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# Imagination and Experience

A Commentary on Jérôme Dokic & Margherita Arcangeli

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Jérôme Dokic and Margherita Arcangeli develop a taxonomy of the mental states classified as experience-like imaginings in their paper “The Heterogeneity of Experiential Imagination”. Experience-like imaginings are thought to *re-create* experiences. Therefore, the taxonomy of the Experiential Imagination suggested by the authors mirrors a taxonomy of the underlying, re-created experiences. In this commentary, I will focus on the notion of re-creation that is invoked, and argue that this notion must either be fleshed out further or omitted from the taxonomy. Two further points follow this discussion: first I will discuss the idea of different kinds of self-involvement in objective and subjective imagination and suggest an alternative view. Then I raise some doubts about the classification of cognitive imaginings as experiential imaginings. To summarise, I will suggest an alternative interpretation of these findings by claiming that we can obtain a useful taxonomy of imaginative states based on our pre-theoretical opinions. Furthermore, I will explore the idea that experiential imaginings involve an empty point of view.

## Keywords

Cognitive imagination | Experiential imagination | Objective imagination | Sensory imagination | Subjective imagination

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## 1 Introduction

In their paper “The Heterogeneity of Experiential Imagination”, Jérôme Dokic and Margherita Arcangeli offer a taxonomy of the various mental states subsumed by them under the label Experiential Imagination. Experiential Imagination is introduced as the re-creation of non-imaginative, conscious mental states. Since experiential imaginings re-create experiential mental states, they can be classified according to the underlying taxonomy of the conscious mental states that they re-create. Dokic and Arcangeli

argue that there are two types of Experiential Imagination: objective imagination and subjective imagination. Objective imagination re-creates experiences about the external world, while subjective imagination re-creates experiences about mental or bodily states of oneself. Furthermore, the authors refine the category of the objective imagination by dividing it into sensory imagination and cognitive imagination. This taxonomy of the Experiential Imagination suggested by Dokic and Arcangeli provides a struc-

ture within which to understand the vast spectrum of mental states classified as experiential imaginings by referring to the notions of subjective and objective imagination. The authors additionally suggest an attractive perspective on cognitive imaginings, which relies on the idea that these have a phenomenal character as well.

I would like to discuss three aspects of Dokic and Arcangeli's paper and close with my own reflections on the topic. I will start with a point concerning the definition of Experiential Imagination as re-creating other mental states (section 2). Two points about the taxonomy itself will follow this discussion: the second point deals with the notions of objective and subjective imagination (section 3). A third point with which I will be concerned is the classification of cognitive imaginings within the suggested taxonomy (section 4). It is unclear whether and in what sense the notion of *re-creation* is helpful for delineating the suggested taxonomy of Experiential Imagination. The taxonomy faces certain issues that are partly grounded in the notion of *re-creation*.

Given these considerations, I will present my own take on a classification of imaginings that does not involve the notion of re-creation and is based on our pre-theoretical opinions about imaginings. In addition to this, I explore the notion of an *empty perspective* to describe a phenomenological difference in the perspectival character of imaginings and non-imaginative experiences (see section 5).

## 2 Re-creating experiences in imagination

I would like to focus first on the notion of Experiential Imagination itself. Dokic and Arcangeli want to develop a taxonomy of Experiential Imagination, and they therefore start by exploring the mental states that fall under this category. The authors introduce the subject of their taxonomy, the Experiential Imagination, as follows (see Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 2): Experiential Imagination is first of all imagination that is *experience-like*. Whether all instances of imaginings are of this kind or whether there may be kinds of imagination that do not fall under this category is left open

(Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 2). The notion of Experiential Imagination is spelled out further by referring to Christopher Peacocke's so-called General Hypothesis (GH):

To imagine something is always at least to imagine, from the inside, being in some conscious state (see Peacocke 1985, p. 21).

According to this definition, Experiential Imagination is imagining something *from the inside*, which is defined as involving "the perspective of a conscious experience" (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 3). An example would be visually imagining a white sandy beach, which involves a certain experiential perspective (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 3). The authors call this kind of imagination "X-like" imagination or "re-creating X" in imagination (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 3), with X standing for the non-imaginative mental state that is re-created (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 3). Following this terminology, visually imagining a white sandy beach is vision-like imagination or re-creating a visual experience of a white sandy beach in the imagination. The authors sum up these considerations in a brief discussion on the notion of *re-creation*: Experiential Imagination is, according to the authors, imagination that re-creates non-imaginative conscious states (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 3). The idea that imaginative states re-create other mental states allows Dokic & Arcangeli to ground their taxonomy of the Experiential Imagination on a classification of such re-created mental states. A taxonomy of these underlying non-imaginative mental states can therefore serve as a basis for a taxonomy of the corresponding imaginative states ([this collection](#), p. 3). Dokic and Arcangeli do not commit themselves to any existing account that explains the imagination in terms of *re-creation* or *simulation* (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 3). The notion of re-creating a non-imaginative mental state is not explored further, since "it is enough for our purposes to accept the idea that a phenomenologically useful taxonomy of imagination can be guided

by a corresponding taxonomy of non-imaginative mental states” (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 3).

Even if the authors wish to remain as neutral as possible with respect to the notion of re-creation, it is important to spell it out. There are two main reasons why I think that this notion should be explored further: first, the notion of re-creation is crucial to the nature and scope of the taxonomy in which it is involved. Second, it seems to me that the authors oscillate to some extent between different notions of re-creation, rather than actually remaining neutral about it.

Concerning the first point, there seem at least three options available for understanding the idea that imaginings re-create other mental states, assuming that *re-creating* is not used to specify sub-personal processes but deals instead with mental states on a personal level:

- (1) As a *mere way of speaking* to refer to x-like imaginings
- (2) As the claim that imaginings re-create an experiential *mode*
- (3) As the claim that imaginings re-create experiences as part of their *contents*

The first way to understand the notion of re-creating is to use it synonymously with the notion of x-like imagination. What I mean by this is that we may use the notion of *re-creating X in imagination* to refer to *having an imagining with an x-like phenomenology*. In which case, for example, *re-creating a visual experience in imagination* would be synonymous with *having a vision-like phenomenology*. Understood like this, the notion of re-creating is simply used to refer to imaginings with an experience-like phenomenology. This is merely a way of speaking or a terminological stipulation. If the notion is used like this, it does not assume or specify any relation between imagination and experience in general (or between particular imaginings and experiences). That is, using the notion in this way does not commit us to the claim that imaginings are related to or dependent on experi-

ences in any sense. However, if the notion of re-creation is used as a mere way of speaking, it would be better to omit it from the taxonomy altogether, since it does not play any explanatory role or add any technical term. Instead, we could simply speak of *x-like* imagination and thereby refer to imaginings that have an x-like phenomenology.

The other two ways of spelling out the notion of re-creating are more substantial than just synonyms for x-like imaginings: in these versions, the notion of re-creation is a *metaphysical notion* that is used to indicate a relation between imaginings and experiences. Used like this, the notion of re-creation involves a claim about the metaphysical structure of imaginings (or the imagination), since it endorses the idea that imaginings are related to experiences in a specific way. The nature of this relation can be spelled out differently. Version (2) claims that imaginings re-create experiences in the following sense: for every type of experience there is a respective *imaginative mode*. There is a visual mode of imagination, an auditory mode of imagination, a proprioceptive mode of imagination, and so forth. In this sense, every type of experience is re-created by a specific type of Experiential Imagination. Version (3) claims something else, namely that different experiences are re-created as part of the contents of imaginings: if I visually imagine an object O, for example, the imagining has as part of its content a visual experience of O.

These two notions of re-creation yield different taxonomies with different metaphysical underpinnings: a taxonomy based on (2) differentiates imaginings according to their *mode*, while a taxonomy based on (3) classifies imaginings according to their *contents*. If re-creation is understood as specified in (2), such that for every experience-type there is an imaginative type that re-creates this experience-type, this is a different metaphysical claim to the one sketched in (3). As such, one could claim that there is one type of imagination that re-creates various experience-types by taking them up as parts of their contents. The nature of the relation called *re-creation* therefore has consequences for what is taxonomised: this can be,

for example, the mode or the content of an imagining. Neglecting this notion (if it is considered to be a substantial metaphysical notion) therefore means neglecting the metaphysical basis of the taxonomy. Thus, it seems to me that from a methodological point of view it is indeed important to clarify which notion of re-creation is in play.

The second worry I want to raise about the notion of re-creation is that the authors do not in fact remain neutral with regard to this notion. First, it seems that the notion of re-creating that the authors have in mind is not only a synonym for the expression *x-like imaginings*. One reason to think so is that Dokic and Arcangeli use the notion of re-creation in crucial definitions such as, for example, to formulate the various versions of the General Hypothesis. One example is as follows:

SensH: To imagine something sensorily is always at least to re-create some sensory experience. (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 4)

If *to re-create some sensory experience* is synonymous with *having an imagining with a sensory phenomenology*, the hypothesis and its variants are no longer interesting claims. This indicates that the notion is more than what I called a mere way of speaking, but instead refers to (and thereby stipulates) a relation between imaginings and experiences or imagination and experience in general.

Additionally, it seems to me that the suggested taxonomy oscillates between different notions of re-creation. On the one hand, Dokic and Arcangeli sometimes seem to sympathise with the mode-sense of the notion of re-creation (as in (2)). When introducing the distinction between objective and subjective imagination, they claim, for example, that this distinction is concerned with the mode of the experience and not with the content (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 9). I address this point in more detail in section 3, below. On the other hand, Dokic and Arcangeli employ the General Hypothesis and develop various variants of it. As a reminder, the General Hypothesis claims that

“to imagine something is always at least to imagine, from the inside, being in some conscious state” (Peacocke 1985, p. 21). This thesis is put forward by Christopher Peacocke (1985, p. 21) and Michael Martin (2002), who call it the “Dependency Thesis” (Martin 2002). It is usually considered to be a claim about what an imagining represents (see e.g., Dorsch 2012, pp. 294 and pp. 314; see also Paul Noordhof’s exploration and criticism of the thesis in Noordhof 2002). The idea behind these claims is that imaginings are experiential in nature because what we imagine in the imagining are experiences: “sensory imagining is experiential or phenomenal precisely because what is imagined is experiential or phenomenal” (Martin 2002: 406). This means that my visual imagining of an object *O* represents an experience of *O* and therefore is experiential. The General Hypothesis hence seems to imply, at least implicitly, a specific conception of re-creation: it endorses the idea that imaginings involve experiences as part of their contents, which is the notion of re-creation I formulated in version (3). Therefore, this view is not neutral about the nature of re-creating: relying on the General Hypothesis brings with it a certain commitment about the notion of re-creation involved (given that one adopts the suggested reading of the General Hypothesis and its variants).

In this section, I (1.) discussed three interpretations of the notion of re-creation that I take to be the most relevant in the given context, since they are alluded to by the authors. It seems that the notion of re-creation needs to be fleshed out further if it is to play some explanatory role in the taxonomy (otherwise it can be dismissed); and (2.) argued that the background assumptions of the taxonomy are committed to differing interpretations of the notion of re-creation. Therefore, the authors do not remain neutral about the notion of re-creation that is involved here but seem to implicitly adopt different notions of re-creation. One way of solving these issues would be to address them and commit to a specific notion of re-creation. Another solution would be to eliminate the notion of re-creation from the taxonomy, which is what I will suggest in the final section of this commentary.

### 3 Subjective and objective imagination and the self

One central aspect of the taxonomy that Dokic & Arcangeli propose is the distinction between subjective imagination and objective imagination (see [this collection](#), pp. 4). Subjective imagination re-creates internal experiences: experiences that are “supposed to be about a mental or bodily state of oneself” (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 6). As an example, the authors point to “proprioceptive and agentic experiences” (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 6) such as imagining the movements of swimming in the sea. In contrast, objective imagination re-creates external experiences. These are experiences that are “typically about the external world” (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 6)—such as, for example, visual experiences of objects. Dokic & Arcangeli claim that experiential imaginings in general can be divided into subjective and objective imaginings ([this collection](#), p. 6). In a second step, this differentiation is then distinguished from Zeno Vendler’s distinction between imaginings that either implicitly or explicitly involve the self (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), pp. 7). The authors argue that Vendler’s categorisation differs from their own by providing four examples of cases of subjective and objective imagination that involve the self either implicitly or explicitly (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 8).

I have a number of worries about some of the ideas and notions that the authors put forward along this line of thought. My first worry concerns the claim that the suggested differentiation of objective and subjective imagination concerns the *mode* of the respective state and therefore differs from Vendler’s distinction, which is thought to be about the state’s *content* (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 8). Internal and external experiences are equally *internal* in some sense, since they are experiences that are internal *to some subject*. As I understand the authors here, the difference between internal and external experiences is that they are usually about internal or external entities, respectively. Thus, in the given context, the notions *internal* and *external* apparently specify

what the experiences are about. On the level of imagination, subjective and objective imagination re-creates these different types of experiences. The authors specify this idea by spelling out two versions of the General Hypothesis adapted for objective and subjective imagination, called *ObjH* and *SubjH* (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 6). As I specified above in section 2, one can read the General Hypothesis and its variants as claiming that imaginings re-create experiences in the sense that they represent experiences as part of their contents. If one accepts this interpretation, it is not obvious to me why and how re-creating internal and external experiences in the imagination yields imaginings that are different in *mode* (namely subjective and objective imaginings) and not in terms of what they represent. This point is an exemplification of the issue I raised in section 2: it depends on how one spells out the notion of re-creation whether or not the line of argument that the authors present to distinguish their notions from Vendler’s is convincing.

My second worry concerns the notion of *implicitly involving the self*. It seems to me that there is room to argue that both objective and subjective imagination as defined by Dokic and Arcangeli always involve the self implicitly (the authors briefly address this point in footnote 13). If this were the case it is unclear how their notions are different from Vendler’s. The self is implicitly involved in an imagining if “it fixes the point of view internal to the imagined scene without being a constituent of that scene” (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 7). An example is imagining seeing the Pantheon: there is a specific point of view involved in this imagining (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 7). This, however, seems to be the definition of Experiential Imagination *in general* that the authors propose in the beginning of the paper. They explain (by referring to Peacocke) that Experiential Imagination always involves an experiential perspective (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 3). If involving an experiential perspective is sufficient to implicitly involve the self, and if experiential imaginings are defined as imaginings that involve an experiential perspective, then every experiential imagining in-

volves the self implicitly. If this is indeed how the authors conceive of Experiential Imagination, a notion introduced by Michael Martin may be helpful for dismissing certain difficulties (though I am aware that he uses this notion in a context with different argumentative aims). Martin argues (similarly to Peacocke) that at least some sensory imaginings involve a point of view, and thereby implicitly represent experiences (2002, pp. 40). However, as he explains, the presence of a point of view in the imagining does not imply that I myself occupy this point of view: “[t]he point of view within the imagined scene is notoriously empty enough that one can in occupying that point of view imagine being someone other than one actually is” (Martin 2002, p. 411). I take this to be a promising way of differentiating imaginings from non-imaginative experiences, since they involve different kinds of points of view or perspectivalness (I will say more on this in section 5).

Maybe this notion of an *empty* point of view can also be helpful for further sharpening the notions of objective and subjective imagination. One could argue that objective experiential imaginings involve a point of view—but an empty one. Thus, imagining seeing the Pantheon involves a point of view, but this point of view is empty in the sense that it must not be myself occupying this point of view. In this sense, objective imaginings may not involve the self at all. This observation could also serve to set the subjective/objective distinction apart from Vendler’s. But it is probably more difficult to transfer the notion of an empty point of view to subjective imagination, given that it is defined as re-creating experiences about oneself. Maybe this is close to what the authors have in mind when they loosen the notion of subjective imagination towards the end of the paper by claiming that subjective imaginings may be neutral about the identity of the self involved (Dokic & Arcangeli *this collection*, p. 16). Thus, to conclude, considering the notion of an empty point of view at least seems to be an interesting option to be explored in order to strengthen the objective/subjective distinction and the notion of subjective imagination. Apart from this suggestion, I will come back to the notion of an

empty point of view in the final section of this commentary and on this basis offer an additional perspective.

#### 4 The phenomenal character of cognitive imaginings

My third and final point concerns the classification of cognitive imaginings. Cognitive imaginings are usually considered to be non-sensory in the sense of not having a sensory phenomenal character or indeed any phenomenal character at all. An example of cognitive imagination is to imagine that there is a largest prime number. Dokic and Arcangeli suggest that this orthodox classification may be misguided, since one can plausibly argue that cognitive imaginings have a certain phenomenology, namely a cognitive one (*this collection*, pp. 10–11). Therefore, the authors claim, we could classify them as experiential imaginings as well.

I think the idea of ascribing a certain cognitive phenomenology to cognitive imaginings is very attractive, since it acknowledges the idea of a cognitive phenomenology in general and allows us to classify all kinds of imaginings according to one single feature, which is their phenomenal character (see also section 5). However, I am unsure about the classification of cognitive imaginings as experiential imaginings. Here is why: in the beginning of the paper, the authors define one important feature of the kinds of imaginings that they consider experiential: they involve an “experiential perspective” and are (in this sense) “from the inside” (see Dokic & Arcangeli *this collection*, p. 3). It is not spelled out in detail how we should understand the notion of an experiential perspective but, as I interpret it, this involves at least that things are oriented “within egocentric space” (Martin 2002, p. 408), to use Martin’s expression. Martin only speaks about visual perceptual experiences, but it seems to me that one can plausibly expand this notion to all kinds of experiences: they involve an egocentric perspective. As I understand Dokic and Arcangeli, they consider this egocentric perspective to be a defining feature of the phenomenology of experiential imaginings that re-create experiences.

If cognitive imaginings are considered to be experiential imaginings, and if experiential imaginings are considered to involve an egocentric perspective, one would expect cognitive imaginings to also have this egocentric perspective. However, it seems to me that the phenomenal character of cognitive imaginings does not involve the *perspective of an experience*. If I imagine that the earth is flat (and according to the authors thereby re-create the belief that the earth is flat) it seems that imagining this does not involve any egocentric perspective in the sense given above. If at all, cognitive imaginings incorporate a very specific kind of perspective that is distinct from any experiential *perspective*. Consequently, even if cognitive imaginings have a phenomenal character, this seems quite different from the phenomenal character of experiences (given that the latter is considered to involve an experiential perspective). If the authors endorse a different notion of experiential phenomenal character and *having an experiential phenomenal character* is, for example, just a synonym for *having a phenomenal character*, then my point is not valid. However, if Dokic and Arcangeli indeed think that having an experiential phenomenal character means that an egocentric perspective is involved (as in the case of experiences), I suggest that we need to reconsider the classification of cognitive imaginings as provided here. While I find the idea that cognitive imaginings may have some kind of phenomenal character convincing, it seems less convincing to me that they have an experiential phenomenal character in the sense discussed here. Therefore, I propose that we instead classify cognitive imaginings as a different kind of imagination with a specific cognitive phenomenal character.

## 5 Conclusion

The issues I raised in the previous sections can probably all be met in order to maintain the taxonomy suggested by Dokic and Arcangeli and to develop it further. Nevertheless, I think that the points I raised also allow for an alternative interpretation that offers a different perspective on a taxonomy of imaginings. Before

summarising the results of this commentary, I would like to explore this alternative perspective on the topic. My two main claims are: (1.) that it is not helpful to involve the notion of re-creation in a taxonomy of imaginings, and that the taxonomy can be yielded without it; and (2.) that the specific way the self is (not) involved in imaginings *distinguishes* them from experiences rather than mirroring experiences.

