The Heterogeneity of Experiential Imagination

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Imagination is very often associated with the experienceable. Imagination is said to "re-create" conscious experiences. For instance, philosophers often talk of vision-like or audition-like imagination. How many varieties of experiential imagination are there, and how are they related? In this paper, we offer a detailed taxonomy of imaginative phenomena, based on both conceptual analysis and phenomenology, which contributes to answering these questions. First, we shall spell out the notion of experiential imagination as the imaginative capacity to re-create experiential perspectives. Second, we suggest that the domain of experiential imagination divides into objective and subjective imagination. In our interpretation, objective imagination comprises both sensory and cognitive imagination. In contrast, subjective imagination re-creates non-imaginative internal experiences of one's own mind, including proprioception, agentive experience, feeling pain, and perhaps internal ways of gaining information about other types of mental states, such as sensory experience and belief. We show how our interpretation of the notion of subjective imagination differs from Zeno Vendler's, who relies on an orthogonal distinction between two ways in which the self is involved in our imaginings. Finally, we show the relevance of our taxonomy for several important philosophical and scientