of their lack of the kind of representationality linked to cognition.

In a similar fashion, most of the negation claims under consideration are unable to elucidate the nature of imaginative projects. Again, the main problem is that these instances of imagining do not seem to belong to the right kind of mental category with respect to the potential exemplification of the specified cognitive properties. For most of these properties pertain to representational episodes or states, and not to mental projects. In particular, it is not a cognitive project as a whole which provides knowledge, but only certain parts of it, that is, certain of its episodic constituents (e.g., its final conclusion in the shape of a judgement). When we try to calculate a sum in our heads, find the best next move in a game of chess, or judge a certain philosophical issue, it is not the *whole* process or project of calculating, of imagining the different possible positions, or of considering and weighing the evidence, which cognizes reality. Instead, only *part* of the process - some of the episodes involved (e.g., some perceptions, memories or judgements) - may ground or constitute knowledge. In a similar vein, other cognitive features - such as being reliably formed and rationally integrated with one's view of the world, of being constitutively linked to reality, or ultimately based on perception, of possessing a cognitive attitude, or being *prima facie* reasons for belief - may pertain to the episodes making up a cognitive project, but not to the project or its pursuit as a whole.<sup>5</sup> One reason for this is that mental projects do not themselves *constitute* representations. Rather, they are activities which partly *consist of*

---

ways - for instance, as reasons or motives for actions. Besides, all conscious mental phenomena (including imaginings) may be said to be rationally integrated in so far as they can ground introspective judgements concerning their presence. But this form of rational integration surely does not render them cognitive or cognizing in any plausible sense.

<sup>5</sup> There may be a sense in which a whole project may be reliable, just as the processes underlying perceptual experience may be. But the reliability under discussion here is that pertaining to representational states like perceptions or judgements, and not to the processes producing them (though the two kinds of epistemic property are certainly closely linked).

representations. And since cognition is exclusively a matter of representation, it is only the episodic representations involved in projects that can exemplify the cognitive properties under discussion, but not the complex projects comprising them. The other reason for the fact that cognitive or other mental projects cannot reasonably be said to instantiate these cognitive features is that many of them may lead to the manifestation or acquisition of knowledge, while nevertheless containing imaginative elements or non-cognizing cognitions. When acquiring knowledge about some issue, we may make extensive use of imagined hypothetical cases; and we may first form some false judgements and then revise them later on during the process of coming to a conclusion. But it would be surprising if the project as a whole instantiated certain cognitive properties lacked by many of its elements. Consequently, the respective negation claims will be true of cognitive projects as well as imaginative ones, and hence do not reveal much about the distinctive nature of the latter. The only exception may be the negation thesis that imaginings do not aim at the cognition of the world. This property related to cognition can perhaps be instantiated, not only by episodes, but also by projects. And it seems reasonable to regard cognitive projects as being characterized by having precisely this aim (cf. chapter 5 for a defence of this idea and, in general, a detailed investigation into the nature of mental projects). However, this specific negation claim does not differ from the others in being unable to elucidate the nature of the affective imaginings mentioned, given that non-imaginative affective states do not aim at cognition either.

It might be thought that imaginative projects can be defined in terms of imaginative episodes: namely as precisely those mental projects which contain, aim at, or lead to, episodic imaginings (of a certain kind). And the hope might be that the negation claims are able to illuminate the nature of imaginative projects after all, since they can illuminate the nature of imaginative episodes in terms of which the projects can then be characterized. However, this proposal should be rejected for three reasons. First, it could still not ensure that the negation claims apply to all kinds of imaginative projects. For it is possible that there are imaginative projects which are to be characterized by reference to affective imaginings of the kind discussed above: that is, to imaginings about whose imaginative nature the negation claims would still have nothing to say. Second, the resulting account would not be illuminating with respect to the ambition of providing a unified theory, since it would account for the imaginativeness of episodes and projects in terms of two distinct features: while episodes would be said to be imaginative because of their lack of a certain cognitive property, projects would be said to be imaginative because they involve imaginative episodes. Hence, the theory would be disjunctive: it would not identify a

common feature of all imaginings, but instead postulate two very different (though related) ways of being imaginative. And third, the idea that imaginative projects can be defined by reference to their involving imaginative episodes is untenable. Although it seems true that all imaginative projects have to involve at least some imaginative episodes while cognitive projects need not involve any imaginings, the latter may involve and even be deliberately directed at the occurrence of imaginative episodes just like the former. I have already illustrated that cognitive projects may in general involve imaginings - say, when we are engaged in hypothetical reasoning. And in the next section, I will present examples of cognitive projects which lead to and, in fact, aim (or are aimed by us) at the generation of imaginative episodes of a certain kind.<sup>6</sup>

Now, the second explanatory limitation of the negation theses under consideration should already be enough to disqualify them as substantial components of a unified account of imagining. They may be true with respect to affective imaginings and imaginative projects; but not in virtue of the imaginativeness of these states. Accordingly, the negation claims cannot contribute much to the elucidation of the common imaginativeness of the different forms of imagining.<sup>7</sup> It may be possible to restrict the negation claims to putatively cognitive imaginings (i.e., sensory and intellectual imaginings) and supplement them with independent claims - possibly of a similar structure - about the nature of affective imaginings and imaginative projects. Such a claim may state, for example, that affective imaginings are similar to real feelings in certain aspects, and different from them in others (e.g., that they are affective states which do not constitute real feelings). But again, the resulting theory would be disjunctive: it would not provide a unified account of imagining which elucidates imaginativeness in terms of a single feature. And besides, it would not anymore be a version of the Cognitive Account, given that it would have to specify imaginative projects and affective imaginings by reference to features or phenomena which are not cognitive (e.g., certain imaginative purposes, or the affective character of real feelings). Hence, the negation claims should not be expected to help elucidate the distinctive nature of imaginings in any way, at least not if the aim is to provide a unified account of imagining capturing the imaginative character common to all central cases of imagining.

---

<sup>6</sup> I will defend this last claim about the implausibility of defining imaginative projects in terms of imaginative episodes in more detail in section 5.3.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps, the negation claims fail to contribute to a unified account of imagining in this way not (merely) because they are unilluminating with respect to the two forms of imagining discussed, but because they do not even apply, and hence cannot be true (or false) of them. The problem with the negation claims would then pertain to their extensional adequacy rather than to their explanatory power.

## 4.2. Two Counterexamples to (Certain) Negation Claims

But the negation claims under consideration also fail to be extensionally adequate with respect to the ambitions of a unified account of imagining. One already mentioned difficulty is that they are usually also true of certain central cases of non-imaginative phenomena, such as emotional or conative states, moods, non-representational bodily sensations, cognitive projects, and so on. Consequently, the negation claims have to be supplemented by further claims capable of distinguishing imaginings from such non-imaginative phenomena. A more serious challenge, however, is that there are certain counterexamples which threaten to undermine thesis (C) and any other negation claim closely associated with it. For, as I want to argue, there are certain kinds of sensory imagining which can cognize reality, and possess many of the cognitive features introduced above, namely, the features of exemplifying a cognitive prototype, being reliable in their representation of reality, being rationally integrated with our picture of the world, being ultimately based on perceptions, and perhaps being aimed at cognition. My conclusion will accordingly be that the respective negation claims are not true of all central cases of imagining and hence should be given up. Furthermore, although proponents of the unaffected negation claims may still hold on to them, the counterexamples to (C) will force them at least to renounce the idea that the cognitive properties concerned are necessary for the provision of knowledge.

In this section I will represent the two counterexamples that I have in mind, and argue that they indeed constitute cognizing imaginings.<sup>8</sup> The next section will then be devoted to objections that may plausibly be raised against their status as imaginative grounds for knowledge, and to the issue of which of the many negation claims they actually undermine. As already mentioned, the two examples I will describe will also be important for the discussions in the subsequent chapters, in particular those about the nature of imaginative and cognitive projects. Now, both counterexamples concern a situation in which a sensorily imaginative representation fulfils the same function of grounding knowledge as a comparable perception would in that situation. That is, the two examples involve sensory imaginings with the potential to figure as bases for respective knowledge-constituting judgements or beliefs.

---

<sup>8</sup> From O'Shaughnessy's own perspective, there may actually be another counterexample: pictorial experience. For him, such experiences involve an imaginative experience of what is depicted, that is, an imagined perception of it (O'Shaughnessy (2000): 349). However, it seems plausible to maintain that the relevant aspect of pictorial experience informs us precisely about what the picture represents, and that hence this aspect of the experience can ground knowledge. But I will not develop or press this point here, mainly because it does not seem to be necessary for O'Shaughnessy to take pictorial experience to be imaginative.

Consider first the case of wanting to buy a new sofa and being worried that it might be impossible to get it into the house due to its considerable size. While in the furniture shop and looking at the sofa, one may try to visualize the narrow door of one's room at home and mentally rotate the visual image of the sofa in order to decide whether it might fit through the door. The resulting image may ground a judgement about the relative sizes of the two objects in the same way in which a comparable perception of the two objects together might do. Just as one might be able to see, say, that the sofa is smaller than the door, one can also recognize this difference in size by visualizing the two objects together. In both cases, the visual representation informs one about which object is larger, and enables one to make a corresponding judgement. With respect to the case of visualizing the sofa and the door, what is primarily epistemically relevant for the formation of the judgement is not the whole mental project of trying to correctly and visually compare the sizes of the two objects by mentally rotating one of them, but rather the last visual image of this project: that is, the image of the piece of furniture as it is spatially related to (e.g., turned upside down and located before or within) the frame of the door in such a way as to allow for a visual comparison of the sizes of the two objects. The particular project is instrumental - and perhaps even necessary - for the occurrence of the final image and (as will become clear) its acquisition of the epistemic standing required for the provision of knowledge. But only the final image carries the information necessary for grounding the judgement in question and can hence occupy the same place as a comparable visual perception or memory.

The second counterexample is as follows. Assume that one is about to meet again an old friend whom one has not seen since his youth a long time ago. One has agreed to an encounter in the busy hall of a station and is not sure whether one will easily recognize him after all the years. What one might thus attempt is to extrapolate his current visual appearance from one's memory of his face and stature in his youth, together with one's general capacity to visually recognize how people change in appearance when getting older. As a result, one may visualize his likely current appearance by forming images of him on the basis of one's memory and adjusting them in response to whether one visually recognizes the imagined person as being the same in appearance as the remembered person, now only much older. Once satisfied that there is such a correlation in content between the visual images and the original memory, one may use the visual image in question to try to recognize the friend among the real crowd in the station. Perhaps the imaginative engagement involved constitutes an extended mental project. But again, it is the final image which is - in the same way as a comparable visual memory might be in other circumstances

- of primary cognitive importance in the recognition of the friend, or the formation of a corresponding judgement about his appearance. For it is this image which contains the information required for recognizing the friend, or forming the judgement. Accordingly, the two counterexamples to (C) consist in visual imaginings which seem to have the potential to ground knowledge-constituting judgements or beliefs and, in the second case, also the acquisition of certain recognitional capacities.

The imaginative representations in the two examples share important features with each other, as well as with the corresponding perceptions or memories, which should be sufficient - as I will argue in what follows - to confirm their status as cognizing states and, more specifically, as grounds for knowledge. First of all, the sensory imaginings described can match reality and lead to practical success. Thus, one may correctly decide on the basis of one's image that the sofa will fit through the door, and hence buy it; or one may be able to recognize one's friend by means of one's image of him. The potential veridicality of the visual image will thereby be a matter of, for instance, the issue of whether one rightly remembers the size of the door or the appearance of the friend, whether one does not change the perceived size of the sofa while visually rotating it in one's mind, or whether one's impression of how the appearance of people alters with age is adequate (at least with respect to the person in question). If the imaginative representations turn out to be veridical, it is therefore to be expected that they typically do so non-accidentally. Because of their dependence on information provided by perception and memory, and because of the importance of one's skill to properly visualize the respective scenarios by means of mental rotation or extrapolation, the resulting sensory imaginings will match reality (if at all) not merely by chance, but in virtue of the reliability both of the underlying cognitive representations and of one's control over the mental capacities involved in visualizing. Not everyone can always - or even sometimes - act reliably on his intention to sensorily imagine something. But it seems plausible to assume that this is at least a possibility, in particular with respect to the first example. There is no reason to doubt, for instance, that we can mentally rotate simple objects (or shapes) without changing their sizes relative to other simple objects (or shapes), at least within a practically permissible margin of error. Hence, if the imagining person is sufficiently skilled, the mental processes of actively producing sensory imaginings can be reliable - if not to the same extent as the comparable perceptual mechanisms, then at least enough to enable practical reliance on them. Furthermore, one may be aware of the potential reliability and non-arbitrary veridicality pertaining to the imaginative representations, in virtue of the introspective knowledge of the nature of one's imaginative project and in virtue of the memory of practical success in the use of visualizing

of this kind in the past. For instance, one may be aware that one uses perceptions and memories and tries to come to an appropriate image by not altering the sizes of the represented objects while visualizing them together; and one may be aware that one had success with previous projects of a comparable nature. One's awareness of the potential trustworthiness and non-accidental veridicality of one's imaginative project becomes also apparent in the fact that one may explicitly decide to rely on one's visualizing in order to find out whether the sofa will fit through the door, or whether the person over there is one's friend. And finally, the visual imaginings represent and refer to the respective objects in the world (the sofa, the door, and one's friend). Three considerations speak in favour of this idea. First, visual imaginings represent objects - if not particular objects (such as the sofa in the shop), then at least particular types or sorts of objects (e.g., some kind of sofa which has the same size and shape as the sofa in the shop). In fact, this fits the natural way in which we describe such cases. And it seems difficult to deny that there are cases of either kind:

If asked to visualize a green apple, you may well succeed in bringing to mind an image of an apple. But, in many contexts, it is simply inappropriate to press the question which apple you have imagined. In visualizing an apple, there need be no particular apple which is imagined.

This is not to say that particularity cannot be injected into our imagery. One can, if one wants, imagine the very green apple now nestling in A. A. Gill's pocket. For we can use imagery for particular imaginative projects, for particular tasks; and in such cases it is entirely appropriate to take the imagery to be the imagining of the particular objects or events that one sets out to have in mind. (Martin (2001): 275)

Accordingly, it seems reasonable to say that the two visual imaginings under consideration represent the respective objects, or at least the corresponding types of object. Depending on which is the case, the visual imaginings will be said to have provided new information about the particular objects (e.g., the relative sizes of the sofa and the door), or about objects of the respective kinds in general (e.g., about the relative sizes of objects of the same size as the sofa and the door). In the latter case, a further step will be necessary to be able to apply the newly gained information to the particular objects in question. For instance, one may have to infer, from the piece of information that sofas with this specific size are likely to fit through doors with that specific size, that the sofa in the shop is likely to fit through the door at one's home. This requires, of course, that one knows that the particular sofa and door are instances of those types of sofas and doors. But this can be assumed, since one set out, and has taken great care, to visualize a sofa and a door with exactly the same sizes and shapes as

the real ones. Second, the imaginings are deliberately designed to refer to the objects and to correctly represent certain features of them (their relative sizes, their appearance at a certain age). As a result, if the visualizing is done properly, their contents will covary with the respective facts in the world, and adequately reflect them. In this respect, they resemble perceptions - with the difference that the capacity of perceptions to represent reality is due solely to factors independent of our intentions (such as evolution), while the capacity of visual imaginings to represent reality is at least partly due to our intentions.<sup>9</sup> And third, there may be genuine cases of misrepresentation: if the visualizing is not done properly, the visual imaginings need not fail altogether to refer to the putative objects of knowledge in question. That is, there may be cases in which the visual imaginings may match reality only partly: for instance, they may represent the size of the door correctly (or at least the relative proportion between its height and width), but not that of the sofa (whether in comparison to the door, or in respect of the proportions among its parts); or they may correctly represent only some features of the face of the friend, but not others. In such cases, the visual imaginings do not necessarily cease to refer to the respective objects as a result of their partial incorrectness. For the images may still be partly caused by the objects in question (via the mediation of the respective perceptions and memories, and by the activity of imagining); and they may still be intended to refer to those objects. Now, the three factors taken together - the partial match between content and reality, the causal link back to the respective aspects of reality, and the intention to refer to reality - should suffice to guarantee the referentiality of visual imaginings, even though they are likely not to be fully correct. Again, visual imaginings may not be very different in this respect from perceptions. For it may be argued that the referentiality of perceptions is the result of the combined presence of a causal link back to the respective aspects in reality and of an at least partial match with reality. In any case, the two visual imaginings under consideration allow for genuine misrepresentation. And this illustrates once more that they intentionally represent the respective aspects of the world.<sup>10</sup>

To conclude, the sensory imaginings involved in the two counterexamples can, in appropriate circumstances, represent and refer to certain aspects of the world, be reliable and non-accidentally veridical with respect to these aspects, be known and trusted by us to be so, and subsequently help us to successfully engage with the world by means of action. All these features, which they have in common with the corresponding perceptions, contribute

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Dretske (1986) on the difference between "natural functions" and "assigned functions" to represent. And cf. Lewis (1980) for the idea that it is essential to the representationality of (veridical) perceptions that their contents are nomologically dependent on the respective aspects of the environment.

<sup>10</sup> The idea that there is a close link between misrepresentation and full intentionality is further defended in Dretske (1994).

to the explanation of how the imaginings can figure as substitutes for their cognitive equivalents, and how they can make the same (or at least a comparable) epistemic contribution to the resulting visual judgements or beliefs as the latter. The respective persons engage with the imaginative activities in the furniture shop or on the way to the meeting point mainly because they can in this way avoid having to engage with more complicated or more demanding activities, such as transporting the sofa home and trying out there whether it will pass through the living room door, or attempting to get hold of a more recent photograph of the friend. That is, the imaginative activities are usually meant to be replacements for certain bodily actions. In a similar way, the final imaginative representations of the respective projects may be understood as substitutes in the cognitive process for the perceptions or memories which would result from the corresponding forms of practical engagement with the objects in question. This is reflected in the great similarity between the respective imaginative and cognitive representations: both may reliably represent and refer to the same state of affairs (possibly in all details); both may lead us to form the same judgements or beliefs; and both may ultimately depend on our (past or present) perceptual access to the objects in question.

### **4.3. The Extensional Adequacy of Negation Claims**

In light of these considerations, it seems very difficult to deny that some of the judgements or beliefs based on the sensory imaginings in question can constitute knowledge. It appears that one can really come to know, by engaging in the respective imaginative activities, that the sofa is larger than the door, or that there will be particularly shaped wrinkles on the cheeks of one's friend; and one really might be able to recognize the friend on the basis of one's visual image. In fact, the whole rationale for the engagement in the imaginative activities concerned may very well be inseparably linked to the possibility of acquiring knowledge in judgemental or recognitional form. But once this is accepted (as it should be), a proponent of (C) or any of the related negation claims, which are threatened by the two counterexamples, has only one plausible option left: to deny that this implies that the sensory imaginings (or their imaginative aspects) can or should be taken to be the epistemic grounds on which the knowledge is based. The idea will be that the two cases described involve some cognitive elements - whether as basis for the visual imaginings, or as part of them - which figure as the actual grounds for the knowledge instead. In other words, despite being involved in the epistemic process leading to the acquisition of the respective instances of knowledge, the proponent of (C) or any of the other challenged negation claims will

argue against the idea that the two visual imaginings are indeed cognizing. In what follows, I will explore the plausibility of this approach. It will become clear during the discussion which negation claims - apart from (C) - are actually undermined by the two counterexamples, and which can be upheld, once any link of entailment to (C) is severed. Now, the strategy to deny that the sensory imaginings are the epistemic grounds for the acquired knowledge faces two difficulties.

One is that there does not seem to be a plausible candidate for an alternative ground. The two cases described involve certain cognitive elements - such as perceptions or memories of particular objects, and one's general knowledge or recognitional capacity concerning certain ways in which objects behave (that they remain constant in size, or how they change appearance with the progress of time). But none of these elements carries the information which is contained in conceptualized form in the resulting instances of knowledge or recognition. For instance, neither the perception of the sofa nor the memory of the door, nor the belief that objects keep their relative sizes with respect to each other, can give rise to the judgement that the sofa is larger (or smaller) than the door. Accordingly, the person trying to find out whether the sofa fits through the door does not remember (or perceive) that the sofa is larger (or smaller) than the door; nor does he manifest some previously acquired knowledge of this fact. Equally, neither being able to visually recognize how the appearance of persons change with age, nor remembering what one's friend looked like when young, can ground the acquisition of the capacity to visually recognize the friend, or the corresponding intellectual knowledge about the current particular appearance of the friend. In particular, the person trying to meet her friend does not recall his current appearance; all she remembers is his appearance in the past.<sup>11</sup>

This means that, in both examples, what the underlying cognitive states represent has to be imaginatively combined and modified by using one's ability to visualize in order to extract

---

<sup>11</sup> It might be possible, to some extent, to infer the appearance of the friend on the basis of one's beliefs about how people age, perhaps in conjunction with one's beliefs about how one remembers him to have looked years ago. For instance, someone may come to believe on these grounds that her friend will have some wrinkles, or grey hair. But such beliefs are not involved in the second counterexample. Instead, it involves the use of one's capacity to visually recognize age-related changes in the appearance of people. Moreover, beliefs about these changes will not be rich enough to determine all the biometrical details (the location, size and shape of the wrinkles, etc.) with which the visual image may provide us on the basis of the imaginative modification of the memory of the friend. What becomes important here is that the example has to involve a *visual* ground for knowledge, and not merely an intellectual one. For the imagining subject may be able solely on the basis of this ground to *visually* recognize the friend. In normal circumstances (e.g., when the friend has no distinguishing characteristics, such as a scar on his cheek), a judgement or belief about the appearance of the friend's face should not suffice for this task.

the information needed for grounding the respective judgements or recognitional capacities. This is not to deny that certain aspects of the cognitive elements concerned with the representation of particular objects may still pertain to the final visual images. For instance, the image of the sofa and the door will presumably represent these entities with their visually remembered sizes, shapes, colours, and so on. And the image of the aged friend will presumably represent him as still having certain of the facial features which one remembers him as having had in the past (e.g., the distance between the eyes, the shape of the head, etc.). Likewise, it is still possible that the visual images may be said to include or manifest aspects of one's general knowledge or recognitional capacity concerning how objects behave. That the sofa has not changed in size, or that the friend is visualized as having wrinkles or grey hair, may perhaps be taken to be instances of such an inclusion or manifestation. But what is not true of the two visual imaginings is that they are cognizing *because* they include or manifest aspects of perceptions, memories, beliefs, or recognitional capacities. To stress the point again, one does not perceive, remember or bring otherwise back to attention that the sofa is larger than the door, or that one's friend will have particularly shaped wrinkles on his cheeks. The reason for this is that one's acquisition of knowledge is based on both the perceptions or memories of the particular objects and the general knowledge or recognitional capacity concerning how real objects behave. What is thus needed is an additional process or activity which combines these cognitive elements in such a way as to lead to the extraction of previously unknown pieces of information. And in the two examples, this required additional activity is imaginative and results in cognizing visual imaginings.

In this respect, the two counterexamples differ from the following case.<sup>12</sup> I may wonder whether frogs have lips and, being unable to form a judgement on this matter by merely thinking about it, may decide to form a visual image of a frog in order to reach an answer. I may thereby form the image by falling back on my episodic visual memories of a particular frog, or by relying on my visual memory or knowledge of how frogs generally look linked to my respective recognitional capacity. This procedure may be veridical and reliable with respect to the visual representation of the mouth of the particular frog, or of frogs in general. Hence, it may allow me to form - on the basis of the resulting visual image - the knowledge-constituting judgement that, say, frogs indeed have lips. But it seems plausible to argue that those elements of my image, which represent the visualized frog as having lips, are instances or manifestations of my visual memory of the appearance of the particular frog, or

<sup>12</sup> Thanks to Mike Martin for this example. Pylyshyn's famous case of finding out how many windows one's house possesses by imagining walking through it - thereby visualizing each of its rooms and counting the windows in them - is presumably of the same kind (Pylyshyn (2002): especially 164).

of my general knowledge or recognitional capacity concerning how frogs look in general. After all, it seems natural to say that, by forming the image, I come to recall that frogs have lips.<sup>13</sup> Hence, although the overall visual representation may still be imaginative, its cognizing aspects seem to be cognitive. That is, the resulting visual imagining appears to be cognizing only in so far it contains mnemonic representational elements which are cognizing: what ultimately grounds the judgement are mnemonic - and not imaginative - elements of the visual representation. In contrast, in the two previous examples, there are no cognitive elements involved (over and above the visual imaginings) which could reasonably be said to ground the respective knowledge-constituting judgements and, in the second case, the acquisition of the capacity to visually recognize the friend. The main difference seems to be that, in the case of the frog, we come to pay attention to previously unnoticed, but nevertheless consciously experienced aspects (similar to the moment when we suddenly realize that someone is sad or angry: something which we have suppressed or ignored before); while in the case with the sofa and the door, or with the friend, we unearth new information which we yet have not experienced, or been able to notice, in its entirety, given that it so far has been scattered over several disconnected perceptions, memories or beliefs.

However, the identification of an alternative ground for the judgemental or recognitional knowledge acquired by means of the imaginative activities is not the only problem facing the proponent of claim (C) or the related negation theses, whose strategy it is to save these claims by denying the status of grounds for knowledge to the two visual imaginings. The other difficulty is that there does not seem to be a good reason for endorsing such a denial. For in the crucial cognitive aspects, the two visual imaginings do not differ from the corresponding visual perceptions or memories; while the actual differences between the two kinds do not undermine the potential of the former to provide sufficient epistemic support for judgements in a similar way to the latter.

Let me begin with the cognitive similarities. I have already argued that the visual imaginings under consideration are intentional and can, under the right kind of circumstances, be veridical and reliable in their representation of the respective aspects of reality. According to traditional views, this should already suffice for the imaginings to qualify as potential grounds for knowledge. But the imaginings can (and usually will) also satisfy O'Shaughnessy's further requirement of rational integration. The person in question

---

<sup>13</sup> Indeed, in the case of forming an image on the basis of the memories of a particular frog, the resulting image should count as a memory image, and not an imaginative one, if its formation does not involve making any imaginative changes either to the appearance of the frog, or to its represented surroundings.

will typically form the respective judgement only if he takes the visual imaginings to be veridical, reliable and more or less consistent with whatever else he believes and, in particular, with his beliefs concerning the visualized objects, and the epistemic standing of the imaginings.

Furthermore, the situation is no different with respect to the other two ideas about grounds for knowledge which might be found in O'Shaughnessy's writings: that they have to be constitutively linked to reality; and that they ultimately have to be based on perceptual contact with reality. Given that it seems plausible to assume that perception is the only way in which we can directly access reality, one further condition on knowledge may be that it has to be ultimately based on perception. But the two visual imaginings fulfil this requirement: they ultimately derive from the respective perceptions of the objects concerned (the sofa, the door, the friend), as well as from the perceptions underlying the acquisition of the relevant general knowledge or recognitional capacity (e.g., perceptions of objects with constant sizes, or of changes over time in people's appearances). Of course, the two visual imaginings cannot provide direct access to reality as the corresponding perceptions would do. But judgements or sensory memories cannot link us directly to reality either - which does not prevent them, however, from being potentially cognizing. Hence, there is no reason to worry about the indirectness of the imaginings, and their ultimate dependence on perceptions.

Likewise, no particular problem should arise pertaining to the visual imaginings, if it is assumed that grounds (and constituents) of knowledge have to be partly constituted by a link to the respective aspects of reality. For the idea that such imaginings are factive and differ in kind from phenomenologically indistinguishable non-cognizing imaginings is not more (or less) problematic than the idea that cognizing judgements or sensory memories are factive and differ in kind from phenomenologically indistinguishable non-cognizing judgements or sensory memories. In all three cases, the factiveness can presumably not be realized by means of a direct causal link to the respective aspects of the world (as in the case of cognizing perceptions). But while this has the consequence that the idea of a constitutive link between the cognizing visual imaginings and the world would need further elucidation which might not be easily provided, the situation is no different with respect to cognizing judgements or sensory memories which are said to be constitutively linked to reality. Requiring a constitutive link to reality would thus be problematic with respect to all non-perceptual forms of knowledge, while giving up on this requirement in the case of memories and judgements would also permit giving up on it in the case of imaginings.

And finally, it is not difficult to identify the cognitive prototype which the visual imaginings may be said to exemplify (if one wants to speak in this way at all). O'Shaughnessy is right, it seems, that sensory imaginings cannot exemplify the prototypes for perceptions or beliefs. But this will also be true of sensory memories. And just like them, sensory imaginings can have their own cognitive prototype: namely that of a reliable and veridical representation of reality formed by means of appropriate imaginative activity. This should count as a prototype as well, given that it combines the elements of intentionality, veridicality, reliability, and (if also required) rational integration. To sum up, the sensory imaginings cannot be shown to fail to be grounds for knowledge by arguing that they cannot possess one of the cognitive properties of being reliable and rationally integrated, ultimately dependent on perception, constitutively linked to reality, or instances of some cognitive prototype. For it is not problematic to ascribe any of these features to the cognizing visual imaginings - at least not more problematic than to ascribe them to cognizing judgements or sensory memories. Moreover, if it is indeed assumed that the possession of these cognitive properties is necessary for the provision of knowledge, the two imaginings constitute counterexamples to the respective negation claims - including (C\*) - and render them false.

The situation is different with the negation claims that characterize imaginings in terms of their lack of a cognitive attitude, their lack of the status as *prima facie* reasons, or their lack of the function or aim of cognizing reality. Presumably the two visual imaginings do not possess any of these features and differ in these respects from the corresponding perceptions, memories or judgements.<sup>14</sup> Hence, the respective negation claims promise to be true of imaginings. But they do not undermine the status of the two visual imaginings under consideration as potential grounds for knowledge. Even if it is assumed that some kind of justification is necessary for knowledge, the justification in question need not amount to *prima facie* justification. There is no problem with the assumption that sensory imaginings can justify beliefs, and that we may take them to justify beliefs, if we have appropriate ancillary beliefs about their reliable and rationally faultless origin (e.g., about the nature of the imaginative projects of which they are parts, their dependence on perceptions or memories, their reliability in the past, or their coherence with the rest of our beliefs). For although it is plausible to assume that perceptions and memories usually do not require additional beliefs in order to be able to possess and exert justificatory power, they sometimes do - for instance, when we initially have good reason to doubt their

<sup>14</sup> Since the visual imaginings are designed to track knowledge, they may be said to have been assigned the function to lead to knowledge, or to have been aimed at cognition. But this function or aim will not pertain to their intrinsic nature. Instead, it will be due to the use to which we put them (cf. Dretske (1986)).

trustworthiness, only to be ultimately reassured by some further evidence which outweighs our (maybe still remaining) doubts. Accordingly, the visual imaginings will not be the only mental episodes the justificatory power of which depends on certain ancillary beliefs.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, there is no good reason to assume that the lack of a (say, evolved) function or aim to cognize reality prevents the two visual imaginings from cognizing reality. It should suffice that, in the two examples, the sensory imaginings are designed by the respective persons to play a certain role in their cognitive lives and to inform them about how things stand - just as some drawings on a board may be designed to represent the movements of players on a football field (cf. Dretske (1994)). And the possession of a cognitive attitude - that is, first of all, the involvement of a claim about how things are - should not be taken to be required for knowledge either: making a claim to truth is not necessary for a mental state to actually be true and cognizing with respect to reality (as it is also not sufficient for being true and cognizing). It may be maintained that the phenomenologically salient attitudinal aspect of episodic cognitions reflects, in addition, their typical functional role and also, perhaps, their status as *prima facie* reasons. But, as I have just argued, the lack of these features should be taken to be unnecessary for the general capacity to provide knowledge. Hence, although it seems true that the visual imaginings possess neither a cognitive attitude, nor *prima facie* justificatory power, nor the function to cognize reality, they can be used and relied on in cognition. And this epistemic role of theirs may simply be established, not by their nature, but by the use that we put them to.

In addition to the differences between imaginings and cognitions specified by the negation claims under consideration, there seem to be several other significant differences between the two visual imaginings and their corresponding visual perceptions or memories which might (wrongly) be thought to undermine the potential of the former to provide sufficient epistemic support for the same judgements as the latter. First, the use of sensory imagination is presumably often less reliable or less precise in its provision of visual information than the use of perception; and we will refrain from judgement more often with respect to the former than to the latter (e.g., if the issue of the sofa fitting through the door is one of centimetres). But this does not prevent imaginings from being sufficiently reliable and precise - as it is reasonable to often rely on perception, even though the use of calibrated tools of measurement or of photographs might be more trustworthy and accurate. Second, the acts of visualizing in the counterexamples do not provide us with new evidence. Instead, they extract information, which has been previously unknown to us, from the portions of

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also O'Shaughnessy's view that perceptions can figure as grounds for knowledge only if they are rationally integrated - which is another form in which the justificatory power of such states may partly depend on the nature of the underlying beliefs.

evidence that we already have had (e.g., in the form of our perception of the sofa, the memories of the door or the friend, or the knowledge about the ageing process). This is unproblematic since having new evidence (i.e., involving the epistemic intake of new information) is not a condition on the provision of knowledge - as illustrated by the possibility of a priori knowledge. Indeed, this may be taken to suggest that the imaginative activity fulfils a cognitive role similar to that of a priori reasoning, given that the latter (at least according to one common understanding) also leads to the gain of information without the acquisition of new evidence. For example, if we had previously measured the piece of furniture and the door with some kind of tool, instead of our eyes, we could have just calculated - in our heads and on the basis of our memory of their sizes - whether the former would fit through the latter. And just as such an example of a priori reasoning would make it superfluous to perform the overt action of solving the problem by means of a slide-rule or a geometrical drawing, the act of mentally rotating the sofa replaces the much more demanding task of actually moving it to one's place and determining whether it fits through the door. Third, it is also important to note that the sensory imaginings can fulfil their cognitive role only on the basis of information that is gathered, processed and stored by cognitive means, such as perception, memory and belief. This, together with the fact that they do not provide new evidence, seems to be reflected by the fact that imagining does not constitute an independent source of empirical knowledge. And fourth, the idea that the visual imaginings can ground knowledge is also compatible with two prominent and plausible observations that have been taken to show why visual imaginings are uninformative: that visual imaginings - in contrast to perceptions - are not observational (cf. Sartre (2004): 8ff.; Wittgenstein (1984a): sections 63, 80 and 88); and that we enjoy a certain immunity to error through misidentification with respect to what we sensorily imagine (Wittgenstein (1984d): 68; Peacocke (1985): 20 and 26f.).

Visual imaginings seem to be *non-observational* in the sense that, when we are visualizing an object from a certain point of view, we do not appear to be able to acquire knowledge by coming to visualize it from another point of view about those aspects of the object which are currently visually unrepresented, but which would be visually represented as a result of adopting an appropriate different perspective on the object. This means that the non-observationality of visual imaginings has the consequence, say, that we cannot acquire any knowledge or make any surprising discoveries about a visualized object's occluded backside by mentally rotating it. For example, it cannot happen that we think that we visualize a closed cube, only to find out, when visualizing it from a different point of view, that it is merely an open box, or an object consisting of three plates meeting in one point and

attached to each other at right angles. In contrast, when we see what we take to be a closed cube, there is always the possibility that it turns out to be an open box or an object consisting of three attached plates and can be visually recognized as such from a different perspective. However, the apparent non-observationality of visual imaginings does not prevent them from figuring as grounds for knowledge in the manner of the two counterexamples. First, the knowledge in the examples does not concern currently visually unrepresented aspects of the objects which would be visualized as the result of an appropriate change of the imaginative point of view. The discovery that the sofa is larger than the door, or that the friend has these particular wrinkles, is not (simply) a matter of altering one's imaginative perspective on the visualized objects. Rather, it is a matter of imaginatively combining the images of two objects and visually comparing their sizes; or of modifying the appearance of an object in conformity with one's knowledge about how people's appearances change over time. One consequence of this is that alterations in perspective are at best instrumental in - but never cognitively contributing to - the successful pursuit of the respective attempts to acquire knowledge by means of imagining. The person in question may have to change several times his imaginative perspective on the sofa in order to find out whether it would fit through the door (as he may in real life have to shift and turn around the sofa several times before he can be sure about whether it fits through the door). But he will not get the answer simply by visualizing the sofa (or the door, for that matter) from a different point of view. He also has to merge the two images of the two objects and use his capacity to visually compare sizes. Second, the two examples need not even involve any perspectival change. For instance, the visualization of the sofa may begin with a frontal perception of the side of the sofa, which will allow one to simply spin around its shape in a two-dimensional plane and compare it with the shape of the door. And the same is true for the other counterexample to (C): to achieve a cognizing image of the friend's face, one need not change one's point of view on the face at all. And third, if the imaginative activity actually involves some instrumental changes in point of view, its success seems to depend partly on the non-observationality of visual imaginings. If what is visually represented as a sofa turns out, when mentally rotated, to be a longish object with hardly any depth, the conclusion that it would fit very easily through the door would not be of much help in deciding whether the real object fits through the real door. Thus, it seems crucial to the mental rotation of the sofa - and perhaps to mental rotation in general - that there are no surprise discoveries about the previously visually unrepresented aspects of it. The non-observationality of visual imaginings is therefore no threat to their capacity to cognize reality under the appropriate circumstances.

And the same is true of another apparent fact about visual imaginings, which seems to distinguish them from visual perceptions: namely that we are to a certain extent immune to error through misidentification with respect to what we are visualizing. It has been noted that it seems absurd to question one's conviction about what one is visualizing; and that facts about the causal origins of the images, or about their (lack of) resemblance regarding particular objects in the world, are irrelevant for the issue of what one is visualizing.<sup>16</sup> For example, when one is convinced that one is visualizing King's College, it appears that one's conviction remains unaffected when one learns that there is an exact replica of King's College (say, in the close environment); or that one's image resembles Hertford College rather than King's College; or that one has - perhaps even knowingly - formed one's image of King's College on the basis of one's memory of Hertford College. In fact, it seems that one cannot err at all about the referents of one's visual imaginings - for instance, that it is, in this case, King's College, and not the replica or Hertford College. But again, this seeming immunity to error through misidentification with respect to what we are visualizing does not affect the capacity of the two counterexamples to (C) to provide knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge involved does not concern the referentiality of the respective images. On the contrary, it again presupposes that the images indeed refer to what we take them to refer to. Consequently, the seeming immunity to error through misidentification concerning what we are visualizing is as unproblematic for the cognitive status of the two counterexamples as the seeming non-observationality of visual imaginings.<sup>17</sup> To conclude, the significant differences between the sensory imaginings and their perceptual or mnemonic counterparts do not matter for the fact that the former can, under the right kind of circumstances, cognize the world as well as the latter.

The two visual imaginings should therefore be accepted as potential grounds for knowledge. As a consequence, they undermine the theses (C) and (C\*). But they also constitute counterexamples to all those negation claims according to which imaginings lack certain features that are necessary for the provision of knowledge. And it seems that these will include the negation claims which take imaginings to lack one of the following features: (i) being reliable; (ii) being rationally integrated; (iii) being ultimately based on perceptual

---

<sup>16</sup> The absurdity, the irrelevance of likeness and the example about King's College have been introduced in Wittgenstein (1984d): 68. They are discussed and supplemented with the irrelevance of causal origin in Peacocke (1985): 20 and 26f.. Cf. also Sartre (2004): 8ff., although he does not always clearly distinguish between the immunity to error and the non-observationality of sensory imaginings.

<sup>17</sup> In fact, the two aspects of visual imaginings may stem from the same fact, namely that the referents of our visual imaginings are ultimately determined by our accompanying desires, intentions or thoughts about our visual imaginings (cf. Sartre (2004): 8ff.; cf. also note 9 in chapter 1).

contact with reality; and (iv) being constitutively linked to reality. Perhaps the underlying epistemological theories turn out not to be true. But it seems difficult to imagine that these properties - if they are indeed instantiated by perceptions, beliefs, and so on - are irrelevant for the provision of knowledge. This is why the cognizing visual imaginings will instantiate them just like cognizing memories or judgements - if any of them do, that is. By contrast, I have argued that the following features should not be taken to be necessary for knowledge, even though they may be closely linked to the nature of cognitions: (v) having a cognitive attitude; (vi) being prima facie reasons for belief; and (vii) having the aim or function of cognizing reality.<sup>18</sup> If cognitive states in fact possess these features, the resulting negation claims will be true, given that imaginings do not instantiate any of these properties. Hence, the proponents of such claims can accept that the two visual imaginings constitute genuine and convincing counterexamples to the claim that imaginings cannot provide knowledge, while still maintaining that imaginings lack other important features common to cognitive states (though not to cognitive projects). But the resulting negation claims will still be subject to severe explanatory limitations and hence cannot make a substantial contribution to a unified account of imagining.

It seems that the error in O'Shaughnessy's argumentation is not part of his defence of claim (A) by means of the Argument from Origin. Indeed, it seems plausible to assume that he is right in arguing that imaginings cannot satisfy the particular cognitive constraints on perceptions and beliefs; and that they therefore cannot exemplify the same cognitive prototypes as these cognitive states. The problem in his argumentation is rather his derivation of claim (C) from (A). The crucial assumption he seems to have relied on in this derivation is that there are no other cognitive prototypes which imaginings could exemplify. And his reason for making this assumption may be his belief that there are only two cognitive prototypes: "the fundamental mental cognitives - *knowledge and perception*" (363). Accordingly, he appears to have overlooked the possibility of other cognitive prototypes, the exemplification of which also requires intentionality, veridicality and reliability, but which differ from the two original ones in that they demand a different kind of reliability. Perceptions have to be reliably caused by the perceived aspects in the world. Beliefs (or judgements) have to be rationally supported by the other relevant cognitive states. The two visual imaginings have to be based on reliable (and veridical) perceptions or sensory memories; and they have to be the result of imaginative activity which is reliable at least with respect to the extraction of information already contained in the underlying

---

<sup>18</sup> Assuming that they really are unnecessary for the provision of knowledge may perhaps explain why O'Shaughnessy does not pay attention to any of these features in his arguments for (A) and (C).

cognitive states. And sensory memories have to reliably depend on our past perceptions of things. Accordingly, there seem to be at least four different forms of knowledge, each with its particular type of reliability, its specific cognitive constraint and its particular cognitive prototype.

This raises the question of why the counterexamples do not seem to have crossed O'Shaughnessy's mind or the mind of other philosophers who have defended (C) or similar negation claims. An answer might be found in the general tendency to neglect imaginative projects in discussions on imagining. It seems that the two counterexamples can occur only as parts of imaginative projects (which are, again, part of an even more comprehensive cognitive project: cf. sections 5.3 and 5.4), the nature of which is essential for ensuring the epistemically sound status of the resulting imaginative representation. Without being embedded in these projects, the visualizings of the sofa in the door and of the appearance of the friend would presumably not be reliably formed, nor be able to fulfil the cognitive role assigned to them by us. If their production did not originate in our perceptions or memories of the respective objects and did not involve the controlled modification of the information contained in these, they would at best randomly match reality, and we would not epistemically trust them in the formation of beliefs. But O'Shaughnessy, for instance, discusses mental phenomena like daydreams only very briefly (mainly at O'Shaughnessy (2000): 216ff.). And he does not link them up with his account of imagining, although daydreaming should clearly count as a central instance of imaginative activity. Similarly, many other discussions of imaginings do not really engage with imaginative projects, and focus instead more or less exclusively on imaginative episodes as instances of imagining; while those texts which address the issue of the nature of imaginative projects are usually concerned with issues different from why they have their imaginativeness in common with imaginative episodes (see, e.g., Peacocke (1985); Hopkins (1998): ch. 7; Wollheim (1973) and (1984): chs. 3 and 4). It is thus perhaps less surprising that O'Shaughnessy and other philosophers do not seem to have noticed, or taken into account, examples like these.

And there might be another reason why such counterexamples to (C) are not as obvious as one might think when confronted with them. For although there are many instances of cognition which involve imagining, few of them seem to involve *cognizing* imaginings. Consider the following three examples: (i) we can find out about the thoughts and feelings of another person by imagining being in her position and state of mind; (ii) we can discover the logical consequences of a certain proposition by engaging in hypothetical reasoning on the basis of imaginatively entertaining it; and (iii) we can find out about the aesthetic

qualities of a certain configuration of objects (e.g., whether hanging a picture on a certain wall would look nice; or whether adding a yellow square to a Mondrian painting would destroy its balance and harmony) by visualizing them and observing our emotional reaction towards them. The last category may also capture emotional reactions to imagined objects which are not necessarily or clearly aesthetic (e.g., feeling disgust when imagining the taste and consistency of worms in one's mouth). In each of these cases, it seems reasonable (as with the two counterexamples) to assume that we can gain some knowledge about reality (possibly in a wide sense, so as to include the recognition of response-dependent features): we may learn something about the minds of other people, about the logical properties of propositions, or the aesthetic qualities of certain combinations of objects. But a proponent of (C) has the option to plausibly deny that the respective cognizing representations are imaginative. In the last example, the relevant ground of knowledge is presumably the (aesthetic or other) emotion felt towards the imagined object: we judge the configuration to be beautiful on the basis of our real (i.e., non-imaginative) feeling towards it (cf. Dorsch (2000)). With respect to imaginatively gained knowledge of what can be inferred from a given proposition, it is not the final imaginative intellectual representation of the inferential train of suppositions which grounds the knowledge, but something like the inference as a whole. For the last supposition does not contain any information about its inferential origin: only reflection on the whole inference can establish the recognition of the inferential link between the original and the inferred propositions. If I infer, on the basis of assuming that determinism is true, that there is no free will, I do not gain knowledge about whether there is free will. At best, I can gain knowledge about whether determinism implies free will. But the respective piece of information is not contained in the final supposition of the inferential chain. Finally, a very similar strategy can perhaps be adopted with respect to the case of empathy, given that it seems plausible to assume that one's judgemental ascription of certain mental states to another person cannot be based simply on one's experience or introspection of one's own (simulated or off-line) mental representations: some additional - and presumably non-imaginative - representational element, linking one's own state of mind with that of the other person, is needed. However, that instances of these three kinds of phenomena do not constitute counterexamples to (C) or other negation claims does not mean that there are no such counterexamples, or that they have to be particularly rare.

#### 4.4. Representational Echo Theses

In any case, perhaps the other possible element of the Cognitive Account of imagining - the idea that imaginings are some kind of echo of cognitive phenomena - fares better. As outlined at the beginning of the last chapter, echo claims are characterized by the fact that they take imaginings to be echoes of cognitive phenomena: that is, they take imaginings to be similar to and dependent on cognitive phenomena. With respect to imaginative episodes, I assume that echo claims imply that they are modelled upon perceptions, beliefs (or judgements), and perhaps similar mental episodes (e.g., sensations or feelings). Maybe some proposals require a further specification of the respective cognitive states (e.g., as veridical and epistemically sound). But I assume here that no serious proposal of an echo thesis about imaginative episodes will elucidate them in terms of mental phenomena other than perception, belief (or judgements), and so on. Likewise, I take it for granted that imaginative and cognitive episodes are similar to each other in what they can represent and in which type of representation they can instantiate. For instance, there are imaginative as well as cognitive visual representations. And they are both concerned with the representation of visible entities and features (although, of course, there are contingent limits on what we can visualize or see, due to our environment, our skills, our past experiences, and so on).

Now, the echo thesis on which I will mainly focus in this section consists in the claim that imaginings are representations of types of certain cognitive phenomena: that is, they have such phenomena as their direct intentional or non-intentional objects. I will label this representational echo claim (B\*). O'Shaughnessy's thesis (B) constitutes one version of this representational echo thesis, given that it takes imaginings to have a non-intentional content which includes one of the two cognitive prototypes. Another version - which has gained recent prominence with regard to sensory imaginings - assumes an intentional link directed at the respective type of cognition (i.e., (veridical) perception).<sup>19</sup> What all versions of the representational echo thesis (B\*) have in common is that they take all imaginative episodes to be internal imaginings, that is, representations of non-imaginative states (such as perceptions or beliefs). And if it turns out that (B\*) cannot capture certain imaginings, its particular versions - whether they postulate an intentional or a non-intentional link - will turn out to be inadequate in this respect as well. I will not engage here with the debate about whether sensory imaginings are always instances of internal imagining. The respective

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Martin (2001): section 3, and (2002): section 3. Although he is not explicit about this, it seems that Peacocke takes the representational link to be intentional as well, given that the respective element representing the type of perceptual experience (i.e., his "S-imagining") is thought-like (cf. Peacocke (1985): 25f.; 28).

representational echo thesis may turn out to be false; but it enjoys at least initial plausibility (cf. note 10 in chapter 2). Instead, I will highlight the implausibility of extending the scope of this representational echo claim to intellectual imaginings and imaginative projects. In the next section, I will show that it is plausible that this situation does not significantly change if the echo thesis is formulated, not in terms of a representational link, but in terms of a causal connection, or of a relationship of imitation or simulation.

But let me begin with the discussion of the representational echo thesis concerning intellectual imaginings. The proposal is to treat them as imaginings of types of beliefs (or judgements). Accordingly, it is maintained that imagining that something is the case is literally imagining believing (or judging) that it is the case. It is important to understand this as a substantial point, and not merely as a manner of speaking: it implies that all intellectual imaginings involve a complex content (or perhaps two kinds of content) including not only the respective proposition but also a type of belief. It will be helpful to contrast this echo thesis with a plausible alternative picture not involving the endorsement of (B\*) with respect to intellectual imaginings. The core idea of this alternative view is to treat intellectual imagining as involving the entertainment of a proposition (as it is also involved in judging, wondering, desiring, and so on): the content of imaginings is exhausted by that proposition; and they have a type of belief as their (intentional) object only in cases of higher-order imaginings in which we explicitly imagine that someone has a certain belief. In this respect, intellectual imaginings are said to be no different from mere thoughts, judgements, wonderings, (conscious) desires, and the like. The alternative view may be supplemented by the idea that intellectual imaginings involve some further element: their active formation, say, or an imaginative attitude towards their proposition. But what counts most here is that the two proposals differ in what kind of content they ascribe to the imaginings. Now, the high implausibility of (B\*), as applied to intellectual imaginings, derives from two sources: (i) there seem to be no good arguments in favour of it; and (ii) some considerations actually speak strongly against the application of (B\*) to intellectual imaginings. I will start with arguments in support of (B\*) concerning intellectual imaginings and then examine objections to this idea.

There seem to be two plausible motivations for endorsing (B\*) with regard to intellectual imaginings. The first is that this endorsement can fulfil a certain explanatory role: namely to explain the similarities between intellectual imaginings and beliefs, and yet to elucidate why - and perhaps even to entail that - the former cannot instantiate types of the latter (e.g., the respective cognitive prototype). More specifically, one component of the idea is that

intellectual imaginings involve the same contents as beliefs simply because they are representations of types of beliefs, and hence include the contents of the latter as part of their own contents. And the other component of the idea is that this representational link to types of beliefs also illustrates how they differ from beliefs, and perhaps why they cannot provide knowledge in the same way as beliefs. The second plausible motivation for the endorsement of (B\*) with respect to intellectual imaginings is that it promises to shed more light on the relationship between these imaginings and the corresponding judgements or beliefs. That there is an intimate link between the two kinds of phenomena has been expressed in the shape of the idea that the elucidation of the nature of imaginings has to make essential and substantial reference to beliefs (cf. Scruton (1974): 100; Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 32; cf. also section 4.5 and note 30 below). For O'Shaughnessy, this is part of the truth of thesis (A): that is, the fact that imaginings generally share their incapacity to exemplify the cognitive prototypes. Hence, O'Shaughnessy concludes that any account of imaginings has to elucidate them in terms of their respective cognitive prototypes - and, in particular, intellectual imaginings in terms of beliefs. But simply saying that they cannot exemplify their respective prototype does not say much about the relationship between intellectual imaginings. O'Shaughnessy may therefore have felt the need to specify the connection between imaginings - and, especially, intellectual imaginings - and the respective cognitive phenomena in more positive terms: namely by means of (B\*) or, more precisely, his particular version (B) (cf. section 3.1). A similar desire may have moved other philosophers to endorse the representational echo thesis.

However, these suggestions cannot settle the issue in favour of the endorsement of (B\*) concerning intellectual imaginings. First of all, it is not clear to what extent the introduction of (B\*) can explain anything, unless what it means for an intellectual imagining to represent a type of belief is specified more precisely. If the representational link remains unilluminated, (B)\* simply cannot contribute to the elucidation of other facts. On the other hand, endorsing the representational echo thesis is not the only way to account for the similarities and differences between intellectual imaginings and beliefs; nor is it the only alternative to providing a positive account of what it means to be an intellectual imagining. First, the introduction of (B\*) is not the only way to explain how intellectual imaginings are both similar to and different from beliefs (or judgements).<sup>20</sup> For instance, the alternative picture of intellectual imaginings described above can account for the similarities by reference to the possibility that intellectual imaginings and judgements can involve the entertainment of the same propositions. And it can trace back their differences to the

---

<sup>20</sup> For a similar argumentative strategy with respect to sensory imaginings, cf. Hopkins (1998): ch. 7.

presence or absence of a cognitive attitude to this content. In particular, one consequence of this lack of cognitive attitude seems to be that intellectual imaginings cannot stand in the required rational relations to other beliefs (and also perceptions). Imaginatively (or merely) entertaining propositions cannot provide rational support for the endorsement of a proposition, even if the latter can be inferred from the former as premises. If two propositions, which we endorse, entail a third proposition, we will not imaginatively (or merely) entertain the implied proposition, but endorse it as well. Hence, the rationality required for knowledge seems to concern reasons for endorsement, and not reasons for entertainment. And this may be a satisfactory explanation of why intellectual imaginings cannot constitute knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Second, a similar strategy can be adopted towards the other potential motivation for the introduction of (B\*), namely that it can specify the nature of intellectual imaginings in positive terms. For an alternative model may identify another potential candidate for the feature which marks intellectual imaginings as imaginative (e.g., their involvement of an imaginative attitude; or their being active). In particular, even if it is true that any account of imagining has to make reference to the respective types of cognitive states, there is no need to assume that this has to concern the positive aspect of such an account. If the negation claim (A), or a similar thesis, is part of a theory of imagining, it already fulfils the requirement identified by O'Shaughnessy. And besides, it is not certain that an account of imaginings has to refer to the respective kinds of cognitions. This idea seems to depend largely on the controversial idea that (A), or a similar negation claim, applies to all kinds of imagining, thus establishing an intimate link between imaginings and cognitions which is in need of further elucidation. But O'Shaughnessy's main motivation for thesis (A) - that there is no intrinsic or relational feature common to all imaginings, in virtue of which they count as imaginative, because there is too great a variety of origins and constitutions among imaginings - need not be true, as I will suggest at the end of this chapter.

It might be insisted that there are other differences between intellectual imaginings and beliefs which can be accounted for solely in terms of (B\*). But the first worry - that (B\*) itself is unilluminating - would still apply. And it is also not obvious which further differences could demand such an explanation. With respect to sensory imaginings, it may

---

<sup>21</sup> It may also imply that being an intellectual state of knowledge requires the involvement of a cognitive attitude - which may explain why there do not seem to be intellectual counterexamples to (C). It does not, however, necessarily entail that states of knowledge have to be of the same kind of mental state as false beliefs: "disjunctivism" may still be an option (cf. note 2 above). Nor does it imply that sensory grounds of knowledge have to involve a cognitive attitude. For such grounds do not have to be rationally supported themselves. The idea here is that reasons for belief are always *reasons for endorsement*. But it is not that reasons for belief have to *be endorsements* themselves.

be argued that (B\*) is necessary to account for some of their phenomenologically salient features (e.g., how an imagined itch can somehow feel itchy without really being an itch; or how visual imaginings can possess a perspectival content; cf. Martin (2002); cf. also section 6.2); or for the fact that we can be immune to error through misidentification with respect to what is imagined (Peacocke (1985)). But in the case of intellectual imaginings, similar issues do not seem to arise. Their phenomenology is not very complex and, presumably, comprises not much more than their lack of an attitude (or the involvement of an imaginative one) and, perhaps, also their entertaining of a specific proposition (Soldati & Dorsch (forthcoming)). Consequently, there do not seem to be any phenomenological aspects of intellectual imaginings which are in special need of explanation. Likewise, our knowledge of what they represent can be accounted for in roughly the same terms in which we explain our knowledge of what our beliefs (or judgements) represent: namely by reference to the concepts and semantic mechanisms which they involve. And intellectual imaginings do not seem to involve any other features whose explanation depends essentially on the acceptance of (B\*).

However, what we need to elucidate might not be some features of intellectual imaginings, but rather their being distinct from other (non-sensory) forms of imagining. The introduction of an echo claim with respect to sensory imaginings may also be motivated by the idea that it can explain the differences between visual, auditory and other forms of sensory imagining (cf. Peacocke (1985) for an endorsement, and Hopkins (1998): ch. 7, for a rejection, of this motivation). It might thus be thought that the representational echo thesis with respect to intellectual imaginings has a similar explanatory force concerning the differences between, say, imaginatively believing something and imaginatively desiring it. The idea is that the two kinds of imagining differ because they involve different types of mental states as part of their contents: the first echoes belief, while the second echoes desire. But at least two considerations speak against this view. First, there seems to be an asymmetry between the two phenomena: while it does not come natural to us to speak of "imaginatively desiring something" (there is no obvious desire-like equivalent to supposing, assuming or imagining-that), it is common ground that there are cases of "imaginatively believing something" (suppositions, etc.). But this suggests that the two phenomena should not be treated in the same way, differing only in their direct objects. It is much more natural to say that while intellectually imagining something involves a *sui generis* way of entertaining a proposition, imaginatively desiring something does not. Otherwise, people would have noticed it, and would have invented a name for it.<sup>22</sup> Thus, this alternative picture seems to provide a much

---

<sup>22</sup> Thanks to Gianfranco Soldati for suggesting this point.

more plausible explanation of how intellectual imaginings differ from cases of imaginatively desiring something than the idea that the two phenomena merely differ in their direct objects. And second, it is widely accepted that there are no cases of "imaginatively desiring something" which cannot be analysed as imagining that one desires something (plus perhaps having certain closely related affective imaginings, such as imagining a feeling of wanting or longing). Imaginatively desiring something may thus simply be a variant of intellectual imagining.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, (B\*) seems to lack argumentative support.<sup>24</sup>

Now, as noted above, the fact that there is no satisfactory argument in support of the claim that intellectual imaginings are imaginative representations of types of beliefs is not the only difficulty for the endorsement of the claim. There are also two considerations that speak strongly against (B\*) as it is applied to intellectual imaginings.

The first concerns the fact that we can, and often do, entertain propositions without either endorsing them or imagining (or otherwise representing) them to be endorsed. We may consciously desire that it will rain; we may hope that it will be sunny; we may worry that we will be too late to reach the shop before it closes; or we may simply wonder whether Quito is really the capital of Ecuador. None of these cases need (and some perhaps cannot) involve an endorsement of the entertained proposition.<sup>25</sup> But it also seems inappropriate to require that they have to involve imagining an endorsement of the entertained proposition. It seems that, at best, it may be argued that they presuppose having some prior beliefs about the possibilities available (e.g., that it could rain or be sunny in the future). However, if we can entertain propositions without either endorsing them or imagining them to be endorsed, it seems arbitrary and unlikely that this should nevertheless be impossible in the case of intellectual imaginings. In particular, it is plausible to assume that the simple active entertainment of a proposition without endorsing it is already an instance of imagining (cf.

---

<sup>23</sup> Here is, however, not the space to adequately deal with this issue (for references, cf. note 12 in chapter 2).

<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that O'Shaughnessy himself does not explicitly argue, or mention his motivations, for endorsing (B). Up to the point where he properly introduces (B) (O'Shaughnessy (2000): 365), he has only argued for the acceptance of (A): that imaginings cannot exemplify the cognitive prototypes. And in the context of discussing (B) and completing his definition of imagining, he adds to this only his plausible considerations about the fact that imaginings share many features with cognitive states, such as the scope of representable entities and features, or their types of representation (O'Shaughnessy (2000): 364f.). But clearly neither (A) nor the similarity claim, nor the two together, is sufficient to entail (B): they do not imply that imaginings should be understood as having cognitive prototypes (or other types of cognitive states) as their immediate objects.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Gordon (1987) on "epistemic" emotions (in contrast to "factive" ones), which need - or even can - not involve any cognitive attitude. Merely entertained thoughts may be another example, at least if they are not taken to be imaginative themselves.

note 4 in chapter 6). The situation may be very different in the sensory case, given that the only other main type of non-perceptual sensory representations - namely sensory memories - possess a cognitive attitude, and may very well turn out to have perceptions as part of their contents (presumably not in the form of types, but, instead, of particular past experiences; cf. Martin (2001)). Hence, there may not be any visual representations which neither involve a cognitive attitude, nor have perceptions as their direct objects.

The second consideration against the idea that intellectual imaginings are imaginings of types of beliefs is that the postulation of such a link remains mysterious. The problem here is not merely that this idea has so far remained unelucidated; it is also that it is very difficult to see how we could make sense of it. In the sensory case, there seem to be at least two options available: one may model the link between the sensory imaginings and the imagined perceptions on the non-intentional link between perceptions and perceived sense-data (as O'Shaughnessy seems to: cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): 363ff.); or one may take the link between the sensory imaginings and the imagined perceptions to be intentional, and argue that all instances of sensory imagining involve a higher-order imaginative thought (or thought-like element) which is intentionally directed at the respective perceptions (as Peacocke seems to: cf. Peacocke (1985)). But neither model is applicable to intellectual imaginings. The idea that the imaginings involve higher-order imaginative thoughts, which are intentionally directed at these types of beliefs, faces two difficulties. First, it would lead to a regress. For the higher-order thoughts would presumably have to be intellectual imaginings too, given that intellectual imaginings do not seem to involve any kind of (higher-order) beliefs. But then the higher-order intellectual imaginings would again have to involve some higher-higher-order imaginative thought; and so on. Second, we do not seem to have to possess or employ the concept of belief (or judgement) and the concept of ourselves (or someone else) whenever we are intellectually imagining something. It appears that we can suppose that it rains, without thereby having to think anything about believing or about ourselves. Now, for very similar reasons, it is implausible to maintain that the intellectual imaginings are themselves higher-order thoughts: that imagining that something is the case is always imagining that one believes that it is the case. On the one hand, intellectual imagining would anew be said to presuppose the possession and employment of the concept of belief (or judgement) and some (first-)personal concept. And on the other hand, it is not clear how this proposal can avoid the regress of having to specify the relationships between the imagining and the believing again in terms of intellectual imagining. Hence, our intellectual imaginings do not seem to be or involve conceptual higher-order thoughts about beliefs. However, it is completely unclear how the

representations of beliefs supposedly involved in intellectual imaginings could instead be non-conceptual or non-intentional. In particular, there is no equivalent among our theories of beliefs (or judgements) to the sense-datum theory of perceptions: none of the theories of beliefs postulates a non-intentional link between these intellectual representations and some immediate objects. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive of any such non-intentional way for intellectual imaginings to represent types of belief. And it seems as unthinkable that there could be a non-conceptual representation of beliefs (whatever that might be) involved in intellectual imagining. Hence, we have no model in terms of which we may come to grasp what it might mean for intellectual imaginings to have types of beliefs as their direct objects. But if we do not even have a starting-point from which to understand this idea, it seems very doubtful that it really can be made comprehensible. In light of this, it is not surprising that all the examples and further comments that O'Shaughnessy uses in his attempt to illuminate (B) concern exclusively sensory cases (cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): 363ff.).<sup>26</sup> To sum up, it seems highly implausible that the representational echo thesis can apply to intellectual imaginings.

Moreover, (B\*) seems to fare even worse with respect to imaginative projects. Clearly, imaginative projects are not representations of cognitive ones; at best, they involve episodes that represent types of other episodes. But there might still be the option to maintain that it is distinctive of imaginative projects that they involve, or aim at, or lead to the formation of episodes which are imaginative representations of types of perceptions, beliefs, and so on. This strategy has already been discussed as a way of trying to avoid roughly the same problem in the case of negation claims. And its application to echo claims faces substantially the same objections. Given that (B\*) seems to apply at best to sensory imaginings, this proposal will leave out imaginative projects which involve only intellectual imaginings (e.g., the project of imaginatively drawing out the consequences of a certain counterfactual situation in a philosophical context). In addition, the imaginativeness of projects would, again, be said to be derivative from that of episodes. And finally, the proposed characterization of imaginative projects remains extensionally inadequate. On the one hand, there are cognitive projects which can involve imaginative episodes. For instance, we may use thought experiments in order to solve a theoretical problem. And on the other hand, there are cognitive projects which can specifically aim at and lead to the formation of imaginative episodes. The two counterexamples discussed above are of this kind: they successfully aim at acquiring knowledge in the form of particular visual images (I will

---

<sup>26</sup> The only exception is the passage in which he states that "a 'make-believe' quasi-belief is intentionally directed to the very same propositional object as its cognitive model" (O'Shaughnessy (2000): 363). But this is meant to illustrate the similarity claim rather than (B).

return to and further elucidate this point in chapter 5). Accordingly, the strategy under consideration would give up on the ambition to provide a common account of the imaginativeness of all forms of imagining. And it should therefore not count as providing a unified account.

#### 4.5. Other Echo Theses

The representational echo thesis (B\*) - and any of its versions, such as (B) - should be given up. But what about other echo claims about imagining? In what follows, I will argue that the postulation of another kind of link, or another form of dependency, between the imaginings and the respective cognitive phenomena is equally unsuccessful at capturing the nature of all or even only most imaginings. I will consider three different ways of characterizing imaginings: as causal successors of cognitive states; as simulations of such states; or as acts of pretending to be in such states.

One plausible candidate for the dependency involved in an echo relation between imaginings and cognitive phenomena is perhaps a causal dependency of the former on past instances of the latter.<sup>27</sup> However, this claim cannot mean that each instance of imagining has to have a causal cognitive predecessor with the same content and the same type of representation. We can visualize aliens without ever having seen any, we can imagine how a papaya fruit might taste without ever having eaten one, and we can suppose that Timbuktu is the capital of Mali without ever having judged or even thought about it. It seems that, at best, it may be argued that, in imagining, we cannot use concepts which we have not already acquired in relation to certain processes of belief-formation (cf. the discussion of Currie's and Ravenscroft's view below); or that, in imagining, we cannot use sensory or affective representational elements concerned with basic features (simple colours, tastes, feelings, etc.) which we previously have not been acquainted with by means of perceptions, sensations, feelings, and so on. However, the resulting dependency claim is comparably weak, given that it does not hold between imaginings and (what is usually taken to be) their cognitive counterparts. It does not imply, for instance, that intellectually imagining that there is water in London causally depends on believing that there is water in London. All that is - and, as the previous examples have already shown, should maximally be - entailed is that intellectually imagining that there is water in London requires having (had) some beliefs about water, as well as some (possibly distinct) beliefs about London. In short,

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Hume who takes imaginings to be "ideas" and thus causally dependent on "impressions" (2000): 1.1.1.6ff.

intellectual imaginings are thus said to causally depend, not on beliefs with the same content, but on beliefs which ensure the availability of the relevant representational means (i.e., conceptual capacities). And perhaps a similar line of reasoning applies to the idea that sensory imaginings require previously apprehended representational material: maybe this is also primarily a claim about certain capacities necessary for sensory imagination which are acquired by means of appropriate perceptual experiences.<sup>28</sup>

However, because the claim about the causal dependency of imaginings on cognitions is rather general and - contrary to the standard model for echo claims - does not concern pairs of counterparts, it cannot contribute much to a unified account of imagining. First of all, even if it turns out to be true that the acquisition of representational means - and, hence, their use in imagining - presupposes having (had) appropriate cognitions, this will not tell us anything distinctive about imaginings, given that the same will presumably be true of many non-imaginative representations, such as memories, desires, hopes or wonderings. If we cannot intellectually imagine something about water or visualize something red without having believed something about water or seen something red, then it should be expected that we also cannot wonder about an issue related to water or visually remember something red without having believed something about water or seen something red. And then, it may be merely a contingent fact about our psychology that we can acquire the capacities necessary for (active) conceptual or sensory representation solely by means of processes involved in the formation of appropriate cognitions. But if this is really the case, the claim about the general causal dependency of imaginings on cognitions cannot express a conceptual or metaphysical necessity. Hence, if the causal dependency claim turns out to be true, it can at best form a small part of a unified account of imagining.

Another idea might be to maintain that imaginings are simulations or imitations of cognitive phenomena. Currie and Ravenscroft seem to suggest an echo thesis of this kind. First of all, they highlight some similarities between imaginings (or what they also call "states of recreative imagination": Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11) and cognitions in the way the two kinds of representations may be integrated into a system of causal or rational relations between different mental representations (e.g., by figuring in real or hypothetical inferences, or in similar processing mechanisms in the case of visual representations: cf. Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): e.g., 49, 81, 93f. and 100; cf. also Currie (2000): 176). Then, they take these similarities to enable imaginings to "simulate" or "to mimic, and relative to certain

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. the common idea that people, who are blind, cannot visualize (e.g., Scruton (1974): 104). But note also that there is some empirical evidence in favour of the idea that even congenitally blind people enjoy mental imagery, or at least something very similar to it (cf. Thomas (1999)).

purposes, to substitute for perceptions, beliefs, decisions, and experiences of movements": imaginings can take over the role of cognitions in certain mental processes, such as reasoning or the processing of visual information (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11; 49).<sup>29</sup> As one particular consequence, we are able to engage in what Currie and Ravenscroft call "perspective-shifting" and what they are mainly concerned with: namely "to put ourselves in the place of another, or in the place of our own future, past, or counterfactual self" (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 8f.). And finally, they assume that the relation of simulation entails not only a partial and, presumably, symmetric similarity in causal or rational role, but also some kind of "asymmetric dependence" (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 49). Although they are not entirely clear about it, Currie and Ravenscroft seem to have in mind a constitutional or conceptual dependency of imaginings on cognitions. They maintain that imaginings are "parasitic" on cognitions and are "adequately describable only by reference to some counterpart", that is, perception, belief, and so on (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 19; 32; cf. also Currie (2001): 254).<sup>30</sup> And they claim that the dependency in question - as well as the resulting relationship of simulation - holds only in one direction: imaginings are dependent on and simulate cognitions, but not the other way round (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 18f.; 49). Accordingly, Currie and Ravenscroft appear to embrace an echo thesis about imaginings: their account involves both an idea of similarity and, it seems, an idea of conceptual or constitutional dependency.

Now, they argue in detail for their similarity claim and their thesis that imagining is central to "perspective-shifting" (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): sections 1.3 and 1.4, and chs. 3ff.). For the sake of argument, I will assume here that they are right about both.<sup>31</sup> Instead, my criticism will concentrate on the fact that Currie and Ravenscroft do not spend much time on elucidating or supporting their idea of an "asymmetric dependence". The only claim that they appear to argue for in relation to their postulation of such a dependency is that we cannot use natural kind or name-like concepts in intellectual imagining if we do not already have beliefs involving those concepts, or at least had judgements or beliefs involving them in the past. The idea is that intellectual imaginings cannot stand in the kind of relations to

---

<sup>29</sup> Currie and Ravenscroft note, however, some doubts about the simulative potential of sensory imaginings (e.g., Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 94 and 100).

<sup>30</sup> Scruton seems to endorse a similar idea of dependency when he writes that "[a man] will feel that to describe his image in terms of sensory experience is appropriate, and indeed inevitable" (Scruton (1974): 100). But in apparent contrast to Currie and Ravenscroft, he also accepts that the respective relation between sensory imaginings and perceptions cannot really be further specified: "[the] man will be unable to indicate in *what* way his image is 'like' a particular sensory experience" (ibid.).

<sup>31</sup> One obvious target for criticism is the empirical adequacy of their claims, as well as that of their rejection of alternative views. Another, which has already been mentioned, concerns their postulation of desire-like imaginings (cf. note 12 in chapter 2).

the environment or the community which are commonly assumed to be required for the fixation of the reference - and hence, presumably, also for the acquisition - of such concepts.<sup>32</sup> Instead, that we intellectually imagine that there is water in London - and not that there is twater in Tlondon - should be best explained in terms of the fact that our respective judgements or beliefs are, or have been, about water and London - and not twater or Tlondon (which again is due to the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O and of London in our environment, or that of our ancestors). Accordingly, being able to intellectually imagine something about water and London requires having (had) some judgements or beliefs about water and London (cf. Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 18f.). But this semantic dependency is exactly of the causal kind introduced above: the formation of intellectual imaginings requires the possession of certain representational capacities, which again presupposes having (had) respective beliefs.<sup>33</sup> The explanatory power of this dependency claim is therefore limited with respect to the provision of a unified account of imagining, given that it will presumably apply also to various non-imaginative representations. Moreover, the proposed dependency does not concern pairs of intellectual counterparts: the supposition that there is water in London is not said to be dependent on some prior belief that there is water in London (but instead on some water-beliefs and some London-beliefs). Hence, the semantic dependency claim under consideration cannot establish the constitutional or conceptual "asymmetric dependence", that Currie and Ravenscroft also postulate and which is necessary for the formulation of an echo thesis in terms of simulation. However, they do not seem to put forward other considerations which would speak in favour of endorsing their claim of an "asymmetric dependence" of imaginings on cognitions. This leaves only two plausible conclusions: either their simulation claim is not meant to go beyond their similarity claim (as well as their semantic dependency claim) and, therefore, does not really constitute an echo thesis (cf. Currie (2000): 176, where no dependency claim is mentioned); or it is meant to introduce a genuine conceptual or constitutional dependency, but then remains as unilluminated as the idea of a representational link between intellectual imaginings and beliefs.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the extensive debates started by Putnam (1975) and Burge (1979).

<sup>33</sup> Perhaps Currie's and Ravenscroft's thesis about the *semantic* dependency is not meant as a claim about the *causal* origin of intellectual imaginings. But it is difficult to see how the referentiality of particular intellectual imaginings could be traced back to the referentiality of particular beliefs in non-causal terms: that is, without assuming that the formation or possession of the beliefs is causally effective in the acquisition of the respective concepts, and that the possession of these concepts is causally effective in the formation of the intellectual imaginings.

<sup>34</sup> Maybe imaginings could still be characterized as precisely those mental states enabling, or being required for, "perspective-shifting" - or, alternatively, simulation. But this claim would not establish an "asymmetric dependence" and therefore would not constitute an echo thesis. It would also permit for an account of imaginings in more fundamental terms - say, by reference to the idea that they and only they are voluntary with respect to what they represent, and the idea that "perspective-shifting" or simulation are enabled by, or require, mental representations which are

But independently of what Currie and Ravenscroft think, it is not clear how the idea of an asymmetric relation of simulation (or something similar) which involves such a strong conceptual or constitutional dependency could be made sense of. Perhaps the closest analogue that we have is the idea that imaginings are mental acts of pretending that one sees, believes, and so on - which is perhaps a plausible interpretation of Ryle's view on imaginings.<sup>35</sup> The proposal seems to imply a conceptual or constitutional link between imaginings and cognitions, which is, moreover, modelled upon a fairly common and well-known phenomenon, namely pretence. As it seems, this view can be interpreted in three different ways, none of which, however, leads to a plausible position.

First, the idea that imaginings pretend to be cognitions (or, for that matter, simulate cognitions) might be understood in terms of *make-believe*. The idea is that to sensorily or intellectually imagine something is to make-believe (i.e., intellectually imagine) that one sees or believes. But this would in fact amount to the highly implausible denial of the existence of sensory (and, presumably, affective) imaginings, given that it would reduce them to purely intellectual ones. Moreover, the nature of the latter would be left unanalysed, since intellectual imaginings could not be elucidated in terms of make-believe without the occurrence of an infinite regress. The proposal under consideration is therefore untenable.

Second, imagining might be said to be *literally* a form of pretence. However, this proposal should be rejected, given that imagining can occur without pretending, and vice versa (White (1990): 150ff.). An impostor may pretend to be an aristocrat without imagining that he is one, or without visualizing himself as one. Instead, he may simply change his appearance and behaviour in accordance with (what he knows about) how aristocrats typically look and act. A different person, on the other hand, may imagine being an aristocrat and picture himself entertaining noble guests in an old and elegant countryhouse. But he need not thereby perform any bodily actions, and in particular none concerned with establishing a likeness in appearance or behaviour with (his picture of) aristocrats. Consequently, imagining cannot amount to (a kind of) pretending. The underlying reason for why imagining and pretending are distinct and fairly independent phenomena seems to be that, while instances of imagining are mental phenomenon, instances of pretence are

---

voluntary in this respect. And it would leave the serious problem of accounting for the fact that imagining being in the position of, or imaginatively simulating being, someone else may - and perhaps even must - nevertheless involve having certain non-imaginative representations (e.g., beliefs about the other person's situation, mental states or character traits; or desires moving oneself to engage in "perspective-shifting" or simulation).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Ryle (1963): section 8.6. Cf. Ishiguro (1966), Shorter (1970) and White (1990) for critical assessments of Ryle's position.

inseparably linked to publicly observable behaviour and, relatedly, require some kind of audience (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 32; cf. also the references in note 37 in chapter 2).

Third, it might be attempted to elucidate imagining by means of drawing an *analogy* with pretence - for instance, by claiming that imagining is a form of "inner pretence", while not really amounting to pretence proper (i.e., publicly observable pretence). But this last proposal is as implausible as the previous two. Now the problem is that imagining and pretending do not have any significant aspects in common, apart from their (potentially) being instances of agency.<sup>36</sup> In particular, while pretending to do or to be something is modelled on a specific kind of action, or on some condition or state closely related to specific behavioural dispositions, imagining is not (cf. White (1990): 157f.). This means, first of all, that pretence involves the same, or very similar, actions as the object of pretence (i.e., the mimicked action, condition or state), but without becoming the real thing. Pretending to have a fight with someone involves performing some of the bodily movements pertaining to real fights, but does not amount to fighting; while pretending to be an aristocrat consists in acting in ways in which real aristocrat behave, without thereby becoming an aristocrat. Moreover, acts of pretence can be appropriately described only by reference to what their object is: sham-fighting has to be elucidated in terms of real fighting. And finally, the pretending person has to rely on her beliefs about the object of pretence and the related ways of acting when engaging in her pretence: she can pretend to fight only if she has some idea of what it means to really fight, and only if she lets her respective beliefs inform and influence her behaviour in a manner appropriate for pretence (cf. Ryle (1963): section 8.5; cf. also White (1990): 155ff.).

In contrast, acts of imagining are not modelled on certain actions, conditions or states in the sense that they mimic the latter by involving the same type of activities as the latter; that they have to be accounted for by reference to the latter; and that the imagining person has to rely on her beliefs about the latter in her imaginative agency. If at all, imaginings should be modelled on cognitions: that is, they should be taken to be "pretend perceptions" or "pretend beliefs". But the only relevant activities which may pertain to both imaginings and cognitions seem to be attention and inference. And neither suffices to establish that imaginings mimic cognitions. Paying attention to what we sensorily imagine (e.g., to certain aspects of a visual image) already presupposes that the respective sensory imagining has been formed. And inferring a certain proposition from a set of others is not necessary for the

---

<sup>36</sup> White lists certain other similarities - for instance, that both imagining and pretending are rather unspecific with respect to their objects, or that both establish a contrast with what is real - which have, however, no bearing on the issue under discussion (White (1990): 153ff.).

active formation of intellectual imaginings.<sup>37</sup> Hence, neither form of agency can constitute the kind of activity at the heart of active imagining. Relatedly, the elucidation of what it means to imagine something does not have to make reference to attention or inference. And the imagining person also does not have to make instrumental use of her beliefs about attention or inference while being engaged in active imagining. Consequently, imaginings are not "pretend cognitions". At best, one may perhaps speak of "pretend inferences" which mimic real inferences by using and resulting in intellectual imaginings instead of judgements or beliefs; and of "pretend attention" which mimics real attention by focussing on sensorily imagined objects instead of really perceived ones. But the fact that we can pay attention to what we sensorily imagine and employ intellectual imaginings in inferences appears to be primarily a consequence of the fact that imaginings are of the same types of representation (e.g., visual or intellectual) as their cognitive counterparts. It does not pertain to a "pretend" relation between imaginings and cognitions that is structurally similar to that holding between acts of pretence and their objects.

In any case, the alternatives to the representational echo thesis (B\*) will in addition have the same difficulties in explicating intellectual imaginings and imaginative projects as (B\*), and presumably for roughly the same reasons. With respect to imaginative projects, they cannot be construed as echoes of cognitive ones (e.g., daydreaming about walking on the moon does not simulate, or causally depend on, any cognitive project); and, again, they cannot be characterized solely by reference to the involvement of episodes which echo cognitive counterparts. With respect to intellectual imaginings, on the other hand, there will always be the simple alternative of characterizing all forms of intellectual representation (whether they are cognitive, imaginative, or neither) in terms of one and the same representational element (the entertainment of a proposition) and an independent, and perhaps not always necessary, involvement of an attitude towards the proposition in question. And this alternative picture seems more likely to be true than any echo claim, given that it seems possible to account for intellectual imaginings without making any reference to their cognitive counterparts. In particular, a characterization of intellectual imaginings does not seem to have to rely on the idea that they lack a cognitive attitude (although it may reasonably be expected to provide the material to explain this lack). Instead, it seems sufficient to assume that imaginatively entertaining a proposition either does not involve any attitude, or perhaps does involve an imaginative one. And this is also in line with the fact that the lack of a cognitive attitude is

---

<sup>37</sup> It is maybe also not sufficient. For while inferences on the basis of beliefs seem to compel us to endorse the resulting propositions, it seems ultimately up to us whether we (continue to) imaginatively entertain a proposition which we have recognized to rationally follow from other imaginatively entertained propositions (plus perhaps some believed ones). This difference may also be related to the issue of whether there are dispositional imaginings.

not distinctive of imaginings: desires, hopes, wonderings, and so on, are not cognitive in this respect either.

To sum up, an endorsement of an echo thesis - and, in particular, of (B\*) or (B) - with respect to intellectual imaginings or imaginative projects is neither well-founded nor plausible. In addition, it is controversial whether an endorsement of this claim is appropriate with respect to sensory imaginings. Hence, the idea that imaginings are echoes of cognitive prototypes should not be expected to make an essential and substantial contribution to a unified account of imagining, which, after all, tries to capture all kinds of imagining.

The overall conclusion of this chapter is that the Cognitive Account of imagining can hardly promise to provide a unified theory of imagining. Both the negation claims, which characterize imaginings as lacking certain cognitive properties, and the echo theses, which take imaginings to be conceptually or constitutionally dependent on cognitive phenomena, are at best unilluminating and at worst false with respect to certain central forms of imagining. With respect to O'Shaughnessy's specific version of the Cognitive Account, his claim (A) and his Argument from Origin in favour of it may be retained. The other two aspects of his definition of imagining - the theses (B) and (C) - should be taken to apply (if at all) only to certain kinds of imagining. It might be worthwhile to try to improve the discussed accounts of imagining by supplementing them with negation or echo theses which characterize imaginings by reference to non-cognitive features (e.g., as being echoes, but not instances, of real feelings). But the prospects of such a (partially) non-cognitive theory do not really seem to be better. On the one hand, there is always the likelihood that the same difficulties arise as in the context of the Cognitive Account (e.g., the implausibility of an echo link, or the general lack of explanatory power of negation claims). And on the other hand, there is always the danger of ending up with an account which is disjunctive, and not unified: different forms of imagining may be specified in terms of different features, some of them cognitive, others not. Hence, the most plausible option seems to be to drop negation and echo claims altogether - at least with respect to the ambition of providing a unified theory of imagining.

How to move on from here? One option is to build upon O'Shaughnessy's Argument from Origin for (A) in the following way. The main idea is to say that the scope of the argument covers too much ground because it concerns both imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena. For most, if not all, of O'Shaughnessy's examples for passively formed imaginings seem to be controversial and, at best, non-central cases of imagining: visual

hallucinations which are either phenomenologically indistinguishable from perceptions, or had by "the insane and the overheated and the drug-laden", or both (O'Shaughnessy (2000): 479; cf. also 349); hypnagogic images (ibid.: 349); pictorial experience (ibid.: 346ff.); dream experiences and dream beliefs (ibid.: 344f.; 349); and "delusional" representations (ibid.: 344f.). The strategy may therefore be to argue that the scope of his account is not only too narrow (since it cannot really capture imaginative projects, or cognizing visual imaginings), but also too wide, given that it captures these contentious passive cases. Accordingly, it may be defended that they should not count as instances of imagining. As a result, one is left only with active instances of imagining. The hope is then to be able to identify a specific type of agency which is common to all central cases of imagining and which is responsible for their imaginativeness. Although it remains true that sensory and intellectual imaginings are non-cognitive in the sense specified by (A), this can be explained by a more fundamental feature: their activity. And at the same time, this may promise to disprove O'Shaughnessy's belief that imaginings do not share a common intrinsic or relational feature, over and above their property of satisfying his definition of imagining. For the idea is that agency, which has been identified as being at the heart of imagining, is intrinsic to all instances of imagining. This is a very rough sketch of the strategy I will adopt, and the position I will try to defend, in the following chapters.

## 5. The Exposition of the Agency Account of Imagining

In the last two chapters, I discussed the Cognitive Account of imagining and found it wanting in its prospects of providing a unified account of imagining. The Cognitive Account focuses on the role of imaginings in cognition, and on their related functional or phenomenological features, such as their lack of a function to cognize reality, or their lack of a cognitive attitude, as a result of which it faces serious difficulties. On the one hand, certain central imaginative phenomena, such as imaginative projects or affective imaginings, are almost invariably neglected; while on the other hand, it turns out that certain imaginative episodes may provide knowledge and possess many related cognitive properties (e.g., reliability and rational integration).

Perhaps it is more promising, therefore, to look at another feature which many - if not all - imaginings seem to possess, whether they are sensory, affective or intellectual, whether they are episodes or projects. The feature that I have in mind is their close relationship to the will. Many instances of imaginings are voluntary: they are actively formed, and expressions of what we want. This aspect of imaginings has already been briefly discussed in the context of O'Shaughnessy's account of imagining, since he takes it to be the ultimate reason why certain imaginings are non-cognitive in his sense (i.e., lack the capacity to cognize). I agree with his general explanatory strategy, according to which many imaginings are not in the position to provide knowledge because of their origin in the will. But I disagree with O'Shaughnessy in two important respects: I assume that all, and not only some, instances of imagining are actions; and I assume that it is precisely their active character which allows some of them to be, under the right circumstances, cognizing (as my counterexamples to thesis (C) are intended to illustrate).<sup>1</sup> In this and the next chapter I shall develop and defend these ideas and present them as the core of a unified account of imagining - of what I shall call the *Agency Account* of imagining. This theory of imagining is characterized by the claim that all central cases of imagining intrinsically consist in voluntary actions of a particular kind; and that they strictly differ in this from all paradigm cases of non-imaginative phenomena.

I have already mentioned two important motivations for switching the focus of the discussion to the idea that imaginings are a special kind of mental action. One is that many

---

<sup>1</sup> But I will retain the idea that imaginings are non-cognitive in another sense: they lack the function or purpose of cognizing reality and, in the case of imaginative episodes, a cognitive attitude and the epistemic role typical of cognitions.

of them seem to be voluntarily formed and controlled;<sup>2</sup> another the inadequacy of the Cognitive Account as a unified theory of imagining. The idea of imaginings as something that we are actively doing may be a more promising candidate for such a theory because it does not readily exclude affective imaginings or imaginative projects. In particular, there is no good reason to doubt that if purely representational imaginings turn out to be mental actions of a certain kind, imaginings which are not purely representational will do so as well. A further motivation is that the Agency Account promises an elucidation of the nature and imaginativeness of the counterexamples central to my case against the Cognitive Account. These examples constitute imaginative projects; and, as already indicated, it seems that their activity is decisive in their being counterexamples to O'Shaughnessy's and similar positions. Then, the proposal that imagining involves some underlying intentions or desires may help to explain certain aspects of imaginings, such as: how they can refer (by being intended to refer); when they count as successful (when conforming to the underlying intention); why certain aspects of them seem to be immune to error through misidentification (because they pertain to their intended referentiality); or why they usually play no role in cognition and hence do not - nor purport to - have the function of playing a role in cognition (because they are usually not suitably determined by reality due to their exclusively practical motivation). I will not further elucidate the explanatory potential which is linked to the idea that imaginings are instances of agency (although the comments that I made during the discussion of O'Shaughnessy's account should suffice to give a notion of it; cf., for instance, the sections 3.5 and 4.5). A final motivation for switching focus is that several philosophers have voiced support for the idea that imaginings (or at least many of them) are voluntary, often, however, without elucidating or defending their claim in any detail.<sup>3</sup> The Agency Account of imagining is hence a plausible position worthy of consideration, and it may be helpful to try to develop a version of it in more detail in order

---

<sup>2</sup> In particular, it makes sense to ask or order someone to imagine, and also to answer to such a demand (Wittgenstein (1984b): vol. II, section 125; Scruton (1974): 94f.). Cf. O'Shaughnessy (1980): vol. I, 1ff. for a detailed discussion of the link between voluntariness and the applicability of orders.

<sup>3</sup> The Agency Account (or something very much like it) has been endorsed by Wollheim (1973): 69, Scruton (1974): 95 (cf. in general 94-100), Levinson (1998): p. 232, n. 3, and McGinn (2004): 12ff.; 131f. Most of these endorsements have been inspired by Wittgenstein's comments on sensory imaginings (cf. his (1984b): vol. II, sections 63 and 627; cf. also Budd (1989): 104ff.). At first sight, it might seem that Sartre and Collingwood also present versions of the Agency Account. Sartre characterizes sensory imaginings as "spontaneous" and "creative" (Sartre (2004): 14) and always involving, or being accompanied by, an "intention" (Sartre (2004): 11; 19; 32), which distinguishes them from passive perceptions (Sartre (2004): 14; 33). And Collingwood claims that imaginings are "active" (Collingwood (1958): 195ff.; cf. chs. 9 and 10 in general). But they both allow for involuntary imaginings (Sartre (2004): 19; Collingwood (1958): 179; 195); and Sartre takes many other intentional states to be "spontaneous", among them sensory memories and pictorial experiences (Sartre (2004): 10). Therefore, although many ideas to be found in Sartre's and Collingwood's writings - notably the idea that imaginings are "active" - are congenial to the Agency Account, they do not really present versions of it.

to assess its merits as a unified account of imagining.

In this chapter, I will build on the provision of an account of imaginative projects in order to develop my own version of the Agency Account of imaginings. This variant of the Agency Account is generally meant to apply to all (and only) paradigm instances of imagining. Its main two claims are, first, that all central cases of imagining are, by their very nature, voluntary actions of a particular kind, namely imaginative projects; and second, that they strictly differ in this from all central cases of non-imaginative phenomena, whether these are passive or active in a way different from that of imaginings. I shall present and elucidate my theory of imaginings in four sections. The first will be concerned with the development of an account of mental projects, such as deliberating about what to believe or do, or daydreaming about being rich. The key idea to be defended will be to treat mental projects as actions which involve mental episodes as constituents and have the purpose of bringing about certain mental phenomena. The next three sections will then apply the developed account of mental projects to two particular kinds of project, namely cognitive and imaginative projects. The first of these sections will be concerned with the characterization of cognitive projects in terms of the purpose of leading to knowledge. In the subsequent two sections, I will introduce two plausible conceptions of what is distinctive of imaginative projects. I will argue that they should be understood, not as aiming at the active formation of imaginative episodes, but as aiming at the active formation of representations with directly determined specific contents. The content of an actively formed representation is thereby directly determined just in case it is determined by the underlying desires or intentions without the use of epistemic or merely causal mechanisms of content determination. The fifth and last section will be taken up with the formulation of the main thesis of my own version of the Agency Account of imagining: that all instances of imagining are instances of being engaged in an imaginative project. As part of the derivation of this thesis I will try to show that (and how) imaginative episodes can be understood as simple imaginative projects (i.e., imaginative projects which involve only a single episodic representation). Most of the defence of the presented Agency Account of imagining will then be left until the next chapter.

## **5.1. Mental Projects**

Up to now, I have relied on some intuitive grasp of what it means for something to be a mental project. In this section, however, I will try to develop an account of mental projects.

My motivation for doing this is twofold. The first reason is that any unified account of imagining should capture a particular kind of mental project, namely imaginative ones. It may thus be helpful to know more about what it means for a mental phenomenon to be a project. The underlying assumption is that this knowledge may help to avoid the difficulties which the Cognitive Account faced in accommodating imaginative projects. The second motivation is the hope that the development of a theory of mental - and, in particular, imaginative - projects will enable the formulation of a theory of imaginings in general. Again, it will be worthwhile to learn a bit more about the nature of mental projects. What I will argue is that they have the purpose of generating mental phenomena; and that their purposiveness (plus perhaps their voluntariness) identifies them as instances of agency.

Mental projects are usually contrasted with mental episodes: while the former (or at least their mentally realized parts) are taken to be complex parts of the stream of consciousness, the latter are among its simplest elements. However, as will become clear in section 5.5, the contrast may not be as strict as suggested. For although passive episodes differ from mental projects, active ones may be understood as constituting their simplest instances. Accordingly, what I have in mind when speaking of mental projects is perhaps best illustrated by a list of examples: mentally calculating a sum; drawing an inference; making up our minds about what to think or do by considering and weighing in our minds the relevant reasons already available to us; trying to empathize with another person and to predict her thoughts and feelings on the basis of our knowledge about her; developing in our minds solutions to some problem; daydreaming about climbing Mount Everest; reconstructing in our memory the events and conversations of some day in the past; recreating or composing in our minds stories, pictures or melodies; reflecting on our current situation and our various responses towards it in order to get clear about our own feelings; calming ourselves down by meditating or reminding ourselves of something pleasant; imagining the sensory experiences involved in playing a Bach prelude on the piano; and so on (for further examples, cf. Wollheim (1973); (1984): ch. 3; Peacocke (1985); Budd (1989): ch. 5).

Maybe the most important feature these mental projects have in common is that they are intrinsically *purposeful*: they all possess a certain inherent goal or end which characterizes them. It is most of all their purposiveness which identifies them as projects and which aligns them with non-mental projects, such as those of becoming rich, writing a book, persuading someone to go to the cinema, or making a journey around the world. Moreover, the purposes of mental projects concern the bringing about (or otherwise influencing) of certain kinds of

mental phenomena in one's own mind, whether these are episodic or dispositional in character; and they count as accomplished if the respective mental phenomena indeed come into being. Thus, they aim at, say, the acquisition of beliefs or character traits, the manifestation of mental dispositions (such as of a mnemonic or emotional nature), the formation of judgements, intentions or imaginative representations, the alteration of one's mood, or perhaps the distraction from, or repression of, certain worries or feelings. The fact that the purpose of mental projects concerns the occurrence of mental phenomena reflects the specific *mental* character of these projects: they count as mental, first of all, because they aim at altering some facts about one's own mind. In contrast, most non-mental projects (such as the ones mentioned) aim at bringing about facts which are either non-mental or concern the mind of other persons.

It seems to be a further requirement on mental projects that they occur - from their conception until their completion - exclusively in the mind. But the border between mental and non-mental projects does not seem to be precise in this respect. While mental projects will typically consist solely of mental episodes (and perhaps also dispositions) and the mental actions and processes which link these together, it may be argued that some mental projects involve also certain forms of relatively non-interfering bodily actions.<sup>4</sup> For instance, it does not seem to matter much for the project of finding the best next move in a certain game of chess whether one scans the position on a chess board with one's eyes or visualizes it in one's mind. Arguably, it may also not matter much whether one actually tries out the moves on the board (say, during an analysis) or visualizes them in one's mind. Only once one actually makes a move in the game is one's action interfering with the world in a relevant or significant manner with respect to the situation in question (i.e., the game of chess). However, I will assume in what follows that, in most cases, the distinction between mental and non-mental projects is precise. And I will also take it for granted that *imaginative* projects - as instances of *imagining* - are realized entirely in the mind. Their pursuit may require the performance of certain bodily actions as enabling conditions (e.g., we may have to find a comfortable position and close our eyes in order to visualize something). And imaginative projects may figure in wider projects which are neither purely mental nor purely imaginative (e.g., instances of aesthetic appreciation, or of prop-involving games of make-believe; cf. Walton (1990): especially chs. 1 and 6). But imaginative projects do not by themselves involve any events which occur outside the mind (and brain) of the imagining person. In what follows, I will therefore focus on projects consisting solely

<sup>4</sup> To capture such cases, it would be necessary to modify the requirement on mental projects under consideration. One idea might be to say that they would not *actually* have to occur exclusively in the mind. Instead it would be sufficient if we *could* pursue the same kind of project (perhaps under different circumstances) without any involvement of bodily action or other external events.

of mental episodes and the mental actions or processes linking them together, and ignore the possibility of other types of projects.

Likewise, it seems possible that some mental projects possess purposes which render them *open-ended* in the sense that there is no specific point at which their purpose will count as achieved. Such projects will not finish by themselves, but have to be terminated by some factors external to them - say, an act of will, or some distracting influence. When I am engaged in daydreaming about climbing Mount Everest and its likely consequences on my life, there need not be any clear point within the daydream at which I will count, or recognize myself, as having finished my project: not after visualizing myself reaching the summit; nor after returning in my imagination to the base camp, or Katmandu, or home; nor after imagining the reactions of my friends to my bragging about my feat, nor after speculating about the fame and riches which will await me and completely change my life if I sell my story. Of course, the more details of my climb I will imagine, the richer and more complete my daydream might become. But there is no richest or most complete daydream to be had: I could literally go on and on, even beyond imagining my own death. Likewise, there might not be a clear point at which I begin to be successful in daydreaming about climbing Mount Everest. For there is no easily specifiable lower limit of richness or completeness which separates success and failure. In order to daydream about both the climb and its consequences on my life, it may not be enough to focus only on one of the two aspects. But it is less clear when I will begin to count as, say, daydreaming about the climb: when I suppose that I am climbing; when I visualize a certain stretch of my climb; or already when I imagine arriving in Katmandu and realizing that my climbing gear got lost on the flight. This does not imply, however, that we cannot fail in pursuing open-ended projects. On the one hand, we can fail to engage in them at all (e.g., if I fail to form any imaginative representation, or if I represent myself solely as lying in the sun on the Riviera). And on the other hand, the daydream may still be not rich or complete enough (e.g., when I intend also to imagine about the consequences of the climb for my life, but terminate my imaginative activity before reaching that point in my daydream). In all these respects, open-ended mental projects are similar to, say, the non-mental project of going for a walk: it also has no clear boundaries, does not by itself impose any stopping point, yet may nevertheless fail.

Apart from establishing their mental character, the purposiveness of mental projects is also responsible for their status as forms of agency. To see this, it is necessary to clarify first what purposiveness amounts to. Roughly, that something is *purposive* means that it is done

for an end: that is, either for its own sake, or for an ulterior purpose (cf. Pink (1996): 14f.; 144). We do things for an end on the basis of, and as the effect of, our motivational states. The respective relation between our motivational states and our purposive doings is that of *practical motivation*. It concerns the causal and rational determination of what we do: that is, it brings about our purposive doings, sustains them until their interruption or completion, and explains them. It is essential to practical motivation that it goes beyond mere causation: the motivational states do not merely bring about the respective doings, but also rationally explain or make sense of them. *Motivational states* (or pro-attitudes) are those mental states which have the power to move us to pursue certain ends (which they usually present as desirable, or as to be achieved).<sup>5</sup> Not all of our motivational states actually move us to try to achieve the respective ends; but those that do may be labelled *practical motives*. Paradigm examples of motivational states are desires, decisions and intentions. But volitions, tryings, intentions-in-action, urges, impulses, wants, wishes, emotions, evaluative or practical judgements may perhaps also be motivational. Out of convenience, I will often speak only of desires and intentions, but thereby mean to include other potential types of motivational states as well.

In accordance with these considerations, the purposiveness of mental projects is reflected in the fact that mental projects are brought about and subsequently guided by underlying desires, intentions, and so on. When we deliberate about what to do tonight or try to empathize with a person, we do this on the basis of, and as the effect of, a corresponding motivational state. In particular, how we proceed in the engagement with these projects is determined by what we are motivated to do. For instance, the intention to deliberate leads to a different mental project than the intention to empathize. And that we consider different possibilities of how to spend the evening – as opposed to what to do for the summer holidays, or whether free will is compatible with determinism - depends on which particular intention or desire moves us and thereby specifies the purpose of our project, and on which means we take to be appropriate for the pursuit of that project. Moreover, we would not count as deliberating about what to do tonight if we lacked any motive for pursuing this aim. The purposiveness of particular mental projects is inseparable from the fact that they are the result of the causal and rational influence of motivational states. And the specific nature of the motivational states in play determines which purposes and projects we pursue, and how our engagement with them develops.

---

<sup>5</sup> I ignore here and in much of what follows that actions (or purposive doings) are usually rationalized and guided not only by states which move us to act, but also by states - typically beliefs - which tell us which means to use to achieve the desired ends. Depending on the context, I will sometimes refer also to these means-representing states (or, rather, to pairs of these and of moving states), when using the expression "motivational states".

Now, the conclusion that the purposiveness of mental projects is responsible for their status as forms of agency is obviously in conformity with theories which identify purposiveness as the mark of agency (Pink (1996): e.g., 14f. and 42; (2002)). But it is also in line with the perhaps more traditional view that the essence of agency is *voluntariness* (e.g., Davidson (1980): especially ch. 4; cf. also Pink (2002) for discussion). According to this latter picture, actions express our will (i.e., what we want to do). They are performed as the causal and rational result of motivational states reflecting the (perhaps only apparent) desirability of the action in question. Voluntarily raising one's arm thus means raising it because one wants, or takes it to be desirable, to raise it. If we are turning off the light because we desire this (and know how to do it), then we are turning off the light voluntarily (cf. Pink (1996): ch. 7). Doing something purposively also requires doing it on the basis of some motivational states. But in this case, the motivational states need not concern the desirability of what we are doing. It suffices if they concern the desirability of something which can be achieved by what we are doing. Accordingly, doing something *purposively* implies (or is perhaps equivalent to) doing it as a means to *some* end: that is, to doing it because it is likely to lead to the achievement of some desirable goal (cf. Pink (1996): 144; (2002)). In comparison, doing something *voluntarily* amounts to doing it for its *own* desirability (which again, of course, may depend on the desirability of its likely consequences). Voluntariness seems to imply purposiveness; but not vice versa. Thus, if agency is characterized in terms of purposiveness rather than voluntariness, there may be some involuntary actions (cf. Pink ((1996): especially ch. 7) on decisions). In any case, mental projects are motivated by states acknowledging the desirability of these projects. When we deliberate, empathize or daydream, we do so because we take it to be desirable to act in these ways. Hence, our engagement with mental projects is not only purposive, but also voluntary: it is up to us whether we pursue a mental project, and also which. As a result, mental projects fit both accounts of agency.

There are other - and less widely accepted - theories of agency which might not seem straightforwardly compatible with the proposed account of mental projects as active. Some philosophers take the relation between motivational states and actions to be non-causal (e.g., Wilson (1989); Ginet (1990)); while others do not postulate such a relation at all and assume instead a causal relation between the agent and his actions (e.g., Chisholm (1976)). However, their disagreement with my proposal need not concern the activity of mental projects in general, but rather the nature of their activity (i.e., how they are linked to agents or their motivational states). Hence it seems that the account of practical motivation with

which I am operating here could be modified appropriately in such a way as to conform to these more uncommon views on agency as well.

There are several aspects of the active nature of mental projects which should be mentioned here since they will become important in what follows (cf. the qualifications to my account of imaginative projects in section 5.4 below). First, it does not require that all aspects of mental projects have to be active (cf. Wollheim (1973): 70f.). Many mental projects involve episodes which have been generated by passive mechanisms, such as epistemic motivation, association, or the manifestation of dispositions. But in this respect, they do not differ from other forms of agency. Actively raising one's arm, say, involves the stimulation of certain nerves; while scoring a goal exploits the effects of gravity and possibly also the movements of the other players (which are passive in so far that they are beyond the control of the scorer). Second, the states which move us to engage in particular mental projects do not thereby become part of these projects. That is, mental projects are the result of the motivational impact of the respective states, but do not include them. My intention to daydream about climbing Mount Everest is not part of my actual daydream. In particular, if I partly or fully fail in acting on that intention, there will be no daydream which completely fits the content of the intention - either because there would not be any daydream at all (but at best an attempt at daydreaming), or a different one (e.g., about climbing the north face of the Eiger). In both cases, it would be odd to say that the intention in question is a (or even the) constituent of a daydream. Again, the same considerations seem to be true of actions, which we usually do not take to contain the underlying desires, beliefs or intentions either. Third, the purposes of mental projects may vary in the detailedness of the specification of the mental phenomena to be brought about. For instance, we may be wondering in general about what to do in the summer; or we may consider the concrete option of visiting some friends for a July weekend in Venice. And fourth, the purposes of mental projects may also make more or less specific reference to the ways in which the mental phenomena are to be brought about (i.e., to the means to be used). That the purpose of a project or an action can make some demands on the means to be employed should not be seen as a problem. I can desire not only to travel from Fribourg to Turin, but also to travel to Turin by taking the route through the beautiful Aosta valley; and this desire again differs from the desire to simply travel through the valley. One aspect illustrating this difference seems to be that the success conditions on the ensuing actions are different. For successfully acting on the last desire, it does not matter whether I reach Turin; while with respect to the first case, it does not matter which route I take. Similar considerations apply to mental projects, their purposes and the respective underlying motivational states. We can intend not only to make up our

minds about what to do in the holidays, but also to thereby take into account the opinion of our family; or, alternatively, we may decide to focus solely on what we want. Again, the success of our project (as well as the reaction of our family) will depend partly on whether the purpose of our mental project specifies certain means, and if so, on whether we employ these means. The purposes of mental projects may thus aim them at two different things: (i) their *ultimate* goal;<sup>6</sup> and (ii) the use of certain means for the achievement of that goal. Both aspects are intrinsic to the projects in question. But while all mental projects must possess an ultimate purpose, they need not be aimed at the employment of particular means. To come to a conclusion about what to do in the summer is the ultimate purpose of the respective project; while discussing the holiday plans with our family becomes part of the purpose of the project at best only as means with respect to its ultimate goal.

In any case, it might be doubted that all mental projects are purposive. To see that such doubts are misguided, it is necessary to first consider another important function of the purpose of mental projects and the related motivational states: namely, to provide the projects with unity. The *unity* of mental projects is what holds their elements together and differentiates them from other mental phenomena. It is important because it is responsible for the fact that mental projects are single, self-contained phenomena and constitute distinct parts of the stream of consciousness. Without it, mental projects could not be distinguished from the other phenomena occurring in phenomenal consciousness. In particular, it would be unspecified which episodes are constituents of a particular project. And it would be impossible to differentiate two mental projects which occur in our minds roughly at the same time (e.g., immediately following or alternating with each other). For instance, my pursuit of the project of thinking about a particular philosophical problem may temporally overlap with my pursuit of the project of deciding what to write in a letter to a friend; and I may switch my attention from one to the other. The unity of a project does not, however, presuppose that the project is continuously in the foreground of our attention, or even in phenomenal consciousness. When I am interrupted by a telephone call while trying to solve a problem or deliberating about what to do in the summer, I may return to my project and take it up again straight afterwards, or the next day, or the next week. And although it may stay in the background of my mind during the phone conversation and perhaps for some time longer, I surely do not have to be consciously occupied with it during the whole period

---

<sup>6</sup> The *ultimate* purpose intrinsic to mental projects has to be distinguished from the *ulterior* purposes for which we desire or intend to pursue the projects, but which are extrinsic to them. We may engage in the project of making up our minds about our travel plans because we want a rest from the nagging questions of our family; or we may decide to travel to Rome because we would like to visit an old friend there. But neither ulterior end is essential to the respective projects of deliberating or travelling, or characterizes them further.

of the break in order to be able to return to it later on. The reason for this is that we do not begin a new mental project each time we take up again our striving for a particular goal. Thus, projects like writing a book, or trying to understand ourselves or another person, usually have a non-continuous nature. Our engagements with them stretch over months or years and involve numerous breaks, while continuing to be concerned with a single, temporally extended and non-continuous project. In this respect, mental projects are similar to many complex mental experiences, such as aesthetic ones. For instance, we do not begin to read a book anew each time we take it up again on the page where we left it the last time, but instead typically continue our experience of reading it (and this remains true even when we reread some of its passages in order to remind ourselves, or get a clearer grasp, of them). Besides, the unity of mental projects does not require that all (or even any of) the episodes included in a project come into being during our pursuit of it. Instead, they may arise independently of the project and only afterwards become one of its parts - say, due to some act of inclusion on behalf of the subject.

Now, which episodes in one's stream of consciousness are part of a particular mental project is a matter of which purpose the project has and, therefore, of which motivational states guide its development. What becomes important here is that the motivational states move us, as part of our engagement with the project, to generate or to include the respective episodes at certain points in the pursuit of the mental project, and in certain relations to the other episodes making up the project. It is decisive that the generation or inclusion of the episodes contributes to, and is seen by us as contributing to, the furtherance of the purpose in question. Thus, the intention to recall some past holiday will bring us to reminisce about certain events that happened during it; and the episodes of memory triggered by us will thereby become constituents of our resulting project because they contribute to the desired recollection of those holidays. On the other hand, the perceptions, thoughts or feelings that we may have at the same time as, but completely unrelated to, our remembering will not be part of this project because they will not further the purpose of recalling the holiday. Similarly, which episodes we produce or admit as parts of the project to decide what to do tonight will be determined by our respective intention and by what we take to be adequate means of acting on that intention. Reminding ourselves of the options and of our evaluations of our feelings towards them will typically be constituents of that project; taking into consideration what we currently hear another person saying may be included by us as well; but feeling an itch or having a spontaneous thought about whether Bovary is really oblivious to the reasons for his wife's behaviour will presumably not enter our project. What matters for whether a certain episode belongs to a given project is thus typically whether the

respective motivational states have rationalized and caused its employment as a means in the pursuit of the project. The precise extent or nature of the required instrumental contribution may, however, not always be easy to specify. Intelligibility of the link between episode and project seems to be a minimal requirement; which again appears to presuppose some connection between the purpose of the project (or the content of the respective motivational state) and the nature or content of the episode in question, which goes beyond mere causation. But perhaps rational connections are not the only appropriate candidates; association or emotional colouring may be sufficient as well.<sup>7</sup> In any case, the intimate link between the unity of projects and the influence and relevance of the underlying motivational states allows, for instance, that our engagement with the projects can be interrupted and spread non-continuously over a long period of time. The link to one and the same (type of) desire or intention guarantees the necessary kind of cohesion. Furthermore, the motivational impact on which elements pertain to a mental project may extend to the relations among the episodes of that project. Some of these links (e.g., inferences or conceptualizations) are actively established in response to its purpose; while others (e.g., certain forms of causation, such as association) are incorporated during the pursuit of the project by including episodes into the project which have been caused by other episodes of the same project. Hence, the purpose of a mental project determines both its episodic and its relational constituents.

Indeed, it is now possible to show that there could not be mental projects lacking a purpose. The main reason for this is that such "projects" (if one could still call them that) would also lack unity, and hence would not constitute distinct mental phenomena. They would be nothing more than arbitrarily individuated portions of the stream of consciousness. For, apart from the purposiveness of mental projects and the resulting motivational links to the underlying motivational states, no other feature of such projects could provide them with unity. It could not be the obtaining, among the episodes of each project, of certain causal or rational relations (other than those linked to the underlying intentions or desires). The reason for this is that the respective relations often reach beyond the borders of projects - in particular, if they are embedded in larger projects. In other words, mental projects do not occur causally or rationally disconnected from other conscious phenomena. When I am daydreaming or thinking about what to do, I may incorporate into my project thoughts the occurrence of which is a conceptualization of - or is associatively triggered by - what I am currently perceiving. Likewise, if I succeed in forming a conclusion about what to believe, the resulting belief may have a causal or rational impact on my further beliefs and actions. And my project of choosing what to do this weekend may be informed by the outputs of my

---

<sup>7</sup> In section 6.5, I will discuss the particular case of daydreams and will argue that they are unified largely by narrative principles.

project to assess the practicability of the different options, or the availability of the required means. But none of the respective phenomena - the perceptions, the further beliefs and actions, the previous project of assessment - are part of the mental projects to which they are causally or rationally related. Hence, the obtaining of such causal or rational relations among the members of a certain set of episodes is not sufficient for this set to constitute a project. Mental projects are also not unified in virtue of something external to them (besides, of course, their purpose and the relevant motivational states which realize that purpose in the subject). As it happens, the episodes of a given project need not concern a common object or subject matter. And if they nevertheless do, this is to be explained in terms of the particular nature of the purpose of the project in question. When I am daydreaming about my next holidays, the involved mental representations may have many different objects, such as the various friends that I would like to meet, or the various places that I would like to visit; while the fact that they are all concerned with my next holidays - or, if I have already decided to travel to Palermo in order to see a particular friend, with that city and that person - is due solely to my intention for it to be that way. And there do not seem to be other external factors which can plausibly be said to be relevant for the unity of mental projects. Hence, in order to constitute distinct mental phenomena in - and not merely arbitrary temporal portions of - the stream of consciousness, mental projects have to be purposive.

## **5.2. Cognitive Projects**

On the basis of these insights into mental projects, it is now possible to characterize particular types of such projects, namely, cognitive and imaginative projects. Clarifying their nature will enable not only the formulation of a unified account of imagining in terms of imaginative projects, but also the further elucidation of the difference between cognitive and imaginative phenomena with respect to one of their most important manifestations in the mind, that is, in the form of mental projects. As the categorization of certain projects as mental has already suggested, mental projects are individuated mainly in terms of their purposes. That is, while it is generally distinctive of projects to be purposive, they can be distinguished in respect of the particular nature of their purposes. In this section, I will briefly characterize the nature of cognitive projects. The following section will be concerned with a more extended discussion of how best to specify their imaginative counterparts.

It seems that cognitive projects can be characterized in a straightforward manner. What projects like trying to calculate a sum in one's head, solving a philosophical problem,

attempting to understand someone else by empathizing with them, and so on, have in common is that they aim at knowledge. When we act on our intention to calculate a sum, empathize with another person or solve a philosophical problem, we try to discover something about the world; and we try to do so in a way that yields reliable and non-accidentally true results. Accordingly, *cognitive projects* can be characterized as those projects which have the goal of producing cognizing representations. Of course, we may have ulterior purposes for engaging in cognitive projects - we may have to pay a bill, want to comfort the person, or intend to write an essay on free will. But this does not mean that we do not act in these cases with the more immediate aim of knowledge in mind. In fact, the ulterior purposes in question will typically be served only if we take care about matters of truth and reliability; and we are usually more or less explicitly aware of this fact. What we have here are examples in which a cognitive project is embedded in another project (which is possibly non-cognitive or non-mental). A project thereby *embeds* another project just in case the latter is pursued as a means in the pursuit of the former. Besides, the proposed characterization of cognitive projects is in line with the possibility of a more comprehensive account of cognitive phenomena. For since it seems plausible to characterize cognitive episodes partly in terms of their general function or aim of providing knowledge, their nature may, in an important aspect, resemble that of cognitive projects.

That cognitive projects should be specified by reference to knowledge becomes further apparent if one considers the alternatives. First of all, they could not be characterized in terms of their inclusion of cognitive episodes. For other types of mental projects - in particular, imaginative ones - involve cognitive episodes as well. When we deliberate about what to do, we usually rely heavily on what we know or perceive. And our daydreams about adventures, meetings or conversations, our hypothetical speculations, our attempts at empathizing with or imagining being in the position of another person, or our imaginative compositions of stories, typically involve many occurrent beliefs or memories - and sometimes even perceptions - which concern the imagined people, places or events. In fact, imaginative projects often embed cognitive projects - my daydream about walking through the centre of Rome may involve various projects of recalling the details of the architecture, atmosphere or noise. Or we may build an imagined story around some extensive memory of a significant event. Hence, the involvement of cognitive episodes is by no means unique to cognitive projects.

Equally, cognitive projects cannot be elucidated by reference to the fact that they include the generation of cognizing representations. Many non-cognitive projects - such as deliberating

about what to do tonight, or imagining what a friend might do on his holiday in Paris - involve cognitive episodes (e.g., judgements about the available options, or about the friend's character) which may very well provide knowledge. Hence the mere inclusion of cognizing episodes does not suffice for a project to be cognitive. Instead, what prevents the non-cognitive projects mentioned from being cognitive is their lack of the purpose of acquiring knowledge.

And finally, cognitive projects - which aim at producing *cognizing* representations - cannot be identified as projects aiming at producing *cognitive* representations: the two constitute two different types of mental projects. The difference between cognizing and cognitive states is that while the former are defined by their actual achievement of the provision of knowledge, the latter are characterized by their cognitive attitude and their typical functional role. As a result, cognitive - but not cognizing - states may fail to provide knowledge (as in the case of, say, perceptual hallucinations, or false or irrational judgements and beliefs). Hence, not all cognitive states need to be cognizing. This opens up the possibility of projects that aim at bringing about cognitions which do not provide knowledge.<sup>8</sup> For instance, we may have the desire to have a certain belief (e.g., that another person loves us; or that God exists) which is sufficiently strong to move us to manipulate the evidence available to us (e.g., by avoiding or seeking respective sources of evidence, or by self-deception, or by going to a hypnotist to induce in us the required belief).<sup>9</sup> However, the resulting projects differ significantly from projects aiming at really trying to discover some facts: whether the person really loves us, whether God really exists. The difference is, again, that the cognitive projects succeed just in case they lead to the acquisition of the desired piece of knowledge; while the success of the non-cognitive projects in question depends solely on the occurrence of cognitions, but is entirely independent of whether these actually provide knowledge.

### **5.3. Imaginative Projects: a First Proposal**

The delineation of the class of imaginative projects seems to be less straightforward than that of cognitive projects. One reason for this may be the fact that imaginative projects do not appear to have a clearly defined function or role in our mental lives. We engage with them for many different reasons: because we want to enjoy, distract or relax ourselves (e.g.,

---

<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, there is also room for cognitive projects which aim at the production of cognizing imaginings (such as the counterexamples to thesis (C)), given that not all cognizing states need be cognitive.

<sup>9</sup> Various examples of these kinds are described in, for instance, Papineau (1999): section 3, and Owens (2000): ch. 2.

when we daydream or invent stories); because we are curious about an idea and wish to explore it further (e.g., when we are occupied with some speculations); because we want to come to a deeper understanding of a person or an issue (e.g., when we engage in empathy or thought experiments); and presumably for many other reasons as well. Similarly, it is not distinctive of imaginative projects that they involve imaginative episodes. As already illustrated in the last chapter (cf. sections 4.3 and 4.4), there are many cognitive projects involving imaginative episodes. We use imaginative thought experiments in order to test certain theories for truth; we may imagine being in the position of someone else in order to better understand him; or, indeed, we may use our visualizing skills in order to determine whether a sofa would fit through our door. Thus, both imaginative and cognitive projects can involve episodes of various kinds. Cognitive projects need not be restricted to cognitive episodes; nor need imaginative projects be limited to imaginative episodes. And they cannot be distinguished from each other in terms of whether they include cognitive or imaginative episodes.

That there does not seem to be an obvious purpose common to all imaginative projects, and that they cannot be characterized by the involvement of imaginative episodes, might be motivation enough to endorse a purely negative characterization of imaginative projects, in analogy to that offered by the Cognitive Account of imaginative episodes. But as with the latter, problems would arise. Most importantly, imaginative projects could not simply be defined as non-cognitive projects (i.e., as projects that do not aim at the production of cognizing states), since many non-imaginative projects are non-cognitive as well. Deliberating about what to do tonight is one of them; meditating in order to calm oneself down another; and reminding oneself of the details of a joke in order to enjoy oneself a third. Nor - for the same reason - does it help to add the condition that for a project to be imaginative it has to be concerned with the generation of (at least partly) *representational* states. For most projects aiming at intentions or feelings will fulfil this requirement too. On the other hand, the definition of imaginative projects as those non-cognitive projects that have the production of *purely* representational states (i.e., non-affective, putatively cognitive states) as their goal is too restrictive, because it leaves out imaginative projects that are concerned with imagining certain sensations or feelings. For instance, one may try to imagine a pain wandering slowly down one's leg; or one may imagine how it feels to be responsible for an accident in which a close friend died (e.g., as part of the more comprehensive project of trying to come to an empathetic understanding of someone). In such cases, the desired representations are not merely representational: they also involve affective elements. Hence, imaginative projects cannot be defined in terms of their non-

cognitivity.

It therefore seems more promising, after all, to look for some positively specified purpose which all - and only - imaginative projects possess, and which characterizes them as imaginative. In what follows, I will discuss two proposals for what this intrinsic imaginative purpose might consist in. The first takes it to be identical with the goal of producing some imaginative episodes (perhaps of a particular kind). Accordingly, imaginative projects are said to be precisely those projects that aim at the generation of imaginative episodes. In contrast, the second construes the imaginative purpose in terms of the goal of providing specific contents. It is thus taken to be distinctive of imaginative projects that they aim at the formation of representations (perhaps of certain kinds) with particular contents. Both proposals have in common that they permit the pursuit of imaginative projects in the search for the achievement of ulterior ends, such as those listed above. But neither assumes that these further purposes play any role in the specification of what it means for a project to be imaginative: the ulterior purposes remain contingent and extrinsic with respect to the projects. Hence, it is not problematic for them that imaginative projects can vary greatly with respect to the ulterior reasons for which they are pursued. In this section, I will discuss and reject the first proposal; while in the following section, I will defend the second one.

According to the first proposal, a project is imaginative if and only if it inherently aims at producing one or more imaginative episodes (of whatever kind). In other words, the purpose of imaginative projects is taken to be simply to imagine something. And this can explain why we treat them as imaginative in the first place. But this proposal needs further refinement. As it stands, it cannot do justice to the nature of cognitive projects which aim at cognizing imaginings. Consider again the project of finding out whether the sofa fits through the door. It is cognitive in nature: it aims at the acquisition of a certain piece of knowledge. But, as we have seen, the project of visualizing the sofa and the door in a certain way may, under the right kind of circumstances, be a suitable means of achieving this cognitive aim. Hence, we may pursue the cognitive project under consideration by means of pursuing a (presumably) imaginative project: that is, the latter project may be a means for, and thus be embedded in, the former. However, we may further qualify the purpose of the cognitive project by including some restrictions on the means to be used - for instance, that it should be imaginative. Accordingly, instead of simply intending to find out whether the sofa fits through the door, we may intend to find out whether the sofa fits through the door *by means of* visualizing the two objects in a certain way (e.g., by mentally rotating them without changing their relative sizes). If successfully pursued, this more specific cognitive

project will embed the imaginative project of visualizing the two objects as well. For it is an essential part of the purpose of this cognitive project to embed the imaginative project: it aims at the acquisition of a certain piece of knowledge, but it also aims at the formation of imaginative episodes as means in this acquisition. However, it does not seem appropriate to say that the resulting cognitive project is also an imaginative project, despite its involving imagining. We do not engage in it because we want to imagine something. Rather, we engage in it solely because we want to cognize reality. The additional restriction to imaginative means is merely contingent on this cognitive purpose. Under other circumstances, we might have chosen different, non-imaginative means (e.g., measuring the two objects; or putting and perceiving them next to each other). In this respect, the cognitive project under discussion does not differ from other cognitive projects that involve imagining as means (e.g., those including thought experiments, geometrical visualizations or hypothetical reasoning). The restriction that imaginative means should be used (i.e., that the cognitive project should embed an imaginative project) does not render the cognitive project imaginative. However, since the proposal under consideration has precisely this implication, it gets the nature of this and similar cognitive projects wrong by misclassifying them as both cognitive and imaginative.

The first proposal can, however, be modified in order to resolve this problem. The idea is to say that imaginative projects are precisely those which have the formation of imaginative episodes as their *ultimate* intrinsic purpose: that is, which do not aim at it solely as a means for another intrinsic aim, such as the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> But even the modified version of the first proposal faces three worries (which also apply to the original version). First, it would remain largely unilluminating until the formulation of an independent account of what it means for episodes to be imaginative; and we still lack such a theory of imaginative episodes. As I argued in the last chapter, the Cognitive Account is inappropriate, even when restricted to imaginative episodes, because the negation claims cannot capture affective imaginings, while the echo theses cannot capture intellectual imaginings (if they can capture episodic imaginings at all). Second, independent of what

---

<sup>10</sup> Other possible modifications are not tenable. It does not help to characterize imaginative projects as precisely those which *necessarily* aim at the formation of imaginative episodes, given that this is true of all cognitive and other projects which are explicitly intended to embed imaginative projects (e.g., projects which aim at calming oneself down *by means of* imagining something, or at resolving a practical or theoretical issue *by means of* thought experiments or hypothetical inferences). For it is essential to these projects that they aim at the generation of imaginative episodes (even if only as a means for their overall end). Similarly, it does not help to define imaginative projects in terms of the purpose of *merely* aiming at the formation of imaginative episodes (or at least the purpose of aiming at the formation of imaginative episodes *without* also aiming at cognition). For there are many non-imaginative projects with a cognitive or a different kind of purpose that embed imaginative projects (e.g., meditative projects, or projects involving thought experiments or hypothetical inferences).

such an account of imaginative episodes might look like, the proposal cannot provide a common account of the imaginativeness of all imaginative phenomena. For imaginative episodes and imaginative projects would turn out to be imaginative for very different reasons: the former would be imaginative by themselves (i.e., because of whatever feature is responsible for this), while the latter would be imaginative only relative to the former (i.e., because of having a purpose which has to be elucidated in terms of the former). That is, the imaginative status of the latter would only be derivative on, or inherited from, that of the former. On its own, this consequence might not be a decisive reason to dismiss the proposal under consideration: maybe it is the best account of imagining that we can hope for. But if a non-hierarchical and unified alternative theory can be had, it should definitely be preferred. And third, the proposal under discussion does not seem to identify the most fundamental feature which is distinctive of imaginative projects and which appears to be responsible for their imaginativeness.

#### **5.4. Imaginative Projects: a Second Proposal**

To understand this last worry, it is necessary to introduce and elucidate the second proposal for an account of imaginative project - the proposal I would like to defend here. Consider the project of visually representing a galloping unicorn. Its purpose is exhausted by the aim of producing representations with specific contents and of a particular type. And it seems to be most naturally realized by means of imaginative activity: namely by visualizing a unicorn which runs along a field. Likewise, the goal of intellectually representing a world in which there are only two-dimensional objects is most easily achieved by forming a respective set of suppositions.

This suggests that there is a close link between the imaginativeness of projects and the purpose of producing certain representations. In accordance with this, the second proposal identifies imaginative projects with projects that have the intrinsic and ultimate goal of generating *specific* representations, that is, representations with particular contents, and also, perhaps, of particular types (e.g., sensory or intellectual ones). This involves, importantly, the goal of actively determining the specific contents of the representations to be formed. The *specific content* of a representation consists thereby in the represented instantiation relations between the represented objects and features and has to be distinguished from the more general subject matter of the representation. While the thought that a certain car is blue and the thought that the car is silver have the same subject matter because they concern the

colour of the car, their specific contents differ since they represent the car as exemplifying different colours. In accordance with this distinction, the determination of the content of an actively formed representation by the underlying motivational states is specific just in case the respective desires or intentions fix at least some of the represented instantiation relations. This happens, for instance, when we think or assume that the car is blue in active response to our decision to think or assume that it is blue. In contrast, the decision to form a judgement about the colour of the car (or, more concretely, to judge whether it is blue) normally does not determine whether the resulting judgement will represent the car as blue, silver or any other colour. Hence, this time, the decision fixes only the subject matter of the judgement, but not its specific content. Now, that imaginative projects are characterized by their aim to lead to the formation of specific representations does not prevent us from engaging in them for many ulterior reasons: enjoyment, curiosity, avoidance of boredom, relaxation, cognition (e.g., in the case of empathy or aesthetic appreciation), and so on. Nevertheless, the intrinsic purpose of imaginative projects is, first of all, to actively produce representations with certain contents. When we daydream about something, imagine a fictional world or story, travel in our minds to other places and times, or imagine being another person, we always act on a desire or intention to form representations with respective contents. For instance, we daydream about being rich, or imagine being Goethe during his only visit to Berlin in 1778, precisely because we have formed corresponding desires or intentions. Thus, the second proposal seems indeed to be able to capture all kinds of imaginative projects.

However, some non-imaginative projects also appear to have the purpose of producing specific representations. For instance, if a person wishes to visually represent a galloping unicorn, she might under appropriate circumstances rely on representation-inducing mechanisms, or on her memories or perceptions, to satisfy her desire. If she knows that taking a certain drug is likely to cause in her perceptions (or, alternatively, a spontaneous sequence of images) of a galloping unicorn, she can act on her intention to produce visual representations of a running unicorn by taking the drug. Likewise, if she knows that she has seen a galloping unicorn in the past, she may actively try to trigger the manifestation of the respective visual memory. Or, if she knows that a unicorn is currently running along the field behind her back, she may decide to turn around and look at it. In each of the three cases, she may come to successfully pursue her project of visually representing a galloping unicorn. But the resulting activities - that is, the triggering of the representation-inducing mechanisms or of her mnemonic dispositions, or the turning around and looking at what is there to be seen - surely do not constitute imaginative projects. In fact, they need not involve

any imaginative representation or activity at all. Similarly, a person who wishes to believe that another person is in love with her, or still alive, may make deliberate use of several active or passive means - such as ignoring, manipulating or suppressing certain evidence, going to a hypnotist, or taking appropriate drugs - in order to form or sustain the respective belief (cf. note 9 above). Again, she may successfully act on her desire to believe that the other person is in love with her, or still alive. But the resulting projects should not count as imaginative either.<sup>11</sup> Some of these hypothetical cases are not plausible candidates for imaginative projects simply because they are not *mental* projects: that is, because they involve extra-mental entities or actions. But others of them may occur exclusively in the mind - for instance, if they exploit only one's knowledge about one's mental dispositions, or involve only the manipulation or suppression of already acquired evidence. What is therefore needed is the identification of a further feature of imaginative projects that distinguishes them from these purely mental, non-imaginative cases. The additional element still missing is the *direct* determination of what is represented. Accordingly, the final proposal that I would like to put forward is that imaginative projects aim at the active production of representations with specific contents that are directly determined by the underlying motivational states - or, as I will also say, that aim at the direct formation of specific representations:

(IP) A mental project is *imaginative* if and only if its ultimate intrinsic purpose is to actively form one or more representations with specific and directly determined contents.

This thesis characterizes imaginative projects by reference to restrictions both on what they should achieve and on how they should achieve it: that is, both on their ultimate goal and on their respective means. Their ultimate purpose is the production of specific representations individuated in terms of their contents; while their means are limited to direct ways of producing such representations. These two elements are combined in the general *imaginative purpose* common to all - and only - imaginative projects: to directly form representations with particular contents, instead of bringing them about by indirect means. The determination of the content of an actively formed representation is thereby *direct* if and only if it does not involve any reliance on epistemic or merely causal mechanisms as

---

<sup>11</sup> I take it that the same is true of the project of producing some *imaginative* episode with a particular content by means of going to the hypnotist or taking an appropriate drug - namely that it is not imaginative either. For there is no reason to accept that the indirect active formation of an imaginative episode should count as an imaginative project. I have already stated my objections to the idea that aiming at imaginative episodes is sufficient for a project to be imaginative; and no other feature of the project under consideration suggests an imaginative nature.

means for the content determination in question. Accordingly, the aim of imaginative projects is to produce one or more representations the specific content of which is not determined by epistemic or merely causal mechanisms.<sup>12</sup> Potential candidates for such mechanisms are the rational processes of conceptualization or inference on the basis of (possibly manipulated) evidence, the manifestation of mental dispositions or associative links, the effects of drugs, of aspects of the environment or of other causes, and so on. Their exploitation in the formation of a representation results in the indirect determination of what is represented. And this is precisely what happens in all the hypothetical cases described above. For instance, that the person visually represents a galloping unicorn (and not, say, a slow-moving elephant) is determined by the nature of the drugs, of her memories, or of her environment, depending on which means she relies on in pursuit of her project to induce in her a visual representation of a galloping unicorn. Of course, what she represents is ultimately dependent on what she wants to represent. But since she exploits some epistemic or merely causal mechanisms when acting on her respective desire or intention, the contents of the resulting representations are determined indirectly. In contrast, when we succeed in visualizing a galloping unicorn, what we visually represent is directly determined by our underlying motivational states: no epistemic or merely causal mechanisms are involved in the fixation of the visual contents.<sup>13</sup> The introduced directness requirement is thus sufficient to distinguish imaginative projects from the hypothetical non-imaginative cases.

It is important to note that the epistemic and merely causal mechanisms mentioned are beyond our voluntary control with respect to the specific determination of the resulting representation's content. We may deliberately exploit their determinative power and trigger its coming into effect (e.g., by acting on our decision to judge a certain issue, or to exploit the effects of hypnosis). But we cannot directly change or influence the nature or direction of their determinative power (e.g., which content is produced). When we actively trigger the manifestation of a memory, or actively draw a conclusion on the basis of the evidence available to us, what we end up representing is not determined by what we want, but by the relevant passively operating epistemic or merely causal mechanisms. Accordingly, the indirect determination of a content during the active formation of a representation is passive: it is merely the causal consequence of the mental activity involved which is responsible for the occurrence, and perhaps also the general subject matter, of the representation in

---

<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, the pursuit of an imaginative project presupposes some grasp of what it means to form representations in a direct manner. But this should not be problematic since it does not require the ability to *characterize* directness in the way proposed here, or in any other way. It suffices that the subject in question knows what to do (and, perhaps, what not to do) in order to directly form a representation; and that he can pick out this specific way of acting by *some* (possibly very basic) conceptual means.

<sup>13</sup> But cf. the qualifications below for some exceptions to this rule.

question. On the other hand, directly determined contents are actively determined: they are fixed by the underlying motivational states without the intervention of epistemic or merely causal mechanisms. Hence, the formation of a representation may also be said to be *direct* just in case it is active and involves the active determination of the content of the formed representation.

This leaves room for representations which are actively produced only with respect to their occurrence, and perhaps also their general subject matter. For example, we may decide to come to a conclusion about whether another person is in love with us by means of considering the evidence available to us, or we may decide to form visual representations of a galloping unicorn by means of taking a drug. And it seems plausible to take the resulting representations to be actively formed, despite the fact that their contents are passively determined by epistemic or merely causal mechanisms. However, it might be argued instead that the indirect formation of a representation is passive through and through because of the involvement of passive mechanisms in the determination of the content of the representation in question; and that the hypothetical cases discussed differ in *this* respect from imaginative projects.<sup>14</sup> The underlying idea is that the indirect formation of a representation is not itself active, but merely the causal result of the performance of a mental action which triggers the formation. But several considerations speak against this idea. First, the occurrence and subject matter of the respective representations (e.g., the judgement, or the visual images) are in fact determined and rationalized by the motivational states involved (e.g., the intention to judge whether the person is in love with us, or the desire to visually represent a galloping unicorn). Second, the mental action performed on the basis of these motivational states counts as successful only if it manages to bring about the respective representations. This suggests that the connection between the underlying mental action and the indirect formation of the representations is more intimate than a merely causal link. And third, there seem to be other kinds of actions that have certain causal effects which we take to be (produced as) part of the actions in question. For instance, despite the passive causation of its outcome, murdering someone by means of shooting him appears to constitute an instance of agency. At least, this is how we speak, and how this case has often been referred to in the literature (cf. Searle (1983): 79ff.; Ginet (1990): 73ff.; Audi (1993): 170ff.; McCann (1998): 2, 17ff. and 76ff.).

It is now time to return to the third worry - left unexplained above at the end of the

<sup>14</sup> Such a position seems to be suggested, for instance, in Scruton's remark that when we influence our beliefs or perceptions by avoiding certain evidence or closing our eyes, "the voluntariness attaches not to the belief or perception themselves, but to the actions that bring them about" (Scruton (1974): 95).

discussion of the first proposal - which said that reference to the formation of imaginative episodes as the ultimate goal of imaginative projects does not characterize these projects in the most basic terms available. The reason this worry arises is that, with respect to our mental projects, being aimed at the direct formation of specific representation implies being aimed at the formation of imaginative episodes. It has often been noted that we cannot form judgements or beliefs with specific contents by means of direct agency: that is, we cannot will them into existence merely by desiring and intending to do so, and without thereby relying on judgement-inducing mechanisms, the manipulation of evidence, our dispositions to remember certain scenarios, or similar passive and indirect means (cf. note 11 in chapter 1). For instance, it appears to be impossible for us to come to believe - by merely willing to do so - that Paris is the capital of Great Britain, even if we were offered a large sum of money if we succeeded in forming that belief. Any such offer - like a corresponding order or demand - seems to be absurd. Of course, we can pretend to have formed the respective belief. But in order to really induce it in us, we would have to make use of, say, a hypnotist, or falsified maps, encyclopedias and news programmes providing us with (in our eyes trustworthy) new evidence that Great Britain has invaded France and chosen Paris as its new capital. But judgements are not the only episodic representations which resist any direct active control over what they represent (cf. Pink (1996)). Perceptions and memories show the same imperviousness to the will, as do representational feelings and desires. Again, no promised amount of money can bring us to change, by mere will, what we currently perceive, how we currently feel, or what we currently desire.<sup>15</sup> What our perceptions, memories, feelings and desires represent is not up to us, but instead determined by our environment, our past experiences, our emotional dispositions, our needs, and so on. Hence, the only mental representations whose contents are under our direct active control are imaginative ones.

As a consequence, we can achieve the distinctive purpose of imaginative projects - that is, the production of specific representations with directly determined contents - only by forming imaginative episodes. This explains why the involvement of imaginative episodes is necessary (though not sufficient) for the pursuit of imaginative projects. But it also accounts for the fact that all our mental projects, which are aimed at the direct formation of representations with specific contents, will likewise be aimed at the formation of imaginative episodes.<sup>16</sup> The idea that we pursue imaginative projects with the purpose of

---

<sup>15</sup> The involuntariness of intentions is perhaps more controversial: cf. the discussions surrounding the "toxin puzzle" first introduced in Kavka (1983). But cf. Pink (1996): especially 192ff., for a powerful argument in its favour.

<sup>16</sup> This claim will apply to *all* possible imaginative projects, and not only to those which *we* can pursue, if our inability to directly will judgements, desires or intentions into existence is not

producing imaginative episodes in mind can therefore be explained in more fundamental terms: namely, in terms of the idea that we pursue these projects with the purpose of directly forming specific representations in mind. In other words, we aim our imaginative projects at the production of imaginative episodes *because* we aim them at the direct formation of specific representations. And this establishes the third worry with respect to the first proposal which characterizes imaginative projects in terms of the ultimate purpose of producing imaginative episodes. The alternative second proposal (IP), by contrast, can avoid this worry, given that it specifies imaginative projects in terms of the ultimate purpose of directly forming representations with specific contents.

But (IP) can resolve the other worries raised against the first proposal as well. First of all, there does not seem to be another feature common to all the concrete purposes of our imaginative projects which can account for their being aimed at the direct production of representations with specific contents. Then, (IP) does not depend on a preceding account of imaginative episodes, given that it does not mention them at all. Furthermore, as I will argue in the next section, this independence allows for an account of the imaginativeness of projects that can capture the imaginativeness of episodes as well. The idea will be that imaginative episodes are imaginative projects, too. Hence, both imaginative episodes and imaginative projects are imaginative in virtue of their common imaginative purpose. And finally, imaginative and cognitive projects differ strictly because they have distinct ultimate purposes. The two kinds of project may embed each other and, because of this, adopt the pursuit of the respective aim of the other kind as means for the furtherance of their own ultimate purposes. That is, we may intend to acquire knowledge as part of an imaginative project, as we may intend to form specific representations as part of a cognitive project. But the two purposes and, hence, the two kinds of projects do not coincide.<sup>17</sup> Cognitive projects aim at the discovery of which content to endorse relative to a certain issue or question; but they do not aim at the endorsement of a *specific* content. Accordingly, the project of trying to find out whether the sofa fits through the door is not imaginative - even if its purpose is amended in such a way as to additionally demand imaginative means - because it does not aim at the active and direct production of a representation with a particular content. Its purpose may specify the objects to be represented (the sofa or the door), as well as the general subject matter (the visual representation of their relative sizes); but it does not

---

merely a contingent fact about our human psychology, but reflects a necessary fact about the constitutions or concepts of the mental phenomena in question.

<sup>17</sup> The only thing that might happen is that we can pursue both a cognitive and an imaginative project by means of doing one and the same thing - for instance, if we: (i) desire to discover whether the sofa fits through the door; (ii) *independently* desire to visualize the sofa in front of the door; and (iii) are able - because of the contingent circumstances - to pursue both projects by one and the same activity.

specify the concrete states of affairs to be represented as pertaining to these objects and subject matter (e.g., that the sofa is or looks larger than the door). Instead, the project aims at the endorsement of whatever is the result of the imaginative combination - in accordance with one's knowledge of how objects behave in reality - of the pieces of information stored in the original perceptions and memories. And similar considerations are true of all other cognitive projects, including those embedding imaginative projects: they do not originate in motivational states which already specify the particular contents to be adopted.<sup>18</sup>

Because the second proposal of how to characterize imaginative projects does not face the same difficulties as the first, the former should be preferred over the latter. But the resulting account of imaginative projects - as formulated by means of (IP) - has still to be further qualified, partly to foreclose the presentation of certain seeming counterexamples to (IP).

First, there are certain qualifications concerning the nature of the concrete purposes of imaginative projects. It is not necessary that the purposes of these projects, or the relevant motivational states, determine the type of the representations to be formed. We may decide to daydream about being rich, without any particular intention to do so by means of representations of a particular type. As a result, we are free in our pursuit of the respective project to use appropriate representations of any modal type. What remains necessary, though, is the motivational fixation of the content to be represented. In addition, the purpose and motivational states pertaining to an imaginative project can make reference to representations in general or to particular kinds of imaginative phenomena. Hence, it is possible to pursue an imaginative project on the basis of intending to, say, *represent* a garden party, *daydream* about one, or *visually* and *auditorily imagine* one. And finally, the determination of what to represent by the purpose and the related motivational states can be more, or less, specific. We may simply want to imagine being Caesar; or we may want to imagine being Caesar during his successful political career in Rome; or we may want to imagine being Caesar at the moment when he realizes that his son is among his assassins. Equally, we can decide to daydream about a garden party; or to daydream about making a confession to a particular person at that party. The degree of specification can thus vary greatly - as long as there is some specification left of what is to be represented.

---

<sup>18</sup> Cases of guessing are perhaps other examples of cognitive projects which embed imaginative ones without being imaginative projects themselves. When we are engaged in guessing, we aim to endorse a true proposition. And we try to do so in a (more or less) reliable way, typically on the basis of considering all the relevant evidence. But cases of guessing differ from cases of judging in that the evidence available to us is not sufficient to favour a single proposition over all others. Instead, guessing always involves making a deliberate choice between several (more or less) equally well-supported or probable alternatives. And this choice may be an instance of imaginative activity. For a good general discussion of guessing, cf. Owens (2003),

Second, the active and direct determination of what is represented need not be complete or entirely voluntary. To begin with, there are certain general limits on what we can imagine or otherwise represent during the pursuit of an imaginative project. I have already noted that intellectual imaginings, if they do not occur in isolated form, but are embedded in a wider imaginative context, may be subject to moral or logical constraints (cf. section 2.2). Thus, we may have difficulties of adopting the moral point of view adopted by the (implied) narrator of a story (Gendler (2000)). And when we imagine something about a certain character in a particular situation, while the nature of both is already determined in rich detail by our previous imaginings and other representations, our imaginative project may gain its own momentum: that is, we may more or less automatically imagine the person to behave in a way which follows logically from what we take her situation and her personality to be (Wollheim (1973): 69f.; cf. also Eco (1974) and Carroll (2001): 124f.). But the restrictions on what we may be able to represent during an imaginative project are not due solely to our moral attitudes or our rationality. They may also arise from limitations in the scope of our past experiences, our conceptual capacities, our imaginative skills, our ability to concentrate, and many other factors.

Then, not all aspects of the contents of the representations formed in accordance with the specific imaginative purpose have to be actively and directly determined by the underlying motivational states. For instance, what we are imagining is often partly determined by how our mind passively and spontaneously fills in the details of the sequences of images or trains of thought that we bring about (cf. section 6.3 for more on spontaneous representations). But this does not undermine the imaginative status of the respective projects (or episodes) since at least part of the contents remains determined actively and directly.

Finally, not all episodes and projects produced or included during the pursuit of an imaginative project have to possess an actively and directly determined content. On the one hand, our imaginative projects may include episodes, such as perceptions or (perhaps non-representational) feelings, which have occurred passively and independently of the pursuit of the imaginative project in question. What we perceive or feel may often prompt us to imagine certain things. And at least sometimes, it will also be reasonable to say that the respective episodes thereby become part of our imaginative project because of their contribution to its pursuit. For example, the perception of the sea and the related feeling of joy may give rise to and further guide a daydream about a happy day spent with another person at the beach. And in virtue of their contribution to the representation of such a day, it

may also be plausible to take them to be part of the respective imaginative project, despite their passivity. On the other hand, imaginative projects may involve the active occasioning of the indirect and passive generation of representations, for instance by means of eliciting the manifestation of mental dispositions, or by using rational mechanisms, such as inference or conceptualization, which are passive with respect to the determination of what is represented. As a result, we can remember something, come to feel emotions, judge something on the basis of evidence, and so on, as part of the pursuit of an imaginative project. The daydream about the day at the beach may prompt old memories and new feelings. For instance, it may give rise to the conclusion that one is in love.

However, it may not always be easy to decide - both for the subject in question and for us - whether a given episode is part of a certain imaginative project, or only closely related to it. That is, it may be undecided to what extent an episode contributes to the desired representation of certain people, situations, events, and so on. For instance, daydreaming about the day at the beach may actually trigger some unexpected, ambivalent feelings or thoughts about the prospect of spending so much time with the other person. And given that these feelings or thoughts may run contrary to the intention to imagine a happy day, it is not clear to what extent they still belong to the daydream, or to what extent they actually terminate it or turn it into a different daydream. But any account of imaginative projects - including the proposal to characterize them in terms of the aim to produce imaginative episodes - will have to face this difficulty. Moreover, imaginative projects are by no means unique in this respect. Which feelings, memories or associated thoughts actually contribute to - and not merely accompany - one's deliberation about what to believe or do in a particular situation may sometimes be difficult to decide too. And the reading of which books is part of the project of writing a certain essay may resist conclusive settlement as well.

Third, the presented account of imaginative projects has to be qualified with respect to its claim that these projects constitute mental actions. First of all, it may very well be that there are imaginative projects which we voluntarily pursue without noticing. It seems plausible to assume that we can be engaged in mental projects without paying attention to them. For instance, we may continue to worry about a certain problem while being occupied by something completely different; and we may actually come up with a solution in this way. Or we may discover that we have been worrying all along about what a person has meant by something she said to us, only realizing afterwards the effect that being occupied in this way has had on our feelings and behaviour. Or we may find ourselves daydreaming about a

person that we met the other day at a party, or that we see sitting in front of us in the metro. Perhaps not all kinds of mental projects allow for such an engagement without attention; but at least some may do. And then, the direct active determination of contents involved in the pursuit of imaginative projects still permits that imaginative projects may be non-basic in the sense that they are pursued by pursuing another - and hence more basic - project or action.<sup>19</sup> The only condition is that the more basic projects or actions do not make use of epistemic or merely causal mechanisms in such a way that the overall project becomes indirect in its determination of the contents of the desired representations. One plausible example of a non-basic imaginative project is one that embeds simpler imaginative projects. When we want to visualize some objects as upside down, one way of doing this is by mentally rotating them. The two involved imaginative projects are clearly distinct: we can visualize the objects as upside down without having to mentally rotate them; and vice versa. But the one project may nevertheless embed the other in the way described. And in this case, the embedding project would turn out to be non-basic. But imaginative projects may also be non-basic in virtue of being pursued by means of simple active imaginings. One example is "[visualizing] Wellington's face by visualizing Goya's picture of him" (cf. Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 32, referring to a suggestion made by Jerrold Levinson). And another case is perhaps that of acting on one's intention to visualize the appearance of a complex object by visualizing its parts one after the other. Visualizing all sides of a house may be such a case; or visualizing a face close up and in great detail.

## **5.5. Imaginative Episodes as Simple Imaginative Projects**

With an account of imaginative projects safely in hand, it is now possible to present, on the basis of this theory, the Agency Account of imagining, which takes all imaginings to be imaginative projects. The main ingredient of my own version of the Agency Account is the identification of imaginative episodes with simple imaginative projects. The resulting account will treat all imaginings as imaginative projects. And it will be able to capture all central instances of imagining, since all of them are either episodes or projects. Hence, the identification of imaginative episodes with certain kinds of imaginative projects can figure as the basis for a unified account of imagining. In this section, I will elucidate and argue in support of the claim that, if imaginative episodes are taken to be active and direct with respect to the determination of their occurrence and their content, then they can and should

---

<sup>19</sup> I follow here the traditional understanding of actions as non-basic just in case they are done by actively performing another action (cf.: Danto (1963); O'Shaughnessy (1980): vol.1, xiii; Searle (1983): 98ff.; McCann (1998): 4; Audi (1993): 171; Lowe (2000): 234).

be treated as simple imaginative projects: that is, as imaginative projects which involve only a single episodic representation. This will allow me to conclude this chapter with the presentation of the main thesis of my version of the Agency Account of imagining, according to which all instances of imagining are mental projects with the purpose of directly forming specific representations. The defence of this theory of imagining must wait until the next chapter.

In the previous section, I argued that my account of imaginative projects in terms of the purpose of directly forming specific representations can avoid the worries confronting the alternative account in terms of the goal of producing imaginative episodes. Among these worries is the challenge to provide a common account of the imaginativeness of all imaginative phenomena - in particular, of all imaginative episodes and projects. I have argued that the proposed alternative fails to do justice to this non-hierarchical picture, which treats all forms of imagining as equal in their imaginativeness, and which should be part of any unified account of imagining. My own theory of imaginative projects can avoid this problem since it provides an account of them without making any reference to imaginative episodes. Likewise, my theory of imaginative episodes does not introduce a hierarchical element either, despite initial appearances. It is true that I want to suggest that while imaginative projects can be elucidated independently of imaginative episodes, the latter should be accounted for in terms of the former. But as it will turn out, this does not mean that there is a hierarchy among the two types of imaginative phenomena. Instead, all it implies is that there are two kinds of imaginative project: simple and complex ones. For what I would like to defend is the idea that imaginative episodes are nothing but simple imaginative projects. My argument in favour of this claim proceeds in two steps. The first is to motivate the thesis that imaginative episodes should, because of their active character, be understood as precisely those episodes which are, or can become, parts of simple imaginative projects. The second step is then to show that imaginative episodes are in fact identical with the simple imaginative projects which are said to contain them. Between the two steps, it will be necessary to investigate in more detail the nature of such simple imaginative projects.

As indicated, the key assumption in the first step is that imaginative episodes are - just like imaginative projects - intrinsically active and direct with respect to the determination of their occurrence and their content. More specifically, my idea is that they are always actively formed with the purpose of directly generating a representation with a specific content. Consequently, their active formation satisfies all aspects of an imaginative project:

it is purposive; it aims at the direct production of a representation with a specific content; it is caused and rationalized by corresponding motivational states; and it is constituted by a mental episode (in this case only one) and the related mental actions or processes involved in the active formation of that episode. Accordingly, one aspect of my proposal is that *all* imaginative episodes occur as part of an engagement with some simple imaginative project. The respective imaginative projects are *simple* in the sense that they involve only a single episodic representation. In contrast, complex imaginative projects involve several episodes; and not all of these episodes need to be imaginative. The other aspect of my proposal is to say that *only* imaginative episodes can become part of simple imaginative projects. This amounts to the claim that only imaginative, but not cognitive or other episodes allow for the kind of active formation described which involves the direct determination of what is represented - a claim which I have already partly assumed in the first chapter (cf. note 11 in that chapter). It follows that imaginative episodes are precisely those episodes which are, or can become, part of simple imaginative projects.

Now, in order to motivate the second step - the *identification* of imaginative episodes with imaginative projects - it will be necessary to take a closer look at the nature of simple imaginative projects. It seems that they consist of two elements or aspects: the active formation of the respective representation, and the actively formed representation itself.<sup>20</sup> The relation between these two elements may be understood in two plausible ways. On the one hand, the link between the two elements might simply be exhausted by the fact that the latter is the immediate causal result or product of the former. In accordance with this view, the two elements would constitute two distinct mental phenomena which merely happen to be part of the same mental project. And while the formation is an instance of agency, the formed episode is only the immediate causal consequence of that instance of agency. On the other hand, the active formation and the actively formed representation might be two (perhaps not easily separable) aspects of a single mental phenomenon, namely an instance of agency. This view implies that the immediate result of the active formation would be part of the respective action.

The first option is unavailable to me. First of all, given that it takes imaginative episodes to be actively formed merely as a consequence of their specific causal origin, it allows for cases in which such episodes are brought about by other causes which render their generation passive. Hence, the imaginative episodes would be - contrary to my assumption -

---

<sup>20</sup> In what follows, I will assume - but not always explicitly mention - that the active formation of the imaginative representations under consideration is direct: that is, involves an active determination of content, without any reliance on epistemic or merely causal mechanisms.

only extrinsically active. In contrast, the second option treats the episodes as essential parts of the respective actions. Thus, their intrinsic active character remains intact - assuming that the overall action of purposively and voluntarily forming the representation is intrinsically active: it is done as a means for an end and in response to its own desirability.

More importantly, the second option seems also to provide a better account of the direct agency involved in the formation of representations, at least in the case of simple mental projects under consideration. If the action concerned is one of actively and directly forming some kind of representation, it seems very difficult to deny that an action of this type could occur without some kind of result (i.e., without some kind of representation). For instance, it seems that there could be no activity of thinking without a thought appearing, or no activity of visualizing without a visual image appearing. Hence, what we may describe as the immediate results of direct mental actions appear to be in fact constitutive parts of these actions.<sup>21</sup> When we form a thought or visualize something, the resulting thought or image is partly constitutive of our mental action. And without the occurrence of such a thought or image, the action would not have been performed. We might still count as having tried and failed to think a thought or form an image. But we would not have *thought* a thought or *formed* an image: that is, we would not have actively engaged in thinking or visualizing. At best, we would have performed another kind of action, namely that of merely willing or trying to form a mental representation (if one assumes that there are such things as willings or tryings, and that they are actions). This picture still allows for partially successful direct mental actions - for example, when we manage to only partly think or visualize what we have intended to, or maybe also when we manage to think or visualize only something completely unintended. Only in cases of complete failure does this view assume that no action of the desired kind has been performed (perhaps in analogy to the idea that nothing is seen in the case of perceptual hallucinations). All these considerations gain further support from the fact that similar considerations seem to apply to certain simple bodily actions (cf. the references in note 21 above). When we move our arm, the resulting movement of our arm is part of the action, and not merely caused by it. And without the occurrence of the arm movement, this action would not have been performed, but at best an action of willing or trying to move our arm.

However, there is another reason why the second conception of the relation between the active and the representational element involved in simple mental projects is much more

---

<sup>21</sup> Cf. McCann (1998): 76ff.; and also Audi, who specifies the result of an active bodily movement as "the movement intrinsic to the action in the way a hand's rising is intrinsic to one's raising it" (Audi (1993): 77).

plausible. For only the second option can account for the specific phenomenological character of actively formed representations. We usually experience actively formed images and thoughts differently from passively formed ones. And the most plausible explanation of this fact seems to be that our experience of actively formed representations typically involves an awareness of agency. That is, it is part of the phenomenological character of these representations that they are experienced as actively formed. Thus, we can typically tell whether we have brought about a certain visual image by means of visualizing something, or whether it has occurred spontaneously and unwillingly. And likewise, we can normally distinguish thoughts which simply cross our minds from those which we actively produce. Moreover, we can become aware of the active formation of a mental representation in an immediate and non-inferential way. It is not that we first become aware of the action of forming a representation and, independently, of the occurrence of a representation of that type, and are then able to infer the presence of a causal link between the action and its result, but only after further reflection on these two independent kinds of awareness. Instead, we usually are able to tell simply by experiencing a mental episode whether it has been actively formed or not. But then, if the status of such representations as the result of action would be due merely to their contingent and non-introspectible causal origin in some preceding activity, it would seem impossible that our experience of them (and not only that of the preceding activity) would involve an awareness of their active character. We usually do not experience mere causal results of actions as active, even if they are of such a kind that, under different circumstances, we could experience them as active. For instance, when we use our right hand to move one of the fingers of our left hand, we will not be aware of the movement of the latter as actively formed; while we typically will if we move the finger in the usual direct way. Moreover, the phenomenological character of mental episodes seems to be able to reflect aspects of their intrinsic nature, but not of their extrinsic causal origin. Accordingly, the experienced activity should pertain also to the nature of the caused representation, and not merely to its active cause. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the fact that we experience the immediate results of mental actions as actively produced can be satisfactorily accounted for only by reference to the fact that these results (i.e., the formed representations) are part of the respective actions, and not merely their immediate causal results. Hence, the second view on the relation between the active and the representational element in simple imaginative projects should be preferred: the two elements are both constitutive parts of the mental action in question.

To forestall possible objections, it is worth noting that the picture just developed is compatible with the idea that all actions are partly or fully constituted by volitions or

tryings. For such a view still suggests an intrinsic difference between a mere willing or trying to act in a certain way, and partly or fully succeeding in that attempt - for instance, between merely willing or trying to raise one's arm without actually bringing about any movement, and willing or trying to raise one's arm with actually bringing about some movement (whether this renders the trying fully successful or not). The two kinds of action will differ constitutionally in that only the latter involves some result of the willing or trying. Furthermore, this intrinsic difference between the two (differently complex) kinds of event will stay in place even if it is additionally maintained that only willings or tryings (whether they lead to some results or not) should count as actions (cf. Hornsby (1980); Pietroski (2000)). According to this more drastic view, raising one's arm, and presumably also thinking a thought, are not actions, but complex events including actions (i.e., the respective willings or tryings); and these actions bring about the other components of the complex events in question. Hence, mere volitions or tryings and the complexes involving both mere volitions or tryings and their results are still said to differ in their nature. Moreover, I take it that this view will (or should) also maintain that the complex event of succeeding in willing or trying to visualize a house is different from seeing a house in that only the former involves the direct determination of what is represented by the underlying motivational states (as mediated by the volition or trying). Now, if it turns out that really only volitions or tryings are actions, my account could not treat imaginings as actions. Instead, it would have to treat them as complex events which consist in actions and certain of their immediately brought about results (i.e., namely episodes the content of which is directly determined by the actions, or episodes which contribute to the formation of the first). But for the sake of simplicity, and since the more drastic view about volitions or tryings seems highly problematic (as well as counterintuitive), I will continue to characterize the respective events of thinking, imagining, moving one's body, and so on, as actions.<sup>22</sup>

It is now time to move on to the second stage in my argument. Imaginative episodes have so far been characterized as being precisely those episodic representations which are or can become part of simple imaginative projects. But it seems more appropriate to go one step further and identify the two kinds of phenomena. The idea is not to say that simple imaginative projects do not involve two different and distinguishable aspects, the activity of forming the representation and the representationality itself - indeed, this would seem rather

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf., for instance, Audi ((1993): ch. 3) and Noordhof (2001b) for arguments against the more drastic view that only volitions or tryings are actions. Note also that some proponents of this view seem to permit that action descriptions can apply to complex events consisting in tryings and their causal results if there is a suitable or non-deviant causal link between the two (Hornsby (1980): 122f.).

absurd since it appears that we *can* distinguish them and talk about their distinctive features, as the comments so far have illustrated. The suggestion is rather that simple imaginative projects - and simple mental projects in general - are episodic in nature: they are *episodes of mental agency*. This means that they could not be less complex than they actually are: we could not simply take away one of the two elements and keep a self-contained mental phenomenon. In particular, the active episodes in question are said not to consist in a passive representational episode to which activity has been added. The active episodes can still involve the same kind of representational element (e.g., the same visual image, or the same entertainment of a proposition) as passive episodes, such as spontaneous images or thoughts. But episodes of mental agency nevertheless differ intrinsically from passive episodes: only the former involve activity. And the representational elements involved cannot, strictly speaking, occur on their own: they have to be part of either a passive or an active episode. Similarly, if there are mere willings or tryings, there will be an intrinsic difference between successfully forming a representation by means of agency and merely willing or trying to do so. And the active element involved in both cases will be able to exist only as part of one of the two phenomena, not on its own.

That this picture adequately reflects the nature of simple mental projects is supported by the fact that the only plausible alternative of how to understand their nature is not appropriate. This alternative model treats the two elements of simple mental projects as two distinct episodes, one of formation and one of representation, combined in an instance of mental agency. For instance, it may be maintained that the successful action of visualizing a face is a mental action which consists of an episode of mere willing or trying to visualize a face, and an independent representational episode (i.e., a visual image of a face). However, this model is untenable because it faces, again, a problem in relation to the explanation of why we experience actively formed representations as actively formed. If it is assumed that simple mental projects consist of two distinct episodes, its two elements would in principle be separable and could occur on their own. But if the representational episode were to appear independently of a preceding instance of active formation, it would clearly not be experienced as actively formed. In contrast, as I have just argued, if the representational episode is part of a mental action (which also involves an instance of active formation), it is experienced as actively formed. Hence, the question arises how linking up a representational episode with an episode of active formation (e.g., perhaps, a mere willing or trying) could influence the phenomenological character of the former. The two episodes might at best be said to be connected by two relational properties: by being causally linked, and by belonging to the same mental project and partly constituting it. But neither seems to be

sufficient to explain why the scope of the awareness of agency is extended from the active formation (e.g., a willing or trying) to the representational episode, once the latter is combined with the former in a simple mental project. That a causal link is not enough has been indicated above. But the connection established by pertaining to the same project does not seem to be sufficient either. The phenomenological character of one episode does not influence that of another just because they come to be parts of the same project. In particular, episodes do not lose their character of passivity when they are included in a mental project which, due to its active nature, involves some actively formed episodes. When we deliberate about what to do in the summer holidays, our decision may be informed by our perceptions (e.g., what our family has to say), our associative thoughts (e.g., reminding us that holiday means for us, first of all, being in a warm, sunny place), or the feelings which accompany our deliberations. But all these episodes are passively caused since their occurrence is the effect of such factors as aspects of the environment and associative links or affective dispositions in the mind. And they do not become active by being included in the project of deliberating, even if we rely on them (e.g., as evidence for our own preferences) when actively forming our conclusion. Hence, the fact that we experience the representations involved in simple imaginative projects as actively formed would remain unexplained if simple mental projects were construed as consisting of two independent mental episodes, one of active formation and another of representation.<sup>23</sup>

The identification of imaginative episodes with simple imaginative projects enables me to formulate my version of the Agency Account, which I put forward as a unified account of imagining. Given that all the central cases of imagining are either episodes or projects, the proposed identity between imaginative episodes and simple imaginative projects leads immediately to the conclusion that all imaginings are imaginative projects. Some of them are complex mental projects; while others involve only a single mental representation. But they all share the feature of being mental projects, and of being purposeful in the way distinctive of imaginative projects. This conclusion, which constitutes the main thesis of my version of the Agency Account of imagining, can be expressed in the following way:

(ACT) A mental phenomenon is an imagining if and only if it is an imaginative project: that is, a mental project with the ultimate intrinsic purpose of actively forming one or

---

<sup>23</sup> In addition, I should adopt the idea that simple mental projects are episodic in nature because my theory of imaginings could otherwise not provide a *common* explanation of the imaginativeness of both imaginative episodes and imaginative projects. For it would otherwise account for the imaginativeness of the latter by reference to their imaginative purpose, while it would account for the imaginativeness of the former by reference to the fact that they are precisely those episodes which are, or can be, part of simple imaginative projects.

more representations with specific and directly determined contents.

This thesis is meant to apply solely to the central cases of imagining described in section 2.2. It might also be understood as capturing a core notion of what it means to be an imaginative mental phenomenon. Accordingly, to imagine something may simply mean to directly form one or more specific representations of it. But my main intention is to take (ACT) to be a claim solely about the nature of the paradigm instances of imagining. In addition, the qualifications I made in relation to my account (IP) of imaginative projects will also apply to this more generally formulated account of imaginings. Keeping this in mind, my proposal amounts to the simple claim that all instances of imagining are instances of an engagement with an imaginative project. My account of imagining therefore characterizes imaginings - whether episodes or projects - by reference to a common feature: namely, their activeness and purposiveness with respect to the direct formation of specific representations. As a result, I maintain that there is really no significant difference between, say, visualizing a static tree and visualizing a galloping unicorn, or between supposing that I am rich and daydreaming about the consequences which that would have for my life. All these examples are concerned with the active formation of representations with directly determined contents and involve respective motivational states. The only noticeable difference (apart from particular differences in content, type, time of occurrence, and so on) consists in the complexity or number of the episodic representations formed.

There may be cases of imaginative episodes or projects in which we actively imagine something, but ultimately against our will, that is, against what we really want to do or what we take to be the best thing to do. In particular, we may produce images and thoughts, which we would in fact prefer to banish from our minds, but cannot help to (continue to) produce. For instance, when we suspect that our partner has an affair with someone else, we may not be able in our jealousy to stop imagining the two together, despite the fact that we would prefer not to picture or think about them because it would make us feel much better, or despite the fact that we know our suspicion to be without any serious evidential foundation. Another example is the case in which our perception of the physical attractiveness of a person leads to our active engagement in some sexual fantasy concerning him or her, although we would rather like not to follow this course of action (e.g., because we take it to be morally inappropriate, because we very much dislike the personality of that person, or simply because it is not the right moment). In both cases, we would like to get rid of the respective images and thoughts. But although these imaginative episodes and projects are actively produced by us, we may not succeed, or only with great effort, in our attempt to

make them disappear again. In some sense, our imaginative activity is "involuntary"; we are "compelled" to engage in it, and the resulting representations are "forced" upon us. But in another sense, it is also clearly voluntary and motivated by some of our motivational states.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, what seems to occur in such cases is some kind of conflict between our different (and not always conscious) motivational states, or our motivational states and our evaluative judgements (if the latter do not possess motivational power). Perhaps, some of these cases can be described as instances of weakness of the will. But they have to be strictly distinguished from (sequences of) spontaneous representations which occur passively and will be discussed in the next chapter.

This concludes the exposition of the Agency Account of imagining that I want to put forward. The subsequent chapter will be concerned with its defence and, in particular, with the defence of the claim that the proposed theory is able to capture all paradigm instances of imagining.

---

<sup>24</sup> It seems that Wittgenstein may have cases like these in mind when he writes "daß Vorstellungen oft gegen unsern Willen sich uns aufdrängen und bleiben, sich nicht verscheuchen lassen. Doch aber kann der Wille gegen sie ankämpfen [that imaginings often force themselves upon us and stay against our will, do not allow themselves to be banished. But the will can fight them - the author]" (Wittgenstein ((1984b): vol. II, section 86); cf. also Budd's interpretation in his ((1989): 105; 109)). Cf. Armstrong ((1969): 298) and Scruton ((1974): 94f.) for very similar statements about the relation between imagining and the will. Cf. also the idea that obsessive or inserted images and thoughts are actively produced by us against our will - though, in the latter case, not acknowledged by us as such (cf. Sartre (2004): 148ff.; Roessler (2001)).

## **6. The Defence of the Agency Account of Imagining**

In the last chapter, I presented the central claim (ACT) of my unified theory of imagining. This thesis maintains that imagining constitutes a form of mental agency which is concerned with the direct formation of representations and which partly or fully determines the specific contents of these states. The directness clause ensures that imagining does not involve the use of passive elements (such as epistemic or merely causal types of determination) as means in the determination of the desired or intended contents. In this final chapter, I will turn to the defence of my version of the Agency Account of imagining. At the beginning of this dissertation, I set up two desiderata for any unified account of imagining (cf. sections 2.1). Such a theory should be extensionally adequate with respect to all central cases of imaginings, as well as all paradigm instances of cognitive phenomena. And it should provide an explanatorily powerful account of the imaginativeness common to all imaginings. In this chapter, I will try to illustrate how the proposed Agency Account of imagining can satisfy these two requirements. The first of the five sections will highlight the explanatory power of (ACT) and discuss the scope of its applicability. The remaining four sections will then be concerned with the discussion of mental phenomena which appear to be problematic for my account and which may constitute counterexamples to it. The focus will be on the possibility of non-representational imaginings and on the issue of whether certain kinds of passive representation - namely spontaneous representations, non-purposive instances of daydreaming, and pictorial experiences - should count as imaginative.

### **6.1. Explanatory Power and Extensional Adequacy**

This section aims to show that the Agency Account of imagining I propose can satisfy the two desiderata on a unified theory of imagining: (i) that it is true of all central cases of imaginings, but not of any paradigm instances of non-imaginative phenomena; and (ii) that it is explanatorily powerful. I will discuss the two requirements in reverse order, beginning with the explanatory power of my theory. There should be no doubt that its main thesis - that all imaginings are mental projects of a particular kind, as specified by (ACT) - is a substantial and illuminating claim. It says something very specific about the nature of imaginings. And in contrast to, say, negation claims, it is not in obvious need of supplementary theses about the constitution of imaginings. Moreover, it seems very reasonable to maintain that the thesis (ACT) - assuming that it is true - identifies the most fundamental feature which imaginings have in common and which is responsible for their

imaginativeness. The candidate feature is, of course, the property of being a mental project with the purpose of directly producing specific representations. And its basicness appears to be very difficult to deny. There does not seem to be any other, more fundamental, property which all the bearers of the complex feature in question have in common, and which is responsible for their exemplification of that feature. In particular, as I have argued in chapter 4, the property of lacking the capacity to provide knowledge - or to show any of the cognitive features necessarily linked to the provision of knowledge - cannot account for the common imaginativeness of imaginings, given that some imaginings (such as the two counterexamples to (C)) can cognize reality, while others (affective imaginings and imaginative projects) do not differ from their non-imaginative counterparts in their lack of cognitive features. On the other hand, the cognitive features which imaginings lack, but which are not necessarily linked to the provision of knowledge, do not seem to be responsible for the specific active character of imaginings either. There is no good reason to maintain that imaginings involve the active and direct determination of what they specifically represent *because* they do not possess a cognitive attitude, are not *prima facie* reasons for belief, or do not have the function or aim of providing knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the complex feature said to be characteristic of imaginings by (ACT) - that is, the feature of being a mental project with the purpose of directly forming representations with particular contents - seems to resist any elucidation in terms of a more fundamental property.

Indeed, the introduction of this complex feature can help to distinguish imaginative phenomena from cognitive ones and, it seems, to explain why imaginings always lack the cognitive features which are not necessary for the provision of knowledge (i.e., a cognitive attitude, the status as *prima facie* reasons, and the function or aim of cognizing reality). The difference in purpose between (complex) imaginative and cognitive projects has already been noted in the last chapter: while the latter aim at the production of cognizing representations, the former aim at the production of representations with specific contents. But the phenomenological and functional differences between imaginative and cognitive episodes may also be accounted for by reference to the particular kind of activity distinctive of imaginings. Since our motivational states determine what our imaginings represent, the latter do not usually cognize reality. For our activity of imagining does not normally bring it

---

<sup>1</sup> There would perhaps be a good reason if one of these three features were necessarily linked to cognition, and if imaginings were never able to cognize reality. For it might then be argued that the lack of any kind of cognitive constraints on imaginings explains why we have voluntary control over what they represent. However, some imaginings can be constrained by what reality is like (namely when we decide and take good care that they are so constrained, as in the two counterexamples to (C)); while others are not of the right kind of mental category as to allow the idea of cognitive constraints to make any sense (as in the case of affective imaginings and imaginative projects). Besides, the three cognitive features just mentioned do not seem to be necessary for the provision of knowledge.

about that the contents of the formed imaginings are reliably (or otherwise epistemically appropriately) linked to whatever entities in reality they may be about. As illustrated in section 4.2, we have to ensure the required epistemic soundness ourselves if we want to form cognizing imaginings. Now, it would indeed be surprising if representations, the content of which is up to us and which most of the time do not cognize reality, possessed an evolutionary or otherwise acquired function or aim of doing so. Moreover, given that imaginative episodes are direct mental actions, they - or at least their relevant aspects, including their content - will normally be experienced as actively determined. In particular, we will usually take their contents to be directly motivated by our underlying desires or intentions. But that we recognize imaginings and their contents as the result of our own agency seems to help explain why we also typically do not take them to reliably represent the world. It is not surprising, then, that in most cases we do not rely on them in belief (nor, presumably, in action); and, hence, that they do not show the same epistemic role as cognitions.

It is less obvious whether - and if so, how - the absence of a cognitive attitude is linked to the presence of agency; or what the relation between the experience of agency and the experience of endorsement may be (e.g., the two may, for some reason, be incompatible with each other). And I cannot provide a satisfactory answer to these issues here. The only thing that I would like to stress is that it would not make any difference for our lack of epistemic trust in imaginings if we experienced them as purporting to be true. For we would nevertheless continue to take their contents to be determined by us. And this would surely serve in most cases as a sufficient defeater concerning our potential epistemic reliance on them - the only exception being, of course, cases in which we actively and knowingly ensure the reliability of the imaginings in question. Accordingly, although the defeating character of the experience of imaginings as active may be undermined or outweighed by appropriate additional beliefs about the epistemically sound origin of the imaginings in our own activity, these cases are rare and do not alter the typical lack of epistemic trust that we show towards our imaginings. And even the presence of a cognitive attitude would not change this situation.<sup>2</sup> Hence, one may be able to conclude that there is no good reason to

---

<sup>2</sup> In fact, a similar problem seems to arise in cases in which we act on our desire or intention to induce cognitions in us by means of appropriate drugs (or similar means, such as going to the hypnotist). It seems that the drugs would have to erase our knowledge of the fact that the respective perceptions, memories or beliefs have been brought about in this way. Otherwise, we would not trust the induced perceptions or memories and would feel compelled to revise the induced beliefs. This problem is noted, among others, by Shoemaker (1998); and it seems to be exploited in Williams' argument against the possibility to form beliefs by merely deliberately willing them into existence (cf. Williams (1970)). Papineau is also aware of this problem, but suggests the existence of mechanisms of self-deception (or similar mental factors) which allow for the occurrence of cases of willed beliefs (cf. Papineau (1999)).

assume that imaginings involve a cognitive attitude as part of their phenomenological character. At least, such an involvement would not alter our treatment of them; nor would it reflect any particular aspect of the nature of imaginings. Now, although this could not fully explain why imaginings do not involve a cognitive attitude, it might at least indicate that the underlying factors responsible for the endorsing attitude of cognitions - whatever they may be - are not present in the case of imaginings. For it may be plausible to maintain that we usually trust cognitions and rely on them in belief (and presumably action) partly because they purport to be true. Hence, the underlying factors responsible for the presence of the cognitive attitude may also be ultimately responsible for the presence of our trust in cognitions.<sup>3</sup> And that imaginings lack the underlying factors responsible for epistemic trust may be reason enough to conclude that they also lack the underlying factors responsible for the presence of the cognitive attitude. Hence, the Agency Account seems to be in the position to at least suggest a plausible explanation of why imaginative episodes do not possess the features characteristic of cognitions, namely their cognitive attitude, their typical epistemic role, and their function or aim of providing knowledge. Imaginings appear to lack these features partly because of the active and direct determination of their contents, and not the other way round.

The other desideratum for a unified account of imagining is extensional adequacy. It requires of such a theory that it is true of all central cases of imagining, but not of any paradigm instances of non-imaginative phenomena, in particular not of cognitive ones. Let me begin with the second and negative part of this requirement. As I have already mentioned (cf. note 11 in chapter 1), it should be - and is widely - accepted that we do not have voluntary control over what our cognitions represent. Accordingly, (ACT) does not apply to perceptions, memories, judgements or beliefs. It is likewise reasonable to assume that other non-imaginative kinds of representation - such as emotions, desires, intentions, and so on<sup>4</sup> - resist any attempt at actively and directly determining what they represent. We

---

<sup>3</sup> It seems plausible to argue that the underlying factors leading us to trust cognitions include their phenomenologically salient cognitive attitude. The idea is that we trust them (and take them to be *prima facie* reasons for belief) partly because we experience them as purporting to be (non-accidentally) true (cf. note 26 in chapter 2). But which underlying factors are relevant is, ultimately, a matter of a theory which satisfactorily explains why cognitive episodes involve a cognitive attitude (and perhaps also their typical epistemic role). However, here is neither the place, nor the need to engage further with this aspect of the nature of cognitions.

<sup>4</sup> There are two kinds of mental phenomena which escape easy classification, but seem to be closely related to intellectual imagining: namely entertaining a proposition and wondering whether something is the case. Both would need further investigation, but here I will have the time only to suggest some ways in which a proponent of the Agency Account of imagining may deal with them. (Thanks to Davor Bodrozic and Gianfranco Soldati for helpful comments.)

Entertaining a proposition (or a thought; or an intellectual content) may be understood in two ways. On the one hand, it may simply mean having a certain propositional content in one's mind as part of an intellectual episode (cf. Walton (1990): 20). On the other, it may mean to actively

cannot bring ourselves to feel love for a certain person or to desire her well-being simply by merely willing to do so, just as we cannot bring ourselves to believe that she is nice or to remember her as beautiful by mere decision to do so (cf., for instance, Pink (1996) for a defence of the involuntariness of decisions). In all these cases, we can only indirectly influence the occurrence of the respective mental states - for instance, by going to a hypnotist or manipulating the evidence available to us. And the proposed theory of imagining accounts for the non-imaginativeness of these states precisely by reference to this aspect of their nature. But it also captures the central cases of non-imaginative mental projects, whether they aim at the acquisition of knowledge, the appearance of certain feelings or moods, the making of a decision, and so on. Again, they are non-imaginative because they do not possess an imaginative purpose.<sup>5</sup> The central cases of non-imaginative phenomena do not satisfy (ACT) because what they represent is either passively or indirectly determined.

But as it seems, (ACT) is extensionally adequate not only with respect to the paradigm instances of non-imaginative phenomena, but also with respect to the central cases of imaginings. Imaginative projects obviously satisfy the account of imagining expressed by (ACT). In particular, I have argued that there cannot be non-purposive mental projects (cf. section 5.1); and that imaginative projects should be characterized in terms of the purpose of forming representations with directly determined specific contents. Many internal imaginings are imaginative projects (cf. Hopkins (1998): ch. 7) and therefore fit my account as well. The internal imaginings in question are those consisting of at least two distinct

---

bring about an episode with such a content. Entertaining a proposition in the first (and perhaps more natural) sense seems to be involved in any kind of intellectual representation, whether it is a judgement, occurrent desire, supposition, and so on. But it does not seem to constitute a self-containing mental phenomenon (e.g., a simple mental episode), let alone an imaginative one. In contrast, entertaining a proposition in the sense of actively thinking something involves more than having a proposition in mind: it includes also at least the activity of forming the respective representation; and it seems plausible to take it to be imaginative. This is compatible with the idea that merely actively imagining (or thinking) something is less committal or constrained than supposing it as part of, say, a fictional story, hypothetical inference, thought experiment or game of make-believe (cf. sections 2.2 and 5.4).

Merely to wonder whether something is the case, on the other hand, means to consider some or all of the alternative propositions, without actually endorsing any of them. Someone may thus ask himself whether we have knowledge about the external world, or whether God exists, but prefer not to form any fixed opinion about these matters. Such cases of wondering seem to involve the active determination of what is represented. But it is not absolutely clear whether wondering should be analysed as having intellectual imagining as one of its constituents (as Frege (1980) seems to believe); or whether wondering should rather be seen as a propositional attitude on the same level as supposing. My own proposal would be to treat wondering as the engagement with a mental project the purpose of which is to do whatever is involved in the pursuit of a cognitive project (e.g., considering the different propositions and the evidence available for them) except the formation of a conclusion. Indeed, it may be an explicit part of the purpose of certain projects of wondering to abstain from any judgement.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also the discussion of guesses in note 18 in chapter 5.

episodes: an imagining of a mental episode together with some higher-order representation about the imagined nature of that episode. For instance, I may imagine a visual perception as of some land appearing on the horizon and simultaneously imagine that my imagined representation is the perception of Columbus when he thought he had reached India. We actively engage in such internal imaginings, and we do so for reasons related to the formation of specific representations. My internal imagining may be motivated by, say, my intention to imagine being Columbus when he first saw land. But perhaps not all imaginings of mental episodes are complex in the way described: there may also be imaginative episodes which count as episodic instances of internal imagining. For instance, it has been argued that visualizing something is best analysed as imagining seeing it, while the latter is understood to involve a sensory image and thought-like element which is dependent on the image and could not occur on its own (Peacocke (1987)). Perhaps there are such cases; and perhaps they should be treated as episodic phenomena, rather than mental complexes.

This leads us to consider imaginative episodes and their prospect of satisfying (ACT). It should be uncontroversial that many imaginative episodes are in conformity with my account in virtue of their active and purposive nature. When we suppose that it is raining, visualize a palm tree, imagine hearing a melody, and so on, we (at least normally) act on the desire or intention to produce mental representations of this kind. Similarly, if simple cases of internal imagining, such as imagining seeing a face, are to be understood as episodic, they should likewise be taken to be something that we actively do on the basis of some desire or intention to form respective representations. And the Agency Account presented also captures imaginative episodes which are not purely representational. Their particular imaginative purposes will depend on whether cases like imagining an itch on our arm or imagining feeling jealous about a person are to be treated as internal imaginings (i.e., imaginings which have the respective feelings or sensations as their intentional object), or as affective imaginings (i.e., representational imaginative episodes with an affective character), or as both. The first will be the result of a desire or intention to directly produce representations of certain affective episodes, while the second will be the result of a desire or intention to produce representations with a specific content and certain affective aspects. The active character of affective imaginings and internal imaginings of feelings distinguishes them strictly from the passive and real emotions which we feel towards fictions and which occur unbidden. In particular, there are no instances of spontaneously or otherwise passively caused imagined feelings: we are not suddenly overcome by an imagined itch, or imagined jealousy.

What all these examples of imaginative episodes and projects illustrate is that the general purpose of imagining - that is, the aim of directly forming representations with specific contents - can be realized in many different forms: by referring to more or less specific contents to be imagined; by including a determination of the type of representation; by referring to particular types of representation; by aiming at episodic or more complex representations; and so on. And the examples also show that (most of) the central cases of imagining - all instances of imaginative projects and at least the typical instances of sensory, intellectual, affective or internal imagining - are captured by my theory of imagining.

However, many philosophers have suggested that there are not only instances of active and representational imagining, such as the ones just discussed, but also instances of imagining which lack representationality or are involuntary, and hence seem to constitute counterexamples to my account. The relevant cases can be divided into two groups, depending on whether they cast doubt on the requirement that imaginings have to be representational, or on the requirement that what is imagined has to be determined actively and directly (i.e., without the involvement of passive means for the determination of what is represented). In the next section of this chapter, I will address the issue of whether there are non-representational imaginings with reference to the example of affective imaginings corresponding to (potentially) non-representational feelings (e.g., of pain, or of anxiety). Given that my account specifies that imaginings are formed with the purpose of producing representations, such cases could not be captured by it. Accordingly, I will present an argument against the plausibility of the existence of non-representational imaginings. In the remaining three sections, I will turn to members of the second group of cases, that is, to representations which are passive, but nevertheless seem to be, or may be taken to be, imaginative. Some of the examples usually put forward as passive imaginings do not seem to allow for any activity with respect to the determination of what they represent. Pictorial experiences and pathological or otherwise psychologically unusual representations (e.g., those caused by mental disorders or hallucinogenic drugs) belong to this group of mental phenomena: they have often been taken to be convincing counterexamples to the Agency Account of imagining.<sup>6</sup> Other proposed counterexamples seem to be of such a nature that, although they are actually passive, they might have involved imaginative activity under different circumstances. Spontaneous images and thoughts (as they may occur in a hypnagogic state of mind), associative or otherwise passive daydreams (e.g., when we "let

---

<sup>6</sup> Walton (1990): 293ff. and O'Shaughnessy (2000): 346ff. present pictorial experiences as imaginative, while Collingwood (1958): 179 and O'Shaughnessy (2000): 350f. add pathological or psychologically unusual phenomena. Explicit statements of the threat of these phenomena for the Agency Account can be found in O'Shaughnessy (2000): ch. 11 and Collingwood (1958): 179.

our mind wander off freely"), and sometimes also real dreams (which may allow for lucid dreaming), have been interpreted in this way.<sup>7</sup> My focus will be on spontaneous images and thoughts (including those of the insane or intoxicated), non-purposive instances of daydreaming, and pictorial experience. I will illustrate why it might be initially plausible to think of these three phenomena as instances of passive imagining, but will argue against this initial plausibility and try to show that they should at best be taken to be very closely linked to imagining.<sup>8</sup>

It appears that there is an easier way of dealing with some of the counterexamples. The second kind of passive imaginings - that is, those which in principle allow for the involvement of imaginative activity - seems to be amenable to a modified version of the Agency Account that demands for imaginings merely the possibility, but not necessarily the actuality, of voluntary control over what is represented.<sup>9</sup> But adopting such a view is untenable since - as I argued in the last chapter (and will mention again below) - the active character of mental episodes is intrinsic and essential to them. Accordingly, episodes which actually occur passively could not as such be active under different circumstances: they would have to undergo a change in their constitution. In addition, the modified version cannot account for the first kind of passive imaginings, which do not allow for the active determination of what they represent under any circumstances. And finally, as I will argue in the remainder of this chapter, there is no good reason to assume that any of the alleged cases of passive imagining mentioned are indeed imaginative. It is therefore both unreasonable and unnecessary for a proponent of the Agency Account to weaken his theory in the way suggested (cf. also note 12 below). I will thus turn to the defence of the stronger version of the Agency Account - as embodied in the claim (ACT) - against the challenge that there are some non-representational or passive imaginings.

## 6.2. Non-Representational Imaginings

I will begin with the issue of whether there could be non-representational imaginative episodes. If there were such states, they presumably would count as central cases of

---

<sup>7</sup> Casey (1976): chs. 1 and 3 and Walton (1990): 13ff. propose the first two as examples of passive imagining, while O'Shaughnessy (2000): 344f. stresses the imaginative character of the last.

<sup>8</sup> Note that many other cases, which might be put forward as potential counterexamples to (ACT), can be dealt with by reference to the qualifications put forward in section 5.4, which specify how the Agency Account can allow for the involvement of passive elements in certain unproblematic ways.

<sup>9</sup> This weakened version of the Agency Account is put forward by Casey (1976): 34f. and 63ff.; and perhaps also Walton (1990): 13ff. and Collingwood (1958): chs. 9 and 10.

imagining and hence as constituting a problem for my account, which takes all imaginings to be the result of the purposive activity of directly forming *representations* of a certain kind. If there were non-representational imaginings, their formation could not be linked to such a purpose. The only possible examples of non-representational imaginings seem to be affective imaginings corresponding to non-representational and non-imaginative affective episodes, such as feelings of pain or orgasm, or feelings or moods of anxiety or loneliness. It is certainly not uncontroversial whether there are any non-representational (or non-intentional) mental phenomena (cf. Crane (2001): ch. 24 for a defence of the intentionality of the mental). But for the sake of argument, let me assume that pains and certain other feelings or moods are non-representational. What I will argue is that, even if this is the case, imagined pains (or imaginatively felt pains) and similar affective imaginings still have to be representational. More precisely, they have to be internal imaginings of real episodes of pain or similar affective episodes. I will confine my considerations to pains. But I take it that they apply to other candidates for non-representational episodes and their respective experiential features as well.

Consider the case of an imagined pain. Such an imaginative episode will differ phenomenologically from real instances of pain. For instance, we will not come to find the former unbearable in the same way as the latter: we will not cry or faint as a consequence of experiencing it. In this respect, imagined and remembered pains seem to be much closer to each other than to real ones. Nevertheless, imagined (and remembered) pains still involve some form of experiential awareness of pain: they have some experienced painfulness about them. In particular, they differ from merely thinking or intellectually imagining that oneself (or another person) has a pain. Moreover, the difference between imagined and really felt pains does not seem to be a matter of degree (e.g., in determinacy, intensity or "vivacity"). We do often have real pains which are not very intense or determinate, but which we nevertheless experience as real pains, and not merely as imagined ones. And it is also plausible to assume that we can imagine rather strong and specific pains, without thereby beginning to really feel pain. Likewise, the difference cannot be one in attitude. If pains are taken to be non-representational, it does not make much sense to speak of an attitude, given that there is no content (or intentional object) at which the attitude might be directed. Non-representational feelings may be experienced as being actually present. But they cannot be experienced as indicating the actual presence of something other than themselves. The only plausible alternative is to assume that the difference between real and imagined pains is due to the fact that imagining (and perhaps also remembering) pain involves a different experiential element from really feeling pain. The idea is that, while having a real pain

involves (or consists in) the experience of *real pain*, imagining a pain involves (or consists in) the experience of *an echo of real pain*. And this proposal may be made more specific by claiming that all instances of imagined pain are instances of internally imagining pain: that is, instances of imagining the experience of real pain. The proposal is that, given that real pains involve the experiential feature of painfulness, imaginative representations of them will involve such an experiential aspect as well - however, only by representing it, and without themselves instantiating it (i.e., without themselves becoming real pains).<sup>10</sup> In fact, it seems difficult to conceive of a non-representational echo thesis (or, for that matter, another kind of claim) about imagined pains which could explain the fact that imagined pains are not real pains (and not experienced as such), but nevertheless involve some kind of experience of painfulness. The only obvious solution seems to say that they represent painfulness, without really being painful.

As the situation is not likely to be different for other examples of affective imaginings corresponding to non-representational episodes of feelings or moods, it should be accepted that there are no non-representational imaginings. Accordingly, instances of imagining pain or similar affective imaginings can be accommodated by my proposal: they are imaginings formed with the purpose of directly producing a representation of how it feels, say, to be in pain. This may also explain why discussions of imagining usually have not addressed the issue of non-representational imaginings, or even explicitly mentioned their actual or possible existence.

### **6.3. Spontaneous Images and Thoughts**

Let me now turn to spontaneous images and thoughts, that is, to the first potential examples of imaginings with a passively determined content. *Spontaneous representations* can be characterized as non-cognitive sensory or intellectual representations which occur entirely unwilling in our minds. This means minimally that they lack a cognitive attitude and the epistemic role typical of cognitions; and that they arise in an unsolicited manner, that is, do not involve any agency or effort on behalf of the subject (cf. Casey (1976): 34f.; 68f.). They are thus passive through and through, and not determined by any of our motivational states. Examples are thoughts that simply cross our minds, or images that appear unbidden when we close our eyes (perhaps including hypnagogic representations). As Casey has plausibly

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Martin (2002): section 3 for such a claim about imagined itches. My considerations about imagined pain have been informed by his considerations, but do not aim to accurately reflect them.

observed, the fact that spontaneous episodes arise unwilled and without the involvement of any effort has the consequence that they have the capacity to surprise us. For we do not know in advance what they will represent and of what type of representation they will be; or even that they will appear (Casey (1976): 34; 63). In this respect, they strictly differ from the examples of "involuntary" imaginings introduced at the end of the last chapter, which we actively bring about, though contrary to what we really want or take to be the best course of action.

Spontaneous representations may still originate in some of our motivational states, as long as these merely cause their occurrence, or are determining them only by some unconscious processes. More often, however, the occurrence of spontaneous representations will be due to associative links, mental dispositions, and similar phenomena. Non-mental causes, such as certain drugs or cerebral events, may bring them about as well. Another important feature of spontaneous images and thoughts is that they are by their very nature fleeting and elusive in character - or, as Casey puts it, they occur "instantaneously [...] and without any sense of drawn-out duration" (Casey (1976): 34). In particular, they are typically transitory and do not involve any of the development which active and deliberate imagining may include (cf. Casey (1976): 34f.; 70f.). As a consequence, they usually disappear as quickly as they come, and as soon as some new representations spontaneously enter our stream of consciousness or are actively formed by us. For instance, when we think about a certain problem, a thought may suddenly occur to us. But if we recognize it as irrelevant for our considerations, we will not dwell on it further; and it will soon vanish again. Similarly, when we close our eyes, we may just let the spontaneously arising images follow each other for a while. They will promptly fade away and be replaced by other images, before we stop their movie-like sequence by opening our eyes again and paying attention to what we can see around us.

But under certain circumstances, spontaneously appearing contents can remain in existence for more than a very short period. Sometimes, this happens in the context of psychologically unusual or pathological cases in which the underlying causes continue to be effective and may even prevent us from banishing the respective representations. Taking hallucinogenic drugs will typically have such results. But the causes may also lie in one's unconsciousness or in some psychological disorder, as in the case of Macbeth's visions of the dagger or of Banquo.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): 346ff., 479. It may not always be easy to decide whether such cases indeed lack any agency on behalf of the subject. Some seemingly spontaneous representations may in fact involve such activity which is, however, not acknowledged by the subject as agency, or not as his own agency (cf. Roessler (2001) on inserted thoughts). Cases in which the agency is acknowledged as one's own, but is in conflict with some of one's further desires or intentions, are

In normal subjects, however, spontaneous images and thoughts are typically sustained and further developed by our own agency. For instance, we may find a thought coming to us worthy of further consideration and may thus decide to investigate the truth-value of its proposition. As a consequence, we will begin to actively entertain the proposition (perhaps in the back of our mind) while looking at some relevant evidence. Or we may try to arrest some of the fleeting visual images occurring in us, or perhaps to further modify, develop or otherwise work with them, by engaging in activities of visualizing (cf. Casey (1976): 63ff.). Our purpose in doing this may be, say, to directly produce visual representations similar to the initial images. What happens in both the intellectual and the sensory case is that we sustain the spontaneously arisen contents beyond their usual short duration by including them in, and adjusting them to, certain mental projects. This presupposes, of course, that the respective contents are subject to the will (i.e., that we can actively influence or terminate them). But apart from unusual or pathological situations, this seems to be normally the case.

However, actively sustaining spontaneously occurring representational elements has the further consequence that they will thereby lose their spontaneity, because they will cease to be passively determined. That is, as soon as they are subjected to an activity of sustaining or changing, the spontaneous representations are turned into (or, perhaps better, succeeded by) mental states of some other kind, namely active thoughts and images (cf. Casey (1976): 64ff.). The spontaneously arisen contents may continue to exist; but not their spontaneity. The representational elements cease to be spontaneous because they become actively sustained as part of their inclusion in the mental project in question (cf. Casey (1976): 64ff.). As a result, the change from passivity to activity is accompanied by a change in kind of mental episode: a spontaneous representation is replaced by an active representation which involves the same representational element as the former, to the extent to which we have not already actively changed what it represents. The spontaneous and the active episodes differ in kind, therefore, for two reasons. On the one hand, the spontaneity of representations has been essentially characterized in terms of their passivity. Accordingly, a loss of passivity means a loss of spontaneity. And on the other hand, active and passive episodes of representation differ intrinsically. As I argued in the previous chapter (cf. section 5.5), actively formed representations are (part of) episodes of mental agency and are as such intimately linked to their active formation and experienced as actively formed. But this involvement of agency distinguishes them intrinsically from passive episodic

---

different. Someone may be obsessed by a certain thought and not be able to banish it from his mind, but still recognize himself as actively thinking it, or even wanting to think it (cf. the "involuntary" imaginings discussed in section 5.5).

representations.<sup>12</sup> Hence, once we begin to actively sustain spontaneously appearing representational elements, they become part of a new kind of mental episode.

One consequence of this is that spontaneous images and thoughts - despite being non-imaginative - seem to be much more similar to imaginings than to cognitions in respect of their susceptibility to imaginative activity. If we want to include spontaneous representations into our imaginative projects or, alternatively, use (aspects of) their representational elements in these projects, we have to actively sustain the spontaneously occurring representational elements by means of imaginative activity. And the activity required to sustain spontaneously occurring contents has then to concern both their presence and the determination of their content. For except in unusual or abnormal cases, whatever originally causally determined their occurrence and specific nature becomes ineffective very quickly - which is why they are so fleeting in the first place. But the impact of the imaginative agency has the result that the nature of the episodes, of which the representational elements in question are part, change fundamentally from being passive to being active. Now, it seems that no kind of non-imaginative representations, apart from spontaneous ones, allows for such a kind of active and transformatory influence. In particular, cognitions do not become active when they are included into imaginative projects. Perceptions, judgements or memories are not altered in their passive character when they become part of such a project. And when we merely rely on the representational elements of perceptions, memories or judgements in forming imaginative episodes, our use of (aspects of) the respective representational elements does not change the nature of the cognitions concerned either. Hence, spontaneous representations seem to be much more similar to imaginings than to cognitions in that they provide easily sustainable or influenceable representational material for the activity of imagining and can be turned into imaginative episodes, or included in imaginative projects, simply by becoming actively sustained. This does not mean, however, that spontaneous representations are imaginative. In fact, they are not, given that they are passive with respect to the determination of their

<sup>12</sup> This also rules out the possibility of accommodating spontaneous representations as imaginative by introducing a modality clause into (ACT), according to which imaginings would be characterized as precisely those phenomena the occurrence and content of which *could* be actively and directly determined or influenced under appropriate circumstances (cf. section 6.1 above). For this would be in conflict with the idea that activity is not a contingent and relational feature of representations: representations of one and the same kind (e.g., spontaneous ones) cannot be sometimes active and sometimes not. In addition, there would still be no good reason to accept spontaneous representations as imaginative and, therefore, to modify (ACT) accordingly. Also, the introduced modality is problematic. If it were specified in terms of what normal or the most skilled human beings could do, many genuine types of imagining would be left out (e.g., visualizing an object with twenty thousand sides). If, on the other hand, it were specified in terms of what any kind of possible being could do, it would presumably capture non-imaginative phenomena as well (e.g., there may be creatures (God?) that may be able to will cognitions - or at least states which are phenomenologically indistinguishable from cognitions - into existence).

contents. Only those representations that are the result of the active sustaining of spontaneous images or thoughts should count as imaginative.<sup>13</sup>

Despite these considerations, it has not been uncommon to take spontaneous representations to be imaginative (Sartre (2004): 19; Casey (1976): 34 and 63ff.; Peacocke (1985): 26f.); O'Shaughnessy (2000): 344f. and 349ff.). But there is no good reason to embrace this conclusion. The main motivation for the categorization of spontaneous representations as imaginings seems to be their non-cognitivity: for instance, that they cannot cognize reality, at least not in the same ways as perceptions and beliefs (cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): *ibid.*); or that they do not involve a cognitive attitude (cf. Sartre (2004): 12f.; 181f. on the difference between sensory imaginings and, respectively, perceptions or sensory memories).<sup>14</sup> The respective negation claims about spontaneous representations may very well be true. And, as a consequence, spontaneous images and thoughts may resemble imaginings more than cognitions, not only in their easy subjection to the will, but also in their phenomenology and their role in cognition. But, as I have argued at length above, the non-cognitivity of imaginings is neither unique to them, nor responsible for their imaginative status (cf. chapter 4). Hence, the similarity between spontaneous and imaginative representations in this respect does not suffice to justify the classification of the former as a subclass of the latter. On the other hand, spontaneous representations do not seem to share another distinctive feature which might plausibly be said to be sufficient for imaginativeness. In particular, they share their passive occurrence and their origin in mental or cerebral causes with many cognitive representations, such as hallucinatory perceptions and associatively triggered kinds of memory. The claim that spontaneous representations are imaginative remains, therefore, completely unfounded. Instead, they are only very similar to imaginings in important respects - a fact which the Agency Account of imagining can satisfactorily identify and explain. It is important to note that this line of reasoning will apply, not only to normal and short-lived instances of spontaneous representation, but also to spontaneous images and thoughts that are the result of mental disorders, subconscious forces or hallucinogenic substances and which may stay in existence for longer periods of time, and usually against our will. The latter may likewise be said to be non-cognitive because of their

---

<sup>13</sup> Thanks to Matthew Nudds for suggesting the possibility of treating spontaneous representations as non-imaginative material for imagining; and to Barry Smith for further discussions.

<sup>14</sup> Casey does not provide any specific support for his position. Sartre also notes similarities between spontaneous images and cases of active visualizing (e.g., their non-observationality, or their negating attitude towards their objects: cf. Sartre (2004): ch. 1. But these similarities also hold between visual imaginings and visual memories (as Sartre accepts: 10; 181) and hence do not seem to be relevant for the imaginativeness of episodes.

lack of a cognitive attitude, or their incapacity to cognize reality. But again, and for the same reasons, this is not enough to render them imaginative.<sup>15</sup>

## 6.4. Daydreaming

In this section, I will discuss the nature of daydreaming and, in particular, of what might be taken to be non-purposive instances of daydreaming. One might think that there are two kinds of daydreams, namely, purposive and non-purposive: while the first are unified and guided by an imaginative purpose, the second are not. As I will illustrate shortly, it seems plausible to assume that there are daydreams of the first kind. But they do not pose a particular problem for my account of imagining, given that they make up imaginative projects. By contrast, daydreams of the second kind would constitute counterexamples to my theory of imagining, since they are said - contrary to (ACT) - not to be unified and guided by an imaginative purpose. The crucial question is thus whether there are such non-purposive daydreams.

Before I address this issue, it will however be helpful to say a bit more about what it means for daydreams to be purposive. It is characteristic of purposive daydreams that there is some underlying motivational state which determines their episodic constituents, course and general content. That is, the motivational state specifies (more or less generally) what we are going to daydream about; and it guides our activity of daydreaming by moving us to generate or include episodes with relevant contents, and to link them to each other in accordance with the general representational purpose of the activity of daydreaming in question. Thereby, instances of purposive daydreaming often start off from an assumed premise, generally reflecting the intended content of the activity of daydreaming, and are then actively developed from there step by step, in a way very similar to that of stories. For instance, daydreaming about climbing Mount Everest will typically originate in an intention or desire to directly form representations that are concerned with, and jointly constitute an adequate representation of, such a climb. Daydreaming with this general purpose in mind may begin with the assumption that I am about to climb Mount Everest, and progress from there by means of the production or incorporation of a series of representations, linked to each other and to the initial assumption in virtue of the overall purpose of representing a

---

<sup>15</sup> Wittgenstein also seems to embrace the view that these kinds of states are non-imaginative when he writes: "Vorstellungen sind nicht Halluzinationen, auch nicht Einbildungen [Imaginings are not hallucinations, nor figments - the author]" (Wittgenstein (1984a): section 621, and (1984b): vol. II, section 63).

climb of Mount Everest. Such representations may concern the preparations for the climb, the actual way up the mountain, the view of the surrounding landscape, the intermingled feelings of exhaustion, cold, fear, excitement and craziness, the distancing thought expressing my knowledge that I could never actually bring myself to climb Mount Everest, the consideration of what might bring people to attempt the climb, the experience of reaching the summit and of the sudden irrelevance of everything (including one's safe return), and so on. All these mental episodes and projects make up the complex activity of daydreaming about how it would be to climb Mount Everest. Their occurrence, content and relationship to each other are motivated and rationalized by the motivational states establishing the general purpose of that activity; and together, they contribute to the achievement of that purpose. It is in this sense that daydreaming and its development can be guided by an overall purpose. And, of course, the particular nature of such activities of purposive daydreaming has two further consequences. First, it ensures that these activities constitute mental projects (though possibly open-ended ones). And second, it marks them as *imaginative* projects, given that their overall purpose is to directly form representations with specific contents (e.g., contributing to the representation of a climb of Mount Everest). Hence, purposive daydreams can be accommodated by my account of imagining since they satisfy its main requirement: that imaginings are mental projects aiming at the direct production of representations with a specific content. And they satisfy that requirement precisely because they possess an imaginative purpose.

It is now the time to ask whether there can be instances of daydreaming which are not unified and guided by such a purpose. Initially plausible candidates for non-purposive daydreams are sequences of merely associatively linked representational and other episodes.<sup>16</sup> Such sequences may occur when we are relaxed and "let our mind wander off freely" - for instance, when we are taking a bath, preparing to go to sleep or meditating, or are sitting in a train and looking outside without paying much attention to the details of the passing landscape. What often happens in such cases is that we abstain from any active intervention and, so to speak, "lean back" and "watch" the series of mental episodes which is unfolding in our minds due to associative and other passive forces, and without our active contribution. Here is how James describes the associative phenomena that I have in mind:<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> I assume here that the following considerations will apply to other potential connections between successive mental phenomena, as long as they are similar to association in that they likewise do not involve imaginative activity. A sequence of hypnagogic representations may be a good example of such a series which does not (only) involve associative connections.

<sup>17</sup> Though he does not seem to clearly distinguish between fully associatively linked sequences of episodes (which are at issue here) and associatively linked purposive daydreams (which will be at issue further below).

[...] our musings pursue an erratic course, swerving continually into some new direction traced by the shifting play of interest as it ever falls on some partial item in each complex representation that is evoked. Thus it so often comes about that we find ourselves thinking at two nearly adjacent moments of things separated by the whole diameter of space and time. Not till we carefully recall each step of our cogitation do we see how naturally we came [...] to pass from one to the other. Thus, for instance, after looking at my clock just now (1879), I found myself thinking of a recent resolution in the Senate about our legal-tender notes. The clock had called up the image of the man who had repaired its gong. He had suggested the jeweller's shop where I had last seen him; that shop, some shirt-studs which I had bought there; they, the value of gold and its recent decline; the latter, the equal value of greenbacks, and this, naturally, the question of how long they were to last, and of the Bayard proposition. [...] Every reader who will arrest himself at any moment and say "How came I to be thinking of just this?" will be sure to trace a train of representations linked together by lines of contiguity and points of interest inextricably combined. This is the ordinary process of the association of ideas as it spontaneously goes on in average minds. (James (1981): 539f.)

And James continues to present another example taken from Hobbes:

In a Discourse of our present civill warre, what could seem more impertinent, than to ask (as one did) what was the value of a Roman Penny? Yet the Cohærence to me was manifest enough. For the Thought of the warre, introduced the Thought of the delivering up the King to his Enemies; The Thought of that, brought in the Thought of the delivering up of Christ; and that again the Thought of the 30 pence, which was the price of that treason: and thence easily followed that malicious question; and all this in a moment of time; for Thought is quick. (Hobbes (1996): part 1, chap. 3, init.; cf. also James (1981): 540)

The resulting sequences of associatively linked mental episodes lack any (overall) purpose and, in particular, any imaginative purpose. But it might be maintained that they nevertheless constitute daydreams. And if this were correct, they would pose a threat to my account of imagining due to their lack of any involvement of imaginative agency. Hence, there might be instances of imagining - namely, non-purposeful daydreams of this kind - which are not imaginative projects. However, this conclusion should be rejected because of the fact that associative sequences of episodes do not possess two features we usually

ascribe to daydreams: narrative structure (or development) and considerable temporal extension. Let me discuss them in turn.

To understand the first difference between daydreams and associative links, it will be helpful to take a closer look at the nature of the connections between the mental phenomena involved in daydreaming and association. In both cases, the links between the respective mental phenomena are in principle intelligible: we usually can account for the occurrence of the episodes involved by making sense of the causal connections in play (cf. Goldie's notion of the coherence in narratives in his (2003a) and (2003b)). For instance, that I am visualizing a landscape of snow-covered mountains or imagining the feeling of elation and exhaustion when reaching the summit of an eight-thousander can be explained by reference to my intention to daydream about climbing Mount Everest: the latter is the causal motive for the occurrence of the former. Similarly, Hobbes' thought of treason can be traced back to his occupation with the war between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians, raging in his times, which he knows to involve the handing over of the king to the English Parliament: thinking about the war has caused Hobbes to think about treason because the two representations concern events which are, for him, significantly linked (i.e., the deliverance of the king and the war in question). Moreover, the rationale of both daydreams and associative links is intelligible on the basis of reflecting on the introspectible features of the mental states involved, notably their contents. My underlying intention explains my engagement in the imaginative activities because the content of the latter satisfies the description - which is part of the content of the former - of what I have been meaning to represent. This match makes it comprehensible why the intention has given rise to the specific representations in question, and not to others.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Hobbes' thought about the civil war accounts for the occurrence of his thought about treason because there is for him a recognizable link between the two represented events (e.g., because he knows the two represented events to be connected through the figure of the King). It is hence legitimate for him, as well as us, to judge that the two thoughts are causally linked in virtue of some associative link. As a result, both daydreams and sequences of associated representations are intelligible mainly in virtue of the contents (and perhaps other introspectible features, such as their affective character) of the mental states concerned and thus differ from mere temporal or causal successions of episodes.<sup>19</sup> And eventually, in both cases, the

---

<sup>18</sup> From our first-person perspective, we will usually have further support for this conclusion in the form of our introspective awareness of our agency.

<sup>19</sup> In fact, it seems plausible to argue that we can - at least in principle - always make sense of associative connections; and that the potential awareness of the rationale is essential to our classification of a connection as associative. For it seems that we would classify any link, which would remain unintelligible for us under all circumstances, not as associative, but instead as merely causal. However, this is compatible with the possibility that there may be cases in which

intelligibility is not usually due to some logical relations between the contents of the linked episodes. In particular, neither daydreaming nor association is primarily a matter of inferring or conceptualization (although at least daydreaming may involve these processes).

However, daydreaming and association differ in the nature of their intelligible causal structure. The difference can perhaps be best expressed by saying that only daydreams are typically narrative, or can typically be narrated. It is thus necessary to specify what it means for a sequence of episodes to have a narrative structure.<sup>20</sup> It is admittedly not easy to do this, but there are nevertheless some features which seem to characterize many, if not all, sequences of mental representations with a narrative structure (what I will call "narratives"). One of these features is that the entities that the episodes in the sequence are about are usually represented as behaving in regulated ways which facilitate our understanding of their behaviour. For instance, physical objects normally follow natural laws and are governed by conventions; while persons also typically think and act in accordance with rational (or at least comprehensible) principles. This enables us, for instance, to identify or empathize with the characters in stories; or to make sense of the causal nexus between certain narrated events (Williams (2002): 233ff.). But it is also closely related to another aspect of narrative sequences: that they often portray some development concerning the represented entities. Movement, metamorphosis, maturation, or revolution, are all possible examples of such a development. A narrative may be about the movement of balls on a snooker table, or about the alteration in their colours; it may be about the change in a character's opinions, or about the overthrow of a government. In addition, both the feature of regularity and that of development seem to presuppose a third aspect: that the relevant episodes in the narrative sequence concern the same particular entities. A fourth important characteristic of many narrative sequences is that they reveal a certain perspective on what is being told - whether this perspective is very subjective and evaluative or emotional, as in the case of, say, many first-personal narrations; or more objective and distanced, as in the case of, say, classical instances of an omniscient narrator (cf. Goldie (2003a) and (2003b)). And a last characteristic of narratives is that they typically portray the events they represent as temporally ordered: one thing is represented as happening after another (Carroll (2001):

---

we are only aware of the existence of an associative link (e.g., by means of an indeterminate impression or feeling of the presence of association), but not of its concrete form or rationale. In *In Search of Lost Time*, it takes Marcel considerable time to establish the connection between his experience of tasting a Madeleine dipped in tea and his childhood memories of the Sunday mornings at his aunt's house in Combray. But from the moment when the two kinds of representation cross his mind he is already aware of the presence of such a connection, long before realizing its specific nature.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Goldie (2003a) and (2003b) for the naturalness of applying the notions of a narrative or of a narrative structure to sets of mental representations, and not only to works of fiction, or to the represented events and their relationships. Cf. also Hobbes (1996): part 1, ch. 3.

120; Lamarque (2004): 394). There are probably further features distinctive of many, if not all, narratives. But to note these five characteristics should suffice to clarify the difference between daydreaming and association with respect to their intelligibility.

Daydreams typically possess several or all of the features just described. For instance, many of the episodes making up my daydream about climbing Mount Everest concern the same individual entities (such as people, tools, peaks, etc.), which are thus often characterized by means of more than one episode. Then, the daydream is likely to represent objects as behaving in regulated ways (e.g., avalanches or ice-axes obeying gravity; or despairing and panicking climbers following their temperament or general human nature). Furthermore, the daydream portrays many kinds of development (e.g., the changes in daytime, weather, height, feelings, and so on). And it normally does so by means of arraying certain events in time (e.g., the ascent as happening before the fall). Finally, the daydream as a whole - or some considerable part of it - may disclose some of my own feelings or opinions about attempting to climb Mount Everest (e.g., my fear and fascination, or my assessment that many people taking up this challenge do not really know what they are doing).

In contrast, sequences of associatively linked episodes typically do not show any of the five features, at least not to a significant extent. In both James' and Hobbes' examples, the mental representations involved do not make sense of regularities among entities. The represented people (e.g., the watchmaker, or the king) are not really represented as thinking or acting in certain ways and hence are not subject to our understanding. The same is true of the represented objects: the conventions and economic principles governing the flotation and exchange of currencies or similar values remain undisclosed (although their existence and influence may be conveyed); and it is not clarified how the war unfolded, or why the clock had broken down. There are some traces to be found of the rationality of subjects or of the behaviour of physical entities: the deliverance of the king is represented as treason and as motivated by greed; and it is suggested that the clock is working again after having been repaired. But the respective forms of behaviour are not fully or richly represented: they are only mentioned or hinted at. Moreover, the forms of behaviour (as well as most other entities) are typically represented by single episodes, with the result that grasping their presence does not require grasping any associative connections. That treason is motivated by greed is part of the content of a single thought: it is merely stated and not further elucidated. This explains why associative sequences usually do not reveal or permit a similar understanding of regularities as daydreams. And it is also closely related to the fact that such sequences normally do not portray any significant developments: their constitutive episodes do not link up to represent some changes, or the influence of dynamic forces, over

time - as, again, illustrated by James' and Hobbes' examples quoted above. It is said that the value of gold has declined; and the idea of war also involves the notion of some development. But anew, both representations are restricted to single episodes (or even concepts) and do not provide any rich or informative grasp of the stated developments. That any traces of a representation of regularities or developments are typically limited to single thoughts or images is further explained by the fact that not many of the entities represented by members of associative sequences are referred to by more than one episode - and, in the examples, none by more than two. That both the image of the clock and the thought about the man who repaired it make reference to the clock does not establish any narrative link between the two representations - and, in particular, no development or law-like connection. And the same is true of the two thoughts about the occurrence of treason: they have nothing in common and are not further linked, over and above being thoughts of the same person and sharing the same subject matter or object (in a wider sense). Finally, the associative sequences in both examples do not manifest any perspective or stance in addition to those expressed by each of the single episodes. Hobbes' thoughts assess the deliverance of the king to be treason and do not fully approve of asking the question about the value of a Roman penny. But they do so not by being associatively linked, but simply by being the thoughts that they are. They would reveal the same view on the events in question if they occurred on their own. Accordingly, the associative links are not essential to the disclosure of Hobbes' assessment. All these considerations strongly suggest that sequences of associatively linked episodes do not possess a narrative structure. As the particular nature of the quotes of James and Hobbes indicate, any attempt at narrating associative links produces primarily a list of successive and associated mental representations, but not really a story.

The difference in narrative structure is reflected in a difference in how we make sense of daydreaming and association. In the case of daydreams, we come to understand the connections between the episodes by grasping the links between the entities that they represent (i.e., the relationships, regularities and developments among them). We trace the coherence of the daydreams back to the causal or other connections between the represented entities. In other words, what matters and is intelligible for us is how the portrayed entities are linked to each other. This is partly the reason why daydreams are narratable. But for the intelligibility of daydreams, it is not necessary that their episodes are causally linked to each other, or that we become aware of any causal links that may obtain among them. The experiences and objects imagined during my daydream are unified by being involved in a potential climb of Mount Everest. This is sufficient to provide the daydream in question with coherence. The representations involved need not - and presumably often will not -

causally influence each other. In the case of associative sequences, on the other hand, coming to understand the connections between the episodes means coming to understand their specifically associative causal links. And this requires taking into account their contents (or their other features open to introspection) only in so far as they are causally or otherwise linked to each other in virtue of what they represent. In fact, two kinds of representation may be associated in our minds for many different reasons, not all of which pertain to their contents: because they represent the same, or similar, objects (e.g., a particular clock); or instead the same features of objects (e.g., being an instance of treason); or because we once experienced the represented entities at roughly the same time or location (e.g., seeing the watchmaker in the jewellery shop); or while being in a comparable mood (e.g., when realizing that one is in love); and so on. But how the represented entities are causally or otherwise related to each other is most of the time irrelevant. Instead, what counts and is intelligible is primarily the specific causal or other links between the associated mental episodes. Hence, sequences of associatively linked episodes differ in their intelligible nature from daydreams: with respect to daydreams, we make sense of the relationships among the entities which the mental episodes portray; while with respect to associative sequences, we make sense of the relationships among the mental episodes themselves.

Central to the second and related difference is the fact that associatively brought about images and thoughts are spontaneous. As such, they are very short-lived in character. As I have already argued, spontaneous representations will remain in existence for a considerable period of time only when they are incorporated into mental projects (e.g., into purposive daydreams or other imaginative projects), or when their underlying causes stay causally effective (e.g., in the case of the impact of hallucinatory drugs, or of certain psychological disorders). Hence, a sequence of associatively linked episodes will typically not last very long - and sometimes only an instant, occurring in between "two nearly adjacent moments" (cf. James' quote above). Or, as Hobbes puts it, "thought is quick". Some sequences of associated representations may be more temporally extended than others; but usually they remain fairly short. One reason why such sequences are normally over very quickly may be that many mental episodes occurring in our consciousness do not bring about others by means of association - perhaps because there are no corresponding mental dispositions realizing an associative link, or because our mind is occupied with other things. Another factor which may explain the short-livedness of associative sequences is our apparent and perhaps constant tendency to actively intervene, say by taking control over the sequences of images and thoughts, or by switching our attention to something else; and so on. For it

appears that we normally do not remain purely passive for very long in our mental lives. In addition, the shortness of the associative sequences is often heightened by the fact that (as illustrated by both James' and Hobbes' examples) only some steps of an associative chain are noticed when they occur, while the intermediary steps have to be reconstructed afterwards. All these factors may contribute to the fact that sequences of associated mental episodes usually do not last very long. In contrast, daydreams are typically considerably extended over time. We conceive of daydreaming as an activity in which we engage, not only for some moments, but for longer periods of time - long enough to allow for the representation of complex relationships, regularities and developments among the entities concerned. Hence, most, if not all, series of associatively linked representations differ from daydreams also in their temporal extension.

This does not, however, prevent purposive daydreaming being accompanied by, and influenced by, association and similar passive mechanisms. We often engage in a series of successive purposive daydreams. And the switches from one daydream to the next are frequently facilitated by the spontaneous occurrence of mental episodes in virtue of some associative links (cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): 216). What happens in such cases is that some episodic constituent of the current daydream (or perhaps also an unrelated, but contemporaneous episode) associatively brings about another mental episode which then figures as the starting-point for a new daydream, or at least instils in us the manifest desire or intention to begin a new daydream. The result is a sequence of (more or less closely) associatively linked purposive daydreams. Apart from association, other factors - such as shifts in attention or interest, inclinations, whims, long-standing plans, subconscious influences, and so on - may also become relevant for the occurrence of a switch from one purposive daydream to another.<sup>21</sup> An example of such a sequence of daydreams may look like the following: I am daydreaming about walking the streets of London and, due to some memory of or fondness for British barber poles with their red and white stripes, this includes visualizing such a pole at the entrance to a barber shop; the colour and name of this pole give rise, by means of association, to the image of the Polish flag and hence to some thought about Poland; because of some long-standing desire to visit that country, I stop my daydream about London and begin to occupy myself instead with a daydream about visiting Poland, starting off with the thought of this country; this again may remind me of my Polish

---

<sup>21</sup> As above, I will concentrate my discussion on associative links and hope that its considerations and results will apply to other kinds of connections as well. For an extensive discussion of sequences of daydreams, cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): chapter 5; especially 212ff.. One interesting suggestion of his is that the associative links may obtain, not between the respective mental episodes, but between the motivational states of the successive daydreams in question.

friend at school whom I have not heard of for years, since she entered art school; and I may thus begin to daydream about her subsequent life and about meeting her again.<sup>22</sup>

In such cases, each of the instances of purposive daydreaming is determined by imaginative agency. But they are typically not unified by an overall imaginative purpose and therefore usually do not show a continuity in what they represent. Instead, the switch from one purposive daydream to another is normally accompanied by a switch of imaginative purpose. In other words, the resulting sequence of daydreams is non-purposive to the extent to which it lacks an overall purpose; but it is purposive in so far as it consists in a series of particular daydreams each of which is purposive. Sequences of associatively linked daydreams differ thus both from single purposive daydreams (because of their lack of an overall purpose) and from sequences of associatively linked mental episodes (because of their involvement of imaginative agency). And it seems plausible to assume that often, when we engage in daydreaming or "let our mind wander off freely" (e.g., while looking outside through the window of a moving train), we in fact alternate between passively witnessing the spontaneous occurrence of images and thoughts and actively developing some of these images or thoughts into daydreams. Thus, after the termination of a purposive daydream, we often either return to a period of mental inactivity or move on to the active pursuit of a new daydream.<sup>23</sup> Our occupation with such sequences of daydreams seems very similar to the activity of more or less aimlessly wandering around a city. During the walk, most - if not all - of our steps or turns are made intentionally. But they are usually not governed by an overall purpose directing them towards a certain destination. Similarly, when we let purposive daydream follow purposive daydream, we are in voluntary control of the particular daydreams, especially of their inception. But our various daydreams typically do not share an overall representational goal: they normally do not concern the same subject matter or even the same characters, places, events, and so on. Hence, where we finally end up in either case need not be determined by our motivational states, in particular not by our desire or intention to go for a walk or to engage in daydreaming. And various factors, such

---

<sup>22</sup> Thanks to David Harris for the example.

<sup>23</sup> It is important to note that the inception of any new purposive daydream has to be active, while the termination of the daydreams in the sequence may be active or passive. The termination is a matter of our active interference, for instance, when we lose interest in further pursuing it and switch our attention to another daydream. And it may also be due to some passive factors, such as something in our environment that we perceive and which distracts us, or the occurrence of some spontaneous representations. In contrast, any new purposive daydream has to be actively started by us. This is simply a consequence of the active nature of purposive daydreams: our engagement with them cannot be brought about by merely causal factors, but presupposes some practical motivation. However, it may be possible that there are cases of (initially) unnoticed purposive daydreaming: that we may "find ourselves" daydreaming about something (e.g., while trying to pay attention to a boring lecture), as we may "find ourselves" scratching or talking aloud to ourselves (cf. section 5.4).

as associations, whims, distractions, external stimuli, and so on, may contribute to our activity of walking or daydreaming by suggesting possible new directions to be pursued.

In any case, just like series of associatively linked mental episodes, series of associatively linked purposive daydreams do not constitute daydreams. And again, this is due to the associative nature of the link between the phenomena in the sequences. Although each of the successive purposive daydreams usually exemplifies many of the five characteristics described above, this is typically not true of the sequences as a whole. Because of the frequent switches in representational purpose, the various daydreams normally do not concern the same entities; the developments, temporal connections and other regularities portrayed in each of the daydreams usually do not extend beyond the individual boundaries of these daydreams; and they typically do not share a common perspective (or common perspectives) on the characters and events represented by them. Hence, sequences of mental phenomena which are not linked by means of an overall imaginative purpose do not constitute daydreams. At best, they may involve daydreaming as a part, namely, if some or all of the connected phenomena are purposive daydreams.<sup>24</sup> This indicates that there is an intimate link between the representational purposiveness of daydreams and the five features which have been identified as being distinctive of them. The idea is that since purposive daydreams are guided by the desire or intention to form representations with a specific content, their episodic constituents normally end up concerning the same entities and their various relationships, as well as establishing a coherent point of view on these entities and relationships. By contrast, if sequences of mental phenomena lack the specific unity due to a common representational purpose, it is difficult to see what else could ensure *both* their unity and the exemplification of several or even any of the five features under discussion, given that associative links are not sufficient. Their temporal, and perhaps also causal, succession is not enough to unify them: very many mental episodes are linked to each other in this way without thereby together forming a self-contained complex mental phenomenon. And concern for the same object (as, say, in the case of complex aesthetic experiences) does not suffice to guarantee the representation of regularities, temporal order, development and a point of view. Furthermore, the situation does not seem to change significantly if the switches between the daydreams in the sequence are not (merely) due to association, but instead to other factors which do not involve imaginative activity (e.g., shifts in attention or interest, whims, long-standing plans, subconscious influences, etc.). On the one hand, it is not clear whether these other kinds of links can unify the sequence. And on the other, it

---

<sup>24</sup> There is also the question of whether associative or similar links are sufficient to establish the unity of a self-contained mental phenomenon. If not, sequences of daydreams or episodes connected in this way will not be potential candidates for daydreams in the first place, given that the latter are distinct and unified parts of the stream of consciousness.

seems doubtful that they could establish or support the instantiation of several or all five of the features characteristic of daydreams. It therefore appears that there cannot be any non-purposive daydreams (i.e., daydreams which lack an overall imaginative purpose).

To conclude, all instances of daydreaming seem to conform to the account of imagining proposed here. While purposive daydreams are imaginative projects, sequences of associatively (or similarly) linked daydreams or episodes may at best involve the oscillation between imaginative activity and association (or other connections), but do not themselves constitute daydreams and should hence not count as imaginings. The whole class of daydreams can thus be accommodated by the proposed theory of imaginings which identifies the latter with a certain kind of mental project, as specified by (ACT).

## 6.5. Pictorial Experiences

What remains to be shown is that pictorial experiences - which are passive with respect to the determination of their content - are not imaginative; and to indicate why this is so. My main concern will be with a systematic approach to the idea that pictorial experience may be imaginative. But Walton's account of our experiences of depictions (to be found in Walton (1990) and (2002)) will play a prominent role in my discussion simply because it seems the most advanced and sophisticated account of pictorial experience in terms of imagining.<sup>25</sup> But before I can deal with the possibility of an imaginative account of pictorial experiences, it is necessary to clarify their general nature.

Pictorial experiences are experiences of pictures as pictures: that is, they are those mental episodes by means of which we recognize, on the basis of visual perception, that something is a picture, as well as what it depicts. They are characterized by at least five features.<sup>26</sup> First, they represent what is depicted: they involve some form of awareness of what the picture represents. If we were not aware of something depicted, we would not be aware of depiction. Second, pictorial experiences also involve an awareness of the picture, that is, of the depicting surface and its features, notably its texture and its configuration of colours and shapes. Again, if we were not aware of the picture, we would not be aware of depiction:

---

<sup>25</sup> Another main proponent of an imaginative account of depiction is O'Shaughnessy who, however, discusses his position only in the space of a couple of pages (O'Shaughnessy (2000): 346ff.). Cf. also note 8 in chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> Here I draw heavily on Wollheim (1987) and (2003), and on Hopkins (1998). But I do not always follow their terminology or the structure of their discussions. And I ignore important aspects of depiction (e.g., the role of intentions).

seeing the depicting surface is necessary for becoming aware of whether, and what, it depicts. Third, the two representational elements are combined in a single (though perhaps metaphysically complex) mental phenomenon, namely pictorial experience. It will become clear later on what exactly this may mean. But this third feature of pictorial experiences is intimately linked to a fourth one: that they constitute a phenomenologically distinct type of mental episode. This means that they share a common phenomenology (besides, of course, the variations due to the differences between the experienced pictures) which distinguishes them from other mental phenomena. Accordingly, we can normally tell whether we currently see a depiction of something or whether we instead see or visually remember or visually imagine it, or see marks on a surface without recognizing them as constituting a depiction. Thus, the pictorial experience of seeing a depicted landscape introspectively differs in kind from all of the following episodes: merely seeing a two-dimensional surface with certain colours and shapes; seeing a landscape face to face; visually remembering (seeing) a landscape; and visualizing or imagining seeing a landscape. And fifth, pictorial experiences should be taken to be, overall, visual and at least partially perceptual (cf. Hopkins (1998): 17; Wollheim (2003): 131 and 146). We cannot experience pictures as pictures if our eyes are closed, or not working, or not directed at the pictures. And it seems appropriate to say that we see what is depicted in, and by looking at, the picture (Wollheim (2003); cf. also Hopkins (2003): 15). The explanation for the visual nature of pictorial experience seems to be that both representational elements appear to be visual. The perception of the picture is obviously visual. But the same seems to be true of the awareness of what is depicted. It consists in the representation of the visual appearances of the depicted objects, as it is reflected by the fact that we rely on our capacities to visually recognize entities when we are looking at pictures. We can learn how something looks just by seeing a depiction of it; and we normally use our knowledge of the appearance of people or things when we recognize them as depicted. Ascribing a visual character to the awareness of what is depicted can explain why this is so. In addition, our representations of the depicted are perspectival (similar to visual perceptions, memories and imaginings). We represent the appearance of the depicted objects from certain sides and from certain points of view. Again, this suggests a visual character of the representational element concerned with the depicted entities.

Pictorial experiences are clearly passive with respect to what they represent pictures as depicting. When looking at pictures, we cannot see in them what we want to see in them: instead, it is forced upon us by the configuration of colours and shapes on the picture's surface. This passivity will be a problem for my account of imagining if pictorial experience is imaginative. Since the awareness of the picture is purely perceptual, the imaginativeness

of the overall experience could presumably derive only from the awareness of the depicted. Hence, what I should concern myself with are accounts of pictorial experience which characterize it as the combination of seeing the picture and imagining the depicted. Of course, it is not to be expected that pictorial experience is *purely* imaginative, or that any philosopher might want to claim this. Due to its dependence on the purely perceptual awareness of the picture, pictorial experience should be taken to be at least partially perceptual. Hence, the proposal I should try to undermine is that pictorial experience is partly perceptual and partly imaginative. However, simply arguing for the fundamental imaginativeness of the representational element concerned with what is depicted does not by itself suffice to establish a counterexample to my theory of imagining. For it might still be possible that the overall pictorial experience may involve, or be based on, this imaginative representation in such a way that it does not inherit the imaginative character of the latter. There are certainly cases in which our non-imaginative episodes involve, or are formed on the basis of, imaginings. For instance, when we try to recall an event or an appearance, we may unwittingly imagine some of the aspects or details of the remembered entity while triggering or forming our memory. But the resulting episode is nevertheless not imaginative: it is a memory (though a partly incorrect one); and it is experienced by us as such (cf. Engel (1999): especially 72ff. and 102ff.). What I should thus try to undermine is the idea that our overall experiences of depictions *are*, at least to some extent, imaginative - and not merely based on imagining.

There are several motivations for endorsing the idea that both the awareness of the depicted and the entire pictorial experience are imaginative; and I will return to some at the end of this section. Here, I will mention only one which I take to be particularly important: namely that we do not take the depicted to be part of the reality actually before us. In other words, our awareness of it does not involve being aware of it as really present. When we look at a depiction of a landscape, we take the picture to be really before us (as we would with anything that is perceived; cf. Martin (2002): section 1); but we do not likewise experience the landscape as being actually present.<sup>27</sup> In this respect, pictorial experience seems to differ phenomenologically from visual perception (and visual memory), while resembling visual imagining. While we take a seen landscape to be actually before us (and a visually remembered landscape to have been present to us in the past), we do not similarly experience a visualized landscape: the latter does not seem to be really before our eyes (cf. Martin (2002): 413f.). Now, this phenomenological similarity between pictorial experience

---

<sup>27</sup> This feature of pictorial experience is often more positively characterized by reference to an awareness of the depicted as absent, non-real, or otherwise non-present (cf. Sartre (2004): 12; Husserl (1980); Husserl (2001): part 5, section 27; Hopkins (2003): 16; O'Shaughnessy (2000): 349).

and visualizing may suggest, or be explained by, their possession of a common feature, namely imaginativeness (cf. O'Shaughnessy (2000): 349).

As mentioned, the proposal under consideration is to take pictorial experience to be the combination of seeing the picture (i.e., the marks on its surface) and imaginatively representing the depicted. The difficult questions concern the issue of what kind of imagining is involved in this way in experiences of depictions; and the issue of how the two representations are linked to each other. The following discussion will be structured around possible answers to the latter question. On the one hand, the two representational elements may simply occur at the same time and in conjunction with each other. And on the other, the two elements may merge into a single representational element. I will discuss these two alternatives in turn. But with respect to each option, the various possible answers to the former question about the nature of the imagining involved will be addressed as well.

The first possibility concerning the kind of combination in play is to take pictorial experience to be the *simultaneous occurrence* of seeing the picture and imagining the depicted. This form of combination leaves the nature and independence of the phenomenologies of the combined episodes intact: their phenomenal characters remain unchanged and distinct. Nevertheless, the episodes involved may be combined in a single, though complex, mental phenomenon. That is, simultaneously occurring episodes need not merely appear at roughly the same time, but can be connected to each other in further ways. Internal imaginings are examples of the simultaneous occurrence of two related episodes. When I visualize the battle of Jena, as seen from a hill, how I experience my visual representation is not affected by my additional supposition that I am Napoleon (or myself, or one of the soldiers) looking at the battle.<sup>28</sup> But the visualizing and the supposition will be linked since the latter will interpret the former as a perception of Napoleon (cf. the discussion of internal imaginings in section 2.2). The linked simultaneous occurrence of episodes may be due to various factors: to some underlying agency (as in the case of mental projects); to some common object and span of attention (as in the case of aesthetic and similar experiences); to some higher-order representation (as in the case of internal imaginings); or perhaps to some other factor.

Now, applying the idea of simultaneous occurrence to pictorial experience, the relevant imaginative episode to be combined with the perception of the picture could be fully or

---

<sup>28</sup> Of course, my intention of imagining having Napoleon's perception may move me to visualize the battle from a lower point of view because I know that Napoleon was rather short. But this kind of influence is not due to the simultaneous entertainment of the two episodes. And it is not an influence of my imaginative thought on my visual imagining.

partly visual: it could consist in visualizing the depicted; or in imagining seeing it (whereby the latter involves both visualizing it and intellectually imagining it as being seen). But the imagining could also be purely intellectual: it could consist in imagining that one sees the depicted; or in imagining that what one sees (i.e., the picture or the marks on its surface) are the depicted; or in imagining that one's seeing the picture is one's seeing the depicted. Accordingly, if a landscape painting is concerned, the options are, while one is looking at the painting, to visualize or imagine seeing a landscape; to imagine that one sees a landscape; to imagine that the picture or its surface is a landscape; or to imagine that one's seeing the picture is one's seeing a landscape. The most promising of all these options seems to be the last one. For it is the only one which establishes some kind of link between the two aspects of pictorial experience - the link being an intentional one, since the imaginative episode in question is about the perception of the picture's surface. Assuming such a link is advantageous since it seems undeniable that the two representations involved in pictorial experience do not merely occur at the same time, but are closely linked (how closely remains to be seen). Not surprisingly, many of the discussions have thus focused on this alternative (cf. Budd (1992b); Hopkins (1998): 20ff.; Walton (1990): 293ff., and (2002): 32f.; Wollheim (2003): 145ff.).

However, independent of whether the two representations are intentionally linked in this way, the simultaneous occurrence of seeing a marked surface and imagining something else is not enough to constitute an experience with the distinctive phenomenology of pictorial experience. There are many cases in which we can, while looking at a surface with a certain texture and pattern of colours and shapes, visually or intellectually imagine whatever we want, we will not undergo an experience which is phenomenologically alike to pictorial experience. Hopkins presents the following example with respect to intellectual imagining:

Consider the making of an episode of *Star Trek*. The cast are rehearsing a scene in which the covers on a window on the ship's bridge are pulled back to reveal the inert wreck of a friendly spacecraft. All they see is a plain blue screen, onto which film of a model of the ruined hulk will later be projected. Finding the actor's performances unusually wooden, the director tells them to concentrate on imagining their reaction to the sight as it is unveiled. He explicitly instructs them to imagine that, as the covers are slowly pulled back, their seeing this bit of the screen is their catching sight of the ship's engines, their seeing that bit their marking out what remains of the hull, and so on. [...] they will surely not see a spacecraft in the screen. They simply continue to see a plain blue, undifferentiated surface. (Hopkins (1998): 22)

Hence, intellectually imagining that one's seeing of the surface is one's seeing something else is not sufficient to combine with one's simultaneous perception of the surface to constitute a pictorial experience. The result will not be different with respect to any other kind of intellectual imagining. During the rehearsal, some of the actors may very well imagine that the respective portions of the screen are the respective parts of the ship (e.g., this may help them to point at them and say 'look, the engines are burnt out'); and they presumably have to imagine that they see the ship in order to imagine that their seeing of the screen is their seeing of the ship. But in neither case does this influence their visual experience of the screen: they see it as blue, and not as depicting a ship. Likewise, visualizing a ship at the respective location on the screen will not<sup>29</sup> influence the content and phenomenal character of their perception. And imagining seeing a ship (if understood not merely as visualizing a ship, but also as imagining that one's visual image constitutes the representational element of a perception) does not change the situation either, since it is simply a combination of the visual imagining with one of the intellectual ones.

Considering why the simultaneous seeing of a surface and imagining something is not sufficient for the occurrence of pictorial experience may help to identify an alternative proposal. The main reason for the insufficiency mentioned is precisely that the two representations merely occur at the same time (and perhaps also are intentionally linked in the way described). As a result, they do not influence each other's nature or phenomenal character and continue to be two independent episodes which could occur on their own. Accordingly, how we experience the resulting complex mental phenomenon is a simple composite of how we experience the perception and of how we experience the imagining: their simultaneous occurrence does not establish any phenomenological link between the two combined representations. In comparison, the two representational elements of pictorial experience appear to be phenomenologically (and not, or not only, intentionally) linked: being aware of pictures as pictures seems to involve, and perhaps even require, being aware of the relation of depiction. This is in line with the idea that it seems very natural to say that we see the depicted in the picture. But it also offers an explanation of why we do not take the depicted to be actually before us: because we represent it together with, and in close connection to, the marked surface. That is, we are aware of the depicted as depicted, and not

---

<sup>29</sup> It is a remote possibility that, when we very vividly imagine a black square while looking at a white wall, the two episodes might begin to merge, and we might come to have a visual experience which combines in its content elements from both representations. But the resulting experience of a (visualized) black square on a (seen) white canvas would still be different from a pictorial experience, say, of Malevich's *Black Square*. Moreover, it would no longer be a case of simultaneous entertainment, but instead a case of fusion. I will discuss the plausibility of fusion and of this example below.

as really present, because our awareness of it is phenomenologically inseparably linked to our concurrent perception of the picture. And this seems to be an essential characteristic of the experience of something as a picture (cf. note 27 above). Consequently, the phenomenal character distinctive of pictorial experience is not a mere composite of how we experience each of the episodes of seeing a surface and imagining something else: it does not involve unchanged the phenomenal characters of these episodes.<sup>30</sup> This explains why Hopkins's and similar examples do not involve an experience of depiction. And it requires that the idea of a simultaneous occurrence of seeing the picture and imagining the depicted should be given up.

It seems that considerations like these have moved Walton to endorse the view that the imaginative experience involved in pictorial experience has to consist in internally imagining an identity between the real perception of the picture and an imagined perception of the depicted, thus establishing an intentional link between the two representational elements of pictorial experience (i.e., the imagining is about the seeing) and promising a phenomenological link as well (Walton (1990): 295; cf. Budd (1992b): 196; and Hopkins (2003): 20). I will assess Walton's proposal after the discussion of the second plausible way in which seeing and imagining may be combined in pictorial experience.

The problems of insufficiency and of phenomenological separateness can both be avoided if the idea of simultaneous occurrence is dropped in favour of the idea of *fusion*: that is, if pictorial experience is taken to be some kind of fusion of the two episodes of seeing the picture and imagining the depicted. A fusion of episodes is characterized by the fact that the phenomenologies of the original episodes cannot be separated anymore in the phenomenology of the resulting experience: the latter is not a composite of the former (cf. Budd (1992): 197). In other words, although the two representational elements may still be recognizable as distinct and may be traced back to the respective types of episode, they are not independent of each other anymore and could not (at least not in the same phenomenologically recognizable form) occur on their own. This conception of pictorial experience does not face the two difficulties that arise if a composite phenomenal character is assumed: the two representational elements are phenomenologically linked; and the resulting phenomenal character of the overall experience is presumably distinctive. But the proposal is problematic for other reasons.

---

<sup>30</sup> Wollheim even argues that the respective aspects of the phenomenology of pictorial experience cannot be compared with, or elucidated in terms of, the phenomenology of the corresponding representational episodes (Wollheim (1987): 46f.). But this claim is far from being uncontroversial (cf. Budd (1992a)).

The main challenge is to make sense of the postulated fusion. An example of the fusion of a visual and an intellectual representation may be the case of seeing under a concept, such as seeing a face as smiling, or seeing lines in a cloud chamber as movements of particles (cf. Budd (1992b): 196). The idea is that seeing a smiling face, or seeing electrons in a cloud chamber, may be the result of merging a perception with an appropriate concept or thought applying to that perception. However, independent of whether this idea is true, there does not seem to be an analogous case of seeing under an imaginatively applied concept. Of course, we can imaginatively apply a certain concept to something that we see (e.g., when we take tree stumps to be bears in a corresponding game of make-believe). But such cases do not appear to involve a fusion of the perception and the imagining. Instead, the two episodes seem to occur merely simultaneously, as these two examples described by Budd show:

If, when studying geometry, I imagine the manifestly noncircular shape I have drawn to be a circle, my perception of the outline is no different from how it is when I do not imagine the shape to be circular; or if, when attending a school play, I imagine of my seeing a child that it is my seeing an angel, my perception of the child does not acquire a phenomenology it lacks when I drop the imagining. (Budd (1992b): 197)

That there does not seem to be any obvious example of a fusion between a perception and an imaginative thought or concept does not show that it is impossible for the two kinds of episode to merge into a single experience with a distinctive phenomenology. However, it renders such a fusion not only very unlikely, but also quite unintelligible (cf. Budd (1992b): 197, and Hopkins (1998): 21 on the visual case). We do not have any idea of how such a fusion might come about; of what the phenomenology of the resulting experience could be expected to be like; and of how this phenomenology would depend on the phenomenologies of the two merged episodes. But as long as these questions are not answered either in general or with respect to the case of pictorial experience, we do not have any reason to assume that pictorial experience is the outcome of a fusion of seeing the picture and intellectually imagining something about the depicted and one's access to it. Moreover, we also do not have any reason to accept the claim that the fusion results in an imaginative experience. Both the nature and the phenomenal character of the original intellectual imagining will have to be greatly transformed during the process of the fusion (Hopkins (1998): 21). And this seems more likely than not to have an effect on the imaginative nature of that episode - especially if one assumes that imagining is linked to activity and hence cannot be part of a perception-like experience, such as pictorial experience. Unless a

plausible alternative to this assumed account of imagining has been defended, the imaginativeness of any experience which might result from the fusion under consideration is at best speculative.

With respect to visual imaginings, the idea of a fusion is not much more promising. When we look at a smooth, white surface and very vividly visualize a black square at a certain location on it, it does not seem that our two episodes merge with each other. In particular, we are still aware of the whiteness of those portions of the wall where we visualize the black square to be: the visualized blackness does not, so to speak, occlude the seen whiteness. We therefore do not appear to undergo a single visual experience representing a black square on a white background (as may happen when we form an image on the basis of our memory of a white wall), but merely entertain the two respective contents simultaneously (Hopkins (1998): 16f.). On the other hand, when we begin to visualize not only the black square, but also the white wall as its background, the resulting fully imaginative representation may be said to involve some phenomenologically salient representational aspects of our perception (though perhaps only via the mediation of our visual short-term memory). However, it should not be classified as the result of a fusion since it does not phenomenologically differ from corresponding visual imaginings that are not based on a current perception, but on, say, a visual long-term memory of the appearance of a white wall, or on our general visual knowledge of what white walls look like. Likewise, the filling-in of the gap due to the blind spot on our retina (or of similar gaps) is not a matter of fusing perceptual with visualized elements: not only does it happen spontaneously and hence presumably does not involve imagining (cf. section 6.3 above), but it also leads to a visual experience which, this time, is phenomenologically exactly like perception. Hence, there do not seem to be easily identifiable examples of a fusion of seeing and visualizing either. As before, the absence of any clear examples is not decisive. But it nevertheless renders the idea of such a fusion highly implausible and incomprehensible. Moreover, there is no support for the idea that were such a fusion to actually occur the resulting experience would be imaginative.

The reason why the fusion between perceptions and imaginings does not seem to occur - and also why, if it did occur, there would be no reason to assume the imaginativeness of the resulting experience - may be that fusion requires a sameness in attitude among the merged episodes. We can see something under a certain concept only if we take the concept to really apply to what we see. But this is not the case when we apply a concept imaginatively. Not only do we fail to endorse the satisfaction of the concept by the seen entities; we may in fact believe that the concept does not capture them (cf. Budd (1992b): 197). And although it

does not constitute an instance of fusion as defined above, the case of visualizing a white wall with a black square on it is perhaps similar enough to give further support to this idea. What seems to happen in this case is that, for the visual representation of the wall to become part of the same experience as the visualizing of the square, it has to be disconnected from its perceptual attitude and instead become imaginative itself. It may also be important here that a transfer of representational elements in the opposite direction seems impossible: we do not appear to be able to turn aspects of what we visualize into perceived aspects and thereby alter certain parts of our current perceptions. That is, we cannot, by merely visualizing a black square, transform our perception of the white wall into a perception of a white wall with a black square on it.<sup>31</sup> But given that pictorial experience is (at least partly) essentially perceptual, this may be another reason why it might not be the result of a fusion of seeing and visualizing.

It is unclear where all these considerations leave Walton's proposal. In more detail, his idea is that the imaginative aspect of pictorial experience consists in imagining of one's seeing the picture that it is one's seeing the depicted; and that this imaginative aspect is a specific instance of imagining "from the inside" the experience of seeing what is depicted (Walton (1990): 293; Walton (2002): 27; cf. Budd (1992b): 196). According to his characterization of what it means to imagine an experience "from the inside", it involves (and presumably consists in) imagining oneself undergoing that experience and thereby imagining how it is to have that experience (Walton (1990): 29f.). That is, it is an instance of internal imagining. This is in line with Walton's insistence that the experience under consideration is not merely a form of purely intellectual imagining (Walton (1990): 29; 293). As a result, Walton seems able to avoid the problems related to the idea of a linked simultaneous occurrence or fusion of seeing the picture and *intellectually* imagining the depicted and one's perceptual access to it (i.e., an imaginative project starting off from a perception of a marked surface and supplementing it with intellectual imaginings about the nature of one's perception). But it is not clear whether he can satisfactorily account for the way in which the proposed internal form of imagining what is depicted is combined with the perception of the picture.

Moreover, it seems very difficult to make sense of the nature of the internal imagining postulated by Walton. Experientially imagining seeing something typically means visualizing it and imaginatively interpreting this visual representation to be a perception of a certain kind (cf. section 2.2). But Walton insists that pictorial experience does not involve

---

<sup>31</sup> We may begin to perceptually hallucinate a white wall with a black square (perhaps even as a causal effect of visualizing it). But this will clearly not be a matter of imagining. Or we may experience a drug-induced image of a white wall. But this seems to be more akin to a spontaneous representation the causes of which remain effective over some period of time.

visualizing what is depicted - and rightly so, as the considerations above have demonstrated. On the other hand, assuming that a perception takes the place of the visualizing in the imaginative project of imagining seeing the depicted entities does not help either. If the perception in question is taken to be of the marks on the picture's surface, the proposal is just a repetition of the one discussed above which characterizes pictorial experience in terms of a perception of the picture and a purely intellectual imagining about the depicted. If the perception is instead taken to be a perceptual experience of what is depicted, the only way to avoid illusionism<sup>32</sup> seems to be to identify the perceptual experience under consideration as a pictorial experience - which means that we are again where we started. However, if imagining seeing the depicted (by means of imagining one's seeing the picture to be one's seeing the depicted) involves neither visualizing nor perceiving the depicted, it is difficult to see how it could involve a visual representation of what is depicted at all. The most obvious solution is to take the imagining to be purely intellectual. And it is not certain that this would not count as imagining an experience "from the inside" (cf. Budd (1992b): 196f.). But, for the reasons mentioned above, the resulting account of pictorial experience is neither plausible nor Walton's.

The unclarity concerning the type of internal imagining said to be involved in pictorial experience pertains also to the examples provided by Walton to illustrate what he has in mind. The example that I will focus on does not seem to differ significantly from the others in its structure:

[...] Scottie, in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, dresses up Judy precisely in order to enjoy a vivid imaginative experience of perceiving the now deceased woman he knew as Madeleine. Surely Scottie's actual experience remains one of perceiving the dressed-up Judy; and surely he imagines this experience to be one of perceiving Madeleine. (Walton (2002): 32)

A natural and, it seems, appropriate way of understanding this case is to identify the imagining as a purely intellectual imagining about the identity of the real perception with an imagined one (Wollheim (2003): 146). Accordingly, the example constitutes an instance of an imaginative project which involves, or is designed around, a certain perception. But this would also mean that the related perceptual and imaginative episodes involved merely occur simultaneously; and that the phenomenology of the former thereby remains the same.

---

<sup>32</sup> That is, the position that pictorial experience consists, at least in ideal cases, in an illusory perception of what is depicted. For the implausibility of this idea, cf.: Wollheim (1987): 76f.; Budd (1992a): 261ff.; Hopkins (2003): 18.

However, this is clearly not the conclusion Walton desires. For he accepts that the two representational elements involved in pictorial experience are two phenomenologically inseparably linked aspects of a single experience with a distinctive phenomenology (Walton (1990): 295). But it is not clear how else the example might be adequately understood. Moreover, given that the example is obviously not an instance of pictorial experience, it may be reasonable to suspect that the differences between the two cases will undermine the claim that a satisfactory account of the example will apply to pictorial experience as well. In particular, it might be argued that in pictorial experience we are in some sense perceptually aware of what is depicted, while Scottie clearly perceives only Judy, but not Madeleine; and that this difference renders the two kinds of experience sufficiently different to demand distinct accounts (Wollheim (2003): 146). Hence, Walton's introduction of this and similar examples does not help to elucidate his claim that pictorial experience is a result of a fusion of seeing the picture and internally imagining one's seeing of the picture to be one's seeing of the depicted.

A last option for Walton and other proponents of the idea that pictorial experience consists in a combination of seeing and imagining is to maintain that the whole experience amounts to a *sui generis* form of internal imagining, which involves both perceptual and imaginative elements and which is not further analysable in terms of other forms of imagining (or other mental phenomena).<sup>33</sup> Some of Walton's comments seem to point in such a direction, in particular his insistence that the imaginative experience he has in mind does not allow for an easy and obvious characterization (Walton (2002): 33). Perhaps his idea that pictorial experience is a combination of seeing the picture and internally imagining the seeing of the picture to be the seeing of the depicted is therefore really to be understood as identifying a (more or less) primitive type of imaginative experience. But again, it is unclear how such an experience may come to incorporate, or be otherwise related to, the perception of the picture; and, more importantly, why the overall experience should count as imaginative (and not, say, perceptual, as Wollheim thinks (2003)). Indeed, Walton acknowledges both worries and even seems to allow for the possibility that the kind of awareness of the depicted proposed by him might not be imaginative, after all (Walton (2002): 33). In any case, as long as his or similar positions are not better elucidated and better supported, the various alternative proposals seem to be more promising.<sup>34</sup> Although pictorial experience

---

<sup>33</sup> Alternatively, pictorial experience may be understood as the fusion of the visual perception of the picture and a *sui generis* form of internal imagining about the depicted. But I take it that there is no important difference in the main problems facing the two positions.