Concerning the first point, it is neither necessary nor helpful to involve the notion of re-creation or any other metaphysical notion if the aim is to yield a *phenomenological taxonomy* of imaginative states (and I take this to be one of the aims of Dokic and Arcangeli's paper). In order to yield such a phenomenological taxonomy, we can simply rely on our pre-theoretical classifications of imaginings as vision-like or action-like, and so forth. The notion *vision-like* and its cognates *x-like* can be understood as phenomenological notions here: to the imagining subject, what it is like to visually imagine an object is similar to what it is like to visually experience an object. That there are such similarities in phenomenal character is an interesting observation that allows us to build a phenomenological taxonomy. If one additionally accepts the idea of a cognitive phenomenology, this account allows us to capture cognitive imaginings as well, and to classify them according to their (cognitive) phenomenal character. Explaining *why* imaginings are vision-like or action-like, and what the metaphysical underpinnings of this phenomenological taxonomy may be is another task. These tasks should not be entangled.

One may worry that these pre-theoretical notions (such as *vision-like*) and opinions are too imprecise and not apt to yield a taxonomy of imaginative states that can ground further philosophical theorising. One answer to this worry is to expand a line of thought suggested by Fabian Dorsch. He considers the fact that we stably, effortlessly, and consistently “do group together a large variety of mental occurrences in the class of imaginings, while excluding many others” (Dorsch 2012, p. 6) to justify the idea that imaginings form a unified class of mental states. This line of thought can be adapted to ground a more fine-grained taxonomy of ima-

ginings, based on our pre-theoretical opinions: we also stably, effortlessly, and consistently classify various imaginings as vision-like, audition-like, movement-like, and so forth. There are certainly borderline cases or instances of imaginings that combine several phenomenological aspects, but nevertheless this pre-theoretical classification is stable in the way described by Dorsch. I consider therefore this intuitive and pre-theoretical classification a helpful taxonomy of imaginings that can serve as a sufficiently justified *starting point* for further philosophical reflection. This pre-theoretical classification of imaginings that I suggest probably does not yield essentially different categories to the taxonomy suggested by Dokic and Arcangeli. It classifies imaginings according to their phenomenal character as vision-like, action-like, and so forth, which are all categories acknowledged by the authors. What I wish to claim is that in order to ground this taxonomy, it is not necessary or helpful to involve a metaphysical notion such as re-creation. It is sufficient to recur to our pre-theoretical classification of imaginative states.

The only category that is probably not reflected in this phenomenological taxonomy is the distinction between subjective and objective imagination, which, according to the authors, also “gives rise to phenomenologically different imaginings” (Dokic & Arcangeli [this collection](#), p. 6). The reason for this is that there is a difference between the more fine-grained phenomenology and the more coarse-grained phenomenology of a mental state. By this I mean that we can distinguish various aspects of a mental state’s phenomenal character. Two different visual experiences of a red apple and a green apple respectively share the coarse-grained phenomenal character of being visual, but they differ in terms of their fine-grained phenomenal character: perceiving a red apple is phenomenally different from perceiving a green apple. The taxonomy I suggest above is concerned with the rather coarse-grained phenomenal character of imaginings that allows us to classify them as vision-like, action-like, and so forth. An even more coarse-grained phenomenal character would be the one which all types of

imaginings have in contrast to cognitive state, for example. The distinction between objective and subjective imagination seems to reflect more fine-grained phenomenological categories than those that classify imaginings according to what their phenomenal character resembles. I am not sure whether there is a *phenomenology of objectiveness* (as opposed to subjectiveness) that, for example, unifies sensory imagination and cognitive imagination as opposed to proprioceptive imagination (as suggested by Dokic and Arcangeli). This shows that the account and methodology that I propose also faces certain challenges. One challenge would be to single out exactly which aspects of the phenomenology we take to be defining marks for a categorisation. Another challenge, for example, would be to point out that for this account we have to rely on introspective findings, whose epistemic status and reliability may be controversial. Nevertheless I think that pre-theoretical reflection based on phenomenological findings is an appropriate way to lay out a taxonomy of the mental states we classify as imaginings, since in principle it can be done stably, effortlessly, and consistently (see again [Dorsch 2012](#), p. 6).