<sup>34</sup> Such as accounts taking pictorial experience to be a primitive mode of perception (Wollheim (1987) and (2003)), or elucidating it in terms of an experience of resemblance (Peacocke (1987); Budd (1993); Hopkins (1998); Hyman (2000)).

may yet be similar to imagining in many respects and may perhaps even be based on it (in the sense in which a memory may, unknown to us, involve imagined aspects), there are thus good reasons to give up any imaginative account of pictorial experience .

It might be objected that there are some good reasons for taking pictorial experience to be imaginative, independent of whether it is already possible for us to spell out precisely what this could mean. I have already mentioned one potential explanatory advantage of an imaginative account: it can explain the phenomenological similarity between visualizing and the awareness of the depicted, both of which lack an awareness of reality and presence in relation to what they represent. However, imaginings are not the only kind of representation lacking the respective attitude towards their content: spontaneous or drug-induced images usually do not possess it either (cf. section 6.3 above). Of course, it might be insisted that these two cases are instances of imagining as well. But the only way to support this claim seems to be to endorse a Cognitive Account of imagining which takes all non-cognitive (and purely representational) episodes to be imaginative. And I have already argued that such an account is untenable (cf. chapter 4). Hence, that pictorial experiences represent the depicted without presenting it as actually before us need not mean that this representation is imaginative. Other explanations are also plausible (e.g., in terms of spontaneity or similar psychological mechanisms). Moreover, it may be argued that we are not aware of what is depicted as really present simply because we are directly aware, not of it, but only of its particular depiction. That is, it may be maintained that, when looking at a landscape painting, we immediately represent, not a landscape, but only a depiction of a landscape. And such a kind of representational distance may have the effect that we do not take what is depicted to be really before us.

In any case, it may be maintained that Walton's imaginative account of pictorial experience possesses at least three more explanatory advantages which provide considerable support for its endorsement, or the endorsement of similar theories.<sup>35</sup>

First, it can account for the fact that many pictorial experiences are concerned with pictures that are not depictions of particular objects, but (as one might say) depictions of certain types of objects. Portraits are of particular people; but there are also many pictures which

---

<sup>35</sup> Further advantages may be that his account of pictorial experience fits into his general account of our engagement with representational art, and that it can deal with many others issues and problems surrounding the topic of depiction, such as realism, styles of depiction, or the difference between depictions and descriptions (cf. Walton (1990): especially ch. 8). But these potential advantages do not seem to be able to outweigh the general implausibility of the imaginative account discussed so far.

represent people, but not specific individuals.<sup>36</sup> Walton argues that taking the awareness of what is depicted to be a perception of what is depicted has the consequence that pictorial experience often involves the perception of types - which is highly problematic in light of the widely accepted idea that perception always represents particulars. But the problem does not arise with respect to imagining seeing what is depicted, since we can, it seems, imagine objects of certain types without thereby having to imagine particular objects (Walton (2002): 27ff.). However, independent of whether his own explanation is convincing, he does not succeed in showing that non-imaginative theories of pictorial experience cannot provide a satisfactory account, too.<sup>37</sup> When undergoing pictorial experiences, we do not become aware of the difference between pictures of particular objects and all other pictures: the difference is solely a matter of reference and causal origin. Hence, there is no problem in taking the awareness of the depicted to be a perception of the depicted, as long as it is true that we experience pictures as depicting particular objects, and not as depicting types of objects. Experiences of pictures lacking a referent will then be similar to hallucinatory perceptions: they appear to be about individual entities, but are in fact not. In addition, not all alternatives to an imaginative account of pictorial experience have to assume that the second representation involved is a perception of the depicted. Instead, it might be a judgement-like representation; or, much more plausibly, it may be a perceptual experience which does not, or not directly or solely, represent the depicted. Candidates for such perception-like representations may be experiences of particular visual similarities; or primitive or unanalysable experiences of particular relations of depiction (for references, cf. note 34).

Second, according to Walton, reference to an imaginative aspect allows us to provide straightforward explanations of the forms of behaviour we typically show when having pictorial experiences. As already indicated, such behaviour may include: overlooking certain depicted objects, or searching for them; examining the texture of depicted objects; casually gazing or intensely staring at them; communicating with other people about depicted objects; pointing at such objects and saying "there is a ..."; and perhaps also comparing their appearances with that of other depicted objects (Walton (1990): 35ff.; 220ff.; 296ff.). The idea is, of course, that we imaginatively perform the actions listed on the basis of performing real actions (e.g., scanning or pointing at the picture) and imagining the depicted objects and our perceptual access to them (Walton (1990): *ibid.*). However, it seems that

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Budd's distinction between relational (or referential) and non-relational pictures (Budd (1995): 66f.); and Goodman's distinction between man-pictures and pictures of particular men (Goodman (1976): 21f.).

<sup>37</sup> Walton's own intention is more limited since he is concerned solely with Wollheim's account. But even then, his argument seems to miss its target, and for the same reasons.

these actions can be accounted for without having to assume that pictorial experience is imaginative. What seems sufficient instead is to maintain that pictorial experience is in such cases accompanied by one's imagining that one sees what is depicted, and that one's seeing the picture is one's seeing the depicted. That is, it seems sufficient to play a game of make-believe with the picture as a prop standing for the depicted (cf. Walton's (1990) own explanations; and cf. Wollheim (2003): 146ff. on our engagement with operas and plays). Accordingly, when facing a landscape painting, we may say "there is a tree" or acknowledge having overlooked the stag because we have, or have not, recognized the respective parts of the content of the picture and then have, or have not, imagined the representing parts of the painting (i.e., the respective marks on the surface) to be the represented entities (i.e., the tree or the stag). Indeed, explaining the actions under consideration, it may not be necessary to make reference to imagining at all. Perhaps we elliptically express the thought that there is a depicted tree, or a depiction of a tree; or we do not scan the forest or overlook the stag, but instead the relevant parts of the picture.

A third explanatory advantage that Walton puts forward is that imaginative accounts can explain why our pictorial experiences are perspectival in their representation of what is depicted. Pictures typically represent their objects from certain point of views. And in recognizing what they depict, we also recognize from which perspectives they depict them. For instance, a building may be depicted from street-level, or from high above; and our respective pictorial experience will represent the appearance of the house from the same perspective as the picture (which is, of course, usually unrelated to our own position towards the marked surface in front of us: cf. Walton (2002): 29). Walton's idea is now that we become aware of the perspectival aspect of the depiction by means of a perspectival imaginative experience. For imagining seeing the depicted involves for him imagining seeing it from a certain point of view (Walton (2002): 30). However, his proposal faces some serious problems. First, the spatial perspectival aspect in question seems to require a visual mode of representation. But it has already been doubted that Walton takes pictorial experience to involve perceiving or visualizing the depicted. And it is not clear how the imaginative experience could otherwise be visual. Second, it seems plausible to assume that our awareness of the particular (and possibly response-dependent) perspectival aspect of depictions can constitute knowledge (just as colour perceptions can constitute knowledge). But this would mean that we can cognize aspects of reality by imagining seeing something. As long as it is not clarified how this internal imagining could be subject to and satisfy the necessary cognitive constraints, Walton's idea lacks proper support. One particular difficulty will be to explain why we trust our imaginative awareness of the perspectival nature of

depictions. Perhaps the only plausible response is to admit that we rely on it only because we do not realize its imaginative character. The same problem does not arise, however, if pictorial experience is taken to be fully cognitive. And third, even if Walton could satisfactorily motivate his claim about the explanatory power of his account of the perspectival character of depiction, this would not be enough to rule out alternative explanations which do not presume pictorial experience to be partly imaginative. For imagining seeing something clearly does not exhaust the class of visual and perspectival types of representation.

To conclude, pictorial experiences - just like spontaneous representations and non-purposeful, associative sequences of episodes or projects - should not count as instances of imagining. Hence, they do not pose a threat to the Agency Account of imagining, which might have otherwise arisen since they involve the passive or indirect determination of what is represented. Non-representational imaginings and non-purposeful daydreams, on the other hand, should not be assumed to exist and therefore cannot constitute counterexamples to the Agency Account either. As it seems, this approach to imagining - when formulated in terms of (ACT) - is able to satisfy the two desiderata for a unified account of imagining.

## 7. Conclusion

The main aim of this dissertation has been to present and defend a specific unified account of imagining. The theory in question is a version of the Agency Account of imagining. Accordingly, it takes imaginings to be mental actions of a particular kind. More precisely, as I have elucidated in detail in chapter five, it claims - with certain qualifications - that *imaginings* are mental projects aimed at the formation of one or more mental representations with specific contents which are directly determined by the motivational states involved. *Mental projects* are thereby purposive mental actions that are constituted by mental representations and other mental states, have the goal of producing certain mental phenomena, and (typically) occur exclusively in the mind. That the content determination involved in imagining is *direct* means that the motivational link between the underlying desires or intentions and the formed representations is not mediated by epistemic or merely causal mechanisms. And that the motivational states determine *specific* contents amounts to the fact that the desires or contents identify certain features and entities which are to be represented as standing to each other in the relation of instantiation. The resulting account provides a satisfactory characterization of *imaginative projects*. In particular, it can distinguish imaginative projects from other kinds of mental projects, notably cognitive ones which aim at the formation of cognizing representations. And it elucidates imaginative projects without making reference to other imaginative phenomena. Moreover, the account put forward also applies to *imaginative episodes*, given that these have been shown to constitute simple imaginative projects, that is, imaginative projects containing only a single mental representation. That actively formed mental representations are simple mental projects is a consequence of the fact that the active character of the former is essential to and inseparable from them. Accordingly, the main thesis (ACT) of the Agency Account states that a mental phenomenon is imaginative just in case it constitutes an imaginative project, that is, a mental project with the ultimate intrinsic purpose of actively forming one or more representations with specific and directly determined contents.

The defence of the presented theory of imagining involves two elements: (i) the demonstration that it indeed satisfies the two desiderata for a unified account of imagining; and (ii) the rejection of the Cognitive Account of imagining, that is, of the most plausible alternative to the Agency Account as a unified theory of imagining. The two desiderata for a unified account are specified in the second chapter. The first desideratum is that a unified account has to be extensionally adequate: that is, it has to be true of all paradigm instances of imagining, and false of all central cases of non-imaginative phenomena. Among the latter

are all cognitive phenomena, such as perceptions, bodily sensations, memories, judgements, beliefs and cognitive projects (e.g., theoretical deliberations), as well as desires, emotions, moods, the respective feelings, intentions, non-cognitive and non-imaginative projects (e.g., meditations or practical deliberations), and so on. On the other hand, there are five primary forms of imagining: sensory imaginings, intellectual imaginings, affective imaginings, internal imaginings, and imaginative projects. They are all characterized by the fact that they are phenomenally conscious. And the episodic forms of imagining can furthermore be differentiated from their cognitive counterparts by reference to their lack of a cognitive attitude, their lack of the epistemic role typical of cognitions, and their lack of the aim or function of providing knowledge about reality. A unified account of imagining has to be able to do justice to the extensional borders demarcated by these differences. The second desideratum for a unified account of imagining demands that it is explanatorily powerful. This means that such a theory has to be able to illuminate the imaginativeness of all imaginings; and that it has to be able to do so in terms of one and the same fundamental feature(s) common to imaginings. In other words, the theory has to be able to say something basic and substantial about the distinctive nature of imaginings, without thereby becoming disjunctive (i.e., providing different accounts for different kinds of imagining). Only if a theory of imagining can satisfy both desiderata can it count as a unified account of imagining.

That the version of the Agency Account put forward here can indeed live up to this demand has been argued in the sixth chapter. While the claim about its explanatory power seems to be fairly uncontroversial, the claim about its extensional adequacy needs to be defended against several potential counterexamples. Assuming that cognitive and other non-imaginative phenomena do not allow for the voluntary and direct determination of what they represent, the discussion has been focused on cases of apparent imaginings which are either non-representational or possess a passively or indirectly determined content. The only plausible candidates for non-representational imaginings are imaginings the non-imaginative counterparts of which are non-representational. Possible examples may be imagined pains or imaginatively felt anxiety. However, it has turned out that these and similar imaginings should be best understood as representations of the respective non-imaginative counterparts - for instance, real feelings of pain or anxiety. Potential cases of passively or indirectly determined imaginings, on the other hand, seem to be more varied: they reach from spontaneous images and thoughts via non-purposive daydreams to pictorial experiences. Here the conclusion is that the respective phenomena should not count as instances of imagining. Spontaneous representations are merely closely linked to imaginings, since they

provide easily available material for imagining, but they change in nature once they become subject to imaginative activity. What may be described as non-purposive daydreaming does not amount to a self-contained daydream (or any other kind of mental project) and should thus not be taken to constitute an imaginative project. And the awareness of the depicted, which is essential to pictorial experiences, cannot be satisfactorily accounted for in terms of imagining. There might be other problematic cases for the presented Agency Account of imagining. But the theory can presumably accommodate these and similar potential counterexamples. Its extensional adequacy is therefore still intact. As a result, the proposed account promises to satisfy one of the main requirements underlying the project of formulating a unified account of imagining, namely the wish to account for the two facts that we group a variety phenomena together as imaginings and that our categorizations of phenomena as imaginative or non-imaginative are usually immediate, assured and stable. The idea is that our classifications track a certain feature responsible for the unity of the class of imaginings and which we can normally become aware of by means of introspection. According to the Agency Account, the feature in question is the distinctive active character of imaginings, as specified by the thesis (ACT).

While the Agency Account seems to be able to satisfy the two desiderata for a unified account of imagining, its main rival, the Cognitive Account, remains wanting in this respect. I have presented the Cognitive Account and, in particular, O'Shaughnessy's version of it, in chapter three. The Cognitive Account characterizes imaginings in terms of their non-cognitivity. Imaginings may thereby be said to be non-cognitive because they lack one or more features distinctive of cognitive or cognizing phenomena, or because they conceptually or constitutionally depend on such phenomena. While claims of the first kind constitute what I have labelled negation theses, claims of the second kind constitute echo theses. And the various versions of the Cognitive Account differ in which, and how many, negation or echo claims they endorse. My discussion has focused primarily on O'Shaughnessy's theory since it is the most developed version of the Cognitive Account available, and since it includes two of the most common and characteristic elements of this approach to imagining: (i) the negation claim that imaginings cannot cognize reality because they are not linked to reality in the required way, and, in particular, cannot be reliable in their representation of reality, at least not in the same way as perceptions and beliefs; and (ii) the echo thesis that imaginings are representations of types of cognitions.

But although O'Shaughnessy's arguments seem to be able to establish that imaginings cannot satisfy the *specific* cognitive constraints governing perceptions and beliefs, they do

not have the resources to rule out the possibility of other sets of epistemic requirements which imaginings may, after all, conform to. This leaves room for potential counterexamples to the claim that imaginings cannot provide knowledge about reality. And, as I have argued at length in chapter four, certain instances of visual imagining do indeed constitute such counterexamples. The respective imaginings occur in the context of certain mental projects, the successful pursuit of which ensures that the visual imaginings are reliable representations of the world. The projects in question involve the active imaginative manipulation of perceptually acquired or mnemonically stored information, taking into account the ways in which real objects behave such that the resulting visual images reliably represent the relevant aspects of the originally perceived or remembered objects. Thus, despite the fact that imagining cannot provide us with new evidence about reality, it can nevertheless help us to access new information about the world which cannot simply be read off the underlying cognitive states. But the existence of such cognizing imaginings renders all versions of the Cognitive Account that include negation claims stating that imaginings cannot provide knowledge or lack a feature necessary for the provision of knowledge extensionally inadequate.

In addition, I have argued that the Cognitive Account - whether formulated by means of negation or echo claims - cannot capture certain central cases of imagining, notably affective imaginings (in the case of negation claims), intellectual imaginings (in the case of echo theses), or imaginative projects (in both cases). The main reason for this is the exclusive focus of the involved claims on the contrast between imaginative and cognitive phenomena. The listed kinds of imagining typically (if not generally) do not have cognitive counterparts, or at least do not bear any significant relationship to cognitive phenomena which they do not share with other non-cognitive phenomena (such as feelings of desire or emotion, wonderings, and so on). Any attempt to elucidate their distinctive imaginative character solely in terms of a contrast with cognitions is therefore bound to miss the mark. As a result, the Cognitive Account is explanatorily unilluminating - if not extensionally inadequate - with respect to certain central cases of imagining and their imaginativeness. It might be possible to formulate an alternative theory of the kinds of imagining concerned which does not characterize them by reference to cognitive phenomena or features. However, this new theory would either remain restricted to certain forms of imagining and hence function as a supplement to the original Cognitive Account, resulting in a disjunctive account of imagining or it would apply to all kinds of imagining and thus function as a replacement for the Cognitive Account, rendering it altogether superfluous.

To conclude, the Cognitive Account of imagining - whether in conjunction with further supplements or not - cannot hope to satisfy the two desiderata for a unified account of imagining. At best, it can promise to shed some light on the nature of certain forms of imagining (e.g., on how they differ from other kinds of imagining, or from their cognitive counterparts). Also for this reason, the Agency Account is to be preferred. This conclusion is compatible with the endorsement of negation or echo theses for particular kinds of imagining. But whether, for instance, certain types of imagining can be reliable and cognize reality seems to be primarily a matter of the nature of the mental projects which they are part of - and thus a matter of the underlying desires or intentions which motivate and guide these projects. In this respect, the Agency Account should be taken to be more fundamental than the Cognitive Account.

However, the acceptance of the Agency Account as the most promising unified theory of imagining does not mark the end of inquiry. On the one hand, it may be desirable to provide further support for the Agency Account and to elucidate in more detail how it can accommodate certain mental phenomena, in particular those which could not be discussed in this dissertation. As it stands, the Agency Account is true only if we really cannot actively and directly determine the content of our beliefs, intentions and other non-imaginative representations. Hence, this widely held view should be provided with a satisfactory argumentative grounding. Furthermore, the three alternatives to the Cognitive and the Agency Account briefly discussed in the first chapter may deserve more attention - in particular how they might relate to the idea that imaginings are mental actions of a certain kind. And it would also be interesting to investigate to which extent certain mental phenomena, which are neither clearly imaginative nor clearly non-imaginative, are instances of, or at least involve, imagining. Candidates for such cases are: (i) pathological or psychologically unusual phenomena (e.g., inserted thoughts, obsessive representations, delusions, hallucinations, etc.) which may turn out to involve some form of suppressed, non-deliberate or unacknowledged imaginative activity; (ii) hopes, wishes, anticipations or speculations which may also involve imagining, perhaps to the extent to which the concerned non-actual states of affairs are (recognized as) unrealistic or unlikely to occur; (iii) dreams which seem to share a lot of their features with daydreams, but also with associative sequences; and (iv) experiences of grouping phenomena, or of seeing an aspect, which allow for voluntary switches between seeing one thing and seeing another (or, perhaps more precisely, between seeing something as one thing or seeing it as another) that may simply be switches in attention, but that may also instead involve imaginative activity. And the list of mental phenomena worthy of investigation in respect of their potential

imaginativeness can presumably be further extended. On the other hand, it may be interesting to try to bring the conclusions of the considerations about the distinctive nature of imaginings to bear on relevant issues in other areas of philosophy. As mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, imagination is an essential ingredient of particular accounts of such diverse phenomena as thought experiments, conceivability and possibility, simulation, empathy, pretence, games of make-believe, aesthetic appreciation and moral evaluation. The insight that imaginings are mental actions of a certain kind may very well help to clarify the nature of some of these phenomena - even if only by suggesting that they involve imagining to a lesser extent than originally thought (as, perhaps, in the case of types of aesthetic experience). However, the general limits to a dissertation like this have meant that the discussion of the nature of imaginings has had to be restricted to the defence of the Agency Account as the most plausible unified account of imagining.

## 8. Bibliography

- Armstrong, David (1968) *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*. London: Routledge.
- Audi, Robert (1993) *Action, Intention, and Reason*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Bayne, Tim & Pacherie, Elizabeth (forthcoming) "In Defence of the Doxastic Conception of Delusion", forthcoming in *Mind and Language*.
- Bennett, Jonathan (1990) "Why is Belief Involuntary?", in: *Analysis*, vol. 50, pp. 87-107.
- Block, Ned (1994) "Qualia", in: Guttenplan (1994).
- (1996) "Mental Paint and Mental Latex", in: E. Villanueva (ed.) (1996) *Philosophical Issues*, vol. 7. Northridge: Ridgeview Publishing Company.
- Bodrozic, Davor & Dorsch, Fabian (manuscript) "The Impossibility of 'Deciding to Believe'". Manuscript.
- Boghossian, Paul (1989) "Content and Self-Knowledge", in: *Philosophical Topics*, vol. 17, pp. 5-26.
- Braddon-Mitchell, David & Jackson, Frank (1997) "The Teleological Theory of Content", in: *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 75, pp. 474-489.
- Budd, Malcolm (1989) *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*. London: Routledge.
- (1992a) "On Looking at a Picture", in: J. Hopkins & A. Savile (eds.) (1992) *Psychoanalysis, Mind and Art: Perspectives on Richard Wollheim*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1992b) "Review of Kendall Walton's *Mimesis as Make-Believe*", in: *Mind*, vol. 101, pp. 195-198.
- (1993) "How Pictures Look", in: D. Knowles & J. Skorupski (eds.) (1993) *Virtue and Taste*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1995) *Values of Art*. London: Penguin.
- Burge, Tyler (1979) "Individualism and the Mental", in: French, Uehling & Wettstein (eds.) (1979) *Midwest Studies in Philosophy IV*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Carroll, Noel (2001) "On the Narrative Connection". First published in 2000. In: Carroll (2001) *Beyond Aesthetics*. Cambridge: University Press. pp. 118-133.
- Carruthers, Peter (2000) *Phenomenal Consciousness*. Cambridge: University Press.
- (2003) "Review of Currie & Ravenscroft's *Recreative Minds*", in: *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (at <http://ndpr.icaap.org>), no. 12, November.
- Casey, Edward (1976) *Imagining*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- (1987) *Remembering*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Chisholm, Roderick (1976) "The Agent as Cause", in: M. Brand & D. Walton (eds.) (1976) *Action Theory*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Cocking, J. M (1991) *Imagination: A Study in the History of Ideas*. London: Routledge.
- Collingwood, R. G. (1958) *The Principles of Art*. First published in 1938. New York: Galaxy.
- Crane, Tim (1992) "The Non-Conceptual Content of Experience", in: Crane (ed.) (1992) *The Contents of Experience*. Cambridge: University Press.
- (2001) *Elements of Mind*. Oxford: University Press.
- Currie, Gregory (2000) "Imagination, Hallucination and Delusion", in: *Mind and Language*, vol. 15, pp. 124-138.
- (2001) "Imagination and Make-Believe", in: Gaut & McIver Lopes (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. London: Routledge.
- (2002) "Imagination as Motivation", in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 102 (3), pp. 201-216.
- Currie, Gregory & Ravenscroft, Ian (2002) *Recreative Minds*. Oxford: University Press.
- Danto, Arthur (1963) "What We Can Do", in: *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 60, pp. 435-445.
- Davidson, Donald (1980) *Actions and Events*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (1987) "Replies", in: B. Vermazen & M. Hintikka (eds.) (1987) *Essays on Davidson: Actions and Events*. Oxford: University Press.
- (1989) "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge", in: E. LePore (ed.) *Truth and Interpretation*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Davis, Lawrence (1979) *Theory of Action*. Englewood Cliffs (NJ): Prentice-Hall.
- Dennett, Daniel (1988) "Quining Qualia", in: A. Marcel & E. Bisiach (eds.) (1988) *Consciousness in Contemporary Science*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Dorsch, Fabian (2000) *The Nature of Aesthetic Experiences*. MPhil Thesis. University of London.
- Dretske, Fred (1981) *Knowledge and the Flow of Information*. Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press.
- (1994) "Misrepresentation". First published in 1986. In: S. Stich & T. Warfield (eds.) (1994) *Mental Representation*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1997) *Naturalizing the Mind*. Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press.
- (2000) "Norms, History, and the Constitution of the Mental", in his: *Perception, Knowledge and Belief*. Cambridge: University Press.

- Eco, Umberto (1994) *Reflections on "The Name of the Rose"*. First published in 1983. London: Minerva.
- Engel, Susan (1999) *Context is Everything: The Nature of Memory*. New York: Freeman and Company.
- Evans, Gareth (1982) *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Fodor, Jerry (1990) "A Theory of Content", in his: *A Theory of Content and Other Essays*. Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press.
- Frege, Gottlieb (1980) *The Foundations of Arithmetic*. First published in 1884. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Furlong, E. J. (1961) *Imagination*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Gendler, Tamar (2000) "The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance", in: *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 97, pp. 55-81.
- Gendler, Tamar & Hawthorne, John (2002) *Conceivability and Possibility*. Oxford: University Press.
- Giaquinto, Marcus (1992) "Visualizing as a Means of Geometrical Discovery", in: *Mind and Language*, vol. 7, pp. 382-401.
- Ginet, Carl (1990) *On Action*. Cambridge: University Press.
- (2001) "Deciding to Believe", in: Matthias Steup (ed.) *Knowledge, Truth and Duty*. Oxford: University Press.
- Goldie, Peter (2000) *The Emotions*. Oxford: University Press.
- (2003a) "Narrative and Perspective: Values and Appropriate Emotions", in: A. Hatzimoyisis (ed.) (2003) *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements Series*, Cambridge: University Press. pp. 201-220.
- (2003b) "Narrative, Emotion and Perspective", in: M. Kieran & D. Lopes (eds.) (2003) *Imaginative and the Arts*. London: Routledge.
- Goodman, Nelson (1976) *Languages of Art*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Gordon, Robert (1987) *The Structure of Emotions*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Guttenplan, Samuel (ed.) (1994) *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hjort, Mette & Laver, Susan (eds.) (1997) *Emotion and the Arts*. Oxford: University Press.
- Hobbes (1996) *Leviathan*. First published in 1651. Cambridge: University Press.

- Hopkins, Robert (1998) *Picture, Image and Experience*. Cambridge: University Press.
- (2003) "What Makes Representational Painting Truly Visual?", in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl. vol. 78, pp. 149-167.
- Hornsby, Jennifer (1980) *Actions*. London: Routledge.
- Hume, David (2000) *A Treatise of Human Nature*. First published in 1739/40. Oxford: University Press.
- Husserl, Edmund (1980) *Phantasie, Bildbewußtsein, Erinnerung*. Husserliana vol. 23. Den Haag: Nijhoff & Kluwer.
- (2001) *Logical Investigations*. First published in 1901. London: Routledge.
- Hyman, John (2000) "Pictorial Art and Visual Experience", in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 40, pp. 21-45.
- Ishiguro, Hide (1966) "Imagination", in: A. Montefiore & B. Williams (eds.) (1966) *British Analytic Philosophy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- James, Williams (1981) *The Principles of Psychology*. First published in 1890. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- Johnson, Mark (1993) *Moral Imagination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kant (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by P. Guyer & A. Wood. First published in 1781/87. Cambridge: University Press.
- Kavka, Gregory (1983) "The Toxin Puzzle", in: *Analysis*, vol. 43, pp. 33-36.
- Kearney, Richard (1988) *The Wake of Imagination*. London: Hutchinson.
- (1991) *Poetics of Imagining*. London: Harper-Collins.
- Lamarque, Peter (2004) "On Not Expecting Too Much from Narrative", in: *Mind and Language*, vol. 19 (4), pp. 393-408.
- Levinson, Jerrold (1997) "Emotion in Response to Art: A Survey of the Terrain", in: Hjort & Laver (1997).
- (1998) "Wollheim on Pictorial Representation", in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 56 (3), pp. 227-233.
- Lewis, David (1980) "Veridical Hallucination and Prosthetic Vision", in his (1986): *Philosophical Papers: vol. 2*. Oxford: University Press.
- Lowe, E. J. (2000) *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge: University Press.

- Martin, M. G. F. (1992) "The Rational Role of Experience", in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 93, pp. 71-88.
- (1994) "Perceptual Content", in: Guttenplan (1994).
  - (2001) "Out of the Past: Episodic Recall as Retained Acquaintance", in: C. Hoerl & T. McCormack (eds) (2001) *Time and Memory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
  - (2002) "The Transparency of Experience", in: *Mind and Language*, vol. 17, pp. 376-425.
  - (2004) "The Limits of Self-Awareness", in: *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 120, pp. 37-89.
- McCann, Hugh (1998) *The Works of Agency*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- McDowell, John (1982) "Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge", in: *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 68, pp. 456-479.
- (1986) "Singular Thought and the Extent of Inner Space", in: P. Pettit & J. McDowell (eds.) (1986) *Subject, Thought and Context*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
  - (1995) *Mind and World*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- McGinn, Colin (2004) *Mindsight*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- McKinsey, Michael (1991) "Anti-Individualism and Privileged Access", in: *Analysis*, vol. 51, pp. 9-16.
- Millikan, Ruth (1989) "Biosemantics", in *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 86, pp. 281-297.
- Moran, Richard (1994) "The Expression of Feeling in Imagination", in: *Philosophical Review*, vol. 103, pp. 75-106.
- Nichols, Shaun (2004a) "Imagining and Believing: The Promise of a Single Code", in: *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 62, pp. 129-139.
- (2004b) "Review of Currie & Ravenscroft's *Recreative Minds*", in: *Mind*, vol. 113, pp. 329-334.
- Noordhof, Paul (2001a) "Believe What You Want", in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 101, pp. 247-265.
- (2001b) "Getting Personal: Pietroski's Dualism", in: *Symposium on 'Causing Actions': A Field Guide to Philosophy of Mind*. At: [http://www.uniroma3.it/kant/pietroskisymp\\_noordhof.htm](http://www.uniroma3.it/kant/pietroskisymp_noordhof.htm).
  - (2002) "Imagining Objects and Imagining Experiences", in: *Mind and Language*. vol. 17, pp. 426-455.
- O'Shaughnessy, Brian (1980) *The Will*. Cambridge: University Press.
- (2000) *Consciousness and the World*. Oxford: University Press.
  - (2002) "Dreaming", in: *Inquiry*, vol. 45, pp. 399-432.

- Owens, David (2000) *Reason Without Freedom*. London: Routledge.
- (2003) "Does Belief have an Aim?", in: *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 115, pp. 282-305.
- Papineau, David (1993) *Philosophical Naturalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1999) "Normativity and Judgement", in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl. vol. 73 (1), pp. 16-43.
- Paton, H. J. (1936) *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Peacocke, Christopher (1985) "Imagination, Experience and Possibility", in: J. Foster & H. Robinson (eds.) (1985) *Essays on Berkeley*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (1987) "Depiction", in *Philosophical Review*, vol. 96, pp. 383-410.
- (1992) *A Study of Concepts*. Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press.
- (2004) "Explaining Perceptual Entitlement", in: R. Schantz (eds.) (2004) *The Externalist Challenge*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Pietroski, Paul (2000) *Causing Actions*. Oxford: University Press.
- Pink, Thomas (1996) *The Psychology of Freedom*. Cambridge: University Press.
- (2002) "Action and Self-Determination", at: <http://www.mpipf-muenchen.mpg.de/MPIPF/vw-symp-texte/pink.pdf>
- Pollock, John & Cruz, Joseph (1999) *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Pryor, James (2001) "Highlights of Recent Epistemology", in: *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, vol. 52, pp. 95-124.
- Putnam, Hilary (1975) "The Meaning of 'Meaning'", in his: *Philosophical Papers, Vol. II: Mind, Language, and Reality*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Pylyshyn, Zenon (2002) "Mental Imagery: In Search of a Theory", in: *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, vol. 25, pp. 157-238.
- Roessler, Johannes (2001) "Understanding Delusions of Alien Control", in: *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology*, vol. 8, pp. 177-187.
- (2004) "Review of Brian O'Shaughnessy's *Consciousness and the World*", in: *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, vol. 55, pp. 163-173.
- Ryle, Gilbert (1963) *The Concept of Mind*. First published in 1949. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Russow, Lilly-Marlene (1978) "Some Recent Work on Imagination", in: *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 15 (1), pp. 57-66.

- Sartre, Jean-Paul (1997) *Die Imagination (The Imagination: A Psychological Critique)*. First published in 1936. In his: *Die Transzendenz des Ego. Philosophische Essays 1931-1939*. Reinbek: Rowohlt.
- (2004) *The Imaginary*. First published in 1940. London: Routledge.
- Scruton, Roger (1974) *Art and Imagination*. London: Methuen & Co.
- Searle, John (1983) *Intentionality*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Sellars, Wilfrid (1978) "The Role of the Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience", in: H. Johnstone (ed.) (1978) *Categories: A Colloquium*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Shoemaker, Sidney (1998) "Desiring at Will (and at Pill)", in: C. Fehige & u. Wessels (eds.) (1998) *Preferences*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Shorter, J. M (1970) "Imagination". First published in 1952. In: O. Wood & G. Pitcher (eds.) (1970) *Ryle*. London: Macmillan.
- Siewert, Charles (2000) *The Significance of Consciousness*. Princeton: University Press.
- Soldati, Gianfranco (forthcoming) "Review of Currie & Ravenscroft's *Recreative Imagination*". Forthcoming in *Mind*.
- Soldati, Gianfranco & Dorsch, Fabian (forthcoming) "Conceptual Qualia". Forthcoming.
- Sorensen (1992) *Thought Experiments*. Oxford: University Press.
- Strawson, Peter (1970) "Imagination and Perception", in: L. Foster and J. W. Swanson (eds.) (1970) *Experience and Theory*. London: Duckworth.
- Strawson, Galen (2003) "Mental Ballistics or The Involuntariness of Spontaneity", in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 103, pp. 227-256.
- Thomas, Nigel (1999) "Are Theories of Imagery Theories of Imagination?", in: *Cognitive Science*, vol. 23, pp. 207-245.
- Velleman, David (2000) *The Possibility of Practical Reason*. Oxford: University Press.
- Walton, Kendall (1990) *Mimesis as Make-Believe*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- (1997) "Spelunking, Simulation, and Slime: On Being Moved by Fiction", in: Hjort & Laver (1997).
- (2002) "Depiction, Perception, and Imagination: Responses to Richard Wollheim", in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 60 (1), pp. 27-35.
- Warnock, Mary (1976) *Imagination*. London: Faber and Faber.
- White, Alan (1990) *The Language of Imagination*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Williams, Bernard (1966) "Imagination and the Self", in: Williams (1973), pp. 26-45.
- (1970) "Deciding to Believe", in: Williams (1973), pp. 136-151.
  - (1973) *Problems of the Self*. Cambridge: University Press.
  - (2002) *Truth and Truthfulness*. Princeton: University Press.
- Wilson, George (1989) *The Intentionality of Human Action*. Stanford: University Press.
- Winters, Barbara (1979) "Believing at Will", in: *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 76, pp. 243-256.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1984a) *Zettel*. Werkausgabe Band 8. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- (1984b) *Bemerkungen ueber die Philosophie der Psychologie*. Werkausgabe Band 7. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
  - (1984c) *Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Werkausgabe Band 1. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
  - (1984d) *Das Blaue Buch*. Werkausgabe Band 5. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Wollheim, Richard (1973) "Imagination and Identification", in his: *On Art and the Mind*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- (1984) *The Thread of Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
  - (1987) *Painting as an Art*. Princeton: University Press.
  - (2003) "What Makes Representational Painting Truly Visual?", in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl. Vol. 78, pp. 131-147.
- Yablo, Stephen (1993) "Is Conceivability a Guide to Possibility?", in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 53, pp. 1-42.