The second aspect I would like to address is the distinction between subjective and objective imagination. These notions introduced by Dokic and Arcangeli are very helpful, since they reveal the particular ways in which the self (or aspects of the self) is involved in imaginings. However, I think one can draw different conclusions from these observations than those presented by the authors. As I suggested in [section 3](#), I think the best way to describe the point of view involved in imaginings is by adopting and expanding the notion of an *empty point of view*. It seems to me that imaginings do not involve the self in the same way as, for example, experiences do. I will explore this line of thought by pointing to the example of visual experiences as opposed to visual imaginings. The perspectival character of a visual experience has several aspects: it involves a distinct point of view that locates the perceiving subject in a determinate relation to its surrounding objects. Objects are therefore perceived as being close, far away, to

the left, above, and so forth (see also [Martin 2002](#), p. 408). In this sense the self is involved, since there is always an egocentric perspective. However, in imagination this kind of perspectivalness need not be fully realised. It seems possible to imagine an object without imagining it at a certain distance or at a certain position. If I perceive a tree, I perceive it far away to the left, for example. If I imagine a tree I can simply imagine the tree. I *can* imagine a tree in the distance to the left but this is something I deliberately add to the imagining. This thought can be expanded to other forms of imaginings as well. One way to capture this particular perspectival character of imaginings is to adopt the proposed notion of an empty point of view: while experiences involve the self in the sense of involving an egocentric perspective (which is a non-empty point of view), imaginings involve an *empty point of view*. This does not mean that one adopts, in imagining, the point of view of someone else (as opposed to the point of view of myself), but that this point of view is *empty*. One important difference between this notion of an empty point of view and Dokic and Arcangeli's account is that it *differentiates* imaginings from experiences: regarding the point of view that is involved, imaginings differ importantly from non-imaginative experiential states, since the former may involve an empty point of view. In contrast to this, Dokic and Arcangeli seem to think that imaginings mirror non-imaginative states with respect to the nature of the point of view involved (again probably partly due to the notion of re-creation). Again, the approach that I suggest certainly faces challenges. One challenge is to demand that we spell out the notion of an empty point of view in more detail. So far, I have only pointed in the direction of how to capture certain particular features of imaginings. However, investigating this difference further seems like a promising way to clarify the nature of imaginings.

To sum up, I will briefly repeat the points I discussed in this commentary:

1. I suggested that we explore the notion of re-creation further, since it occupies a central place in the suggested taxonomy of Experien-

tial Imagination. As I argued, this notion must either be spelled out or omitted from the taxonomy, since as an underdetermined notion it does not add to the explanatory basis. Furthermore, I showed that the authors seem to implicitly rely on different notions of re-creation instead of remaining neutral about it.

2. I pointed to some worries about the distinction between subjective and objective imagination. I suggested that we adopt the notion of an empty point of view to characterise the kind of self-involvement we find in experiential imaginings.
3. I formulated my doubts about the classification of cognitive imaginings as experiential imaginings due to their phenomenal character, which does not seem to be experiential in the sense that it does not involve an experiential perspective.

I concluded these considerations with my own interpretation of the findings. As I suggested, we can develop a phenomenological taxonomy of different types of imaginings by basing it on our pre-theoretical opinions about imaginings. We do not need to involve the notion of re-creation (or other non-phenomenological notions) in order to do this. Clarifying the metaphysical underpinnings of this taxonomy is a different task. Additionally, I interpreted reflections on the various ways the self is involved in imaginings as yielding the conclusion that imaginings differ from experiences in terms of how the self is (not) involved, rather than mirroring experiences, in this respect. Imaginings involve an empty point of view, while experiences have an egocentric point of view. I consider both these aspects relevant for any theory of imaginings.

Dokic and Arcangeli's taxonomy has essentially contributed to further developing a theory of imaginings by revealing and illuminating relevant aspects of the nature of imaginings. Their observations have clearly uncovered a neuralgic aspect of imaginings, which is how the self is involved (or not involved) in imaginings. Furthermore, their taxonomy allows us to classify cognitive imaginings in terms of their phenomenal character and not, for example, with respect to

what these are about. Although the taxonomy reveals how heterogeneous imaginings are, it therefore nevertheless offers a unified take on imaginings. Adopting Dokic and Arcangeli's observations as a starting point for further investigations will certainly be very fruitful, and is sure to advance our understanding of the nature of imaginings.

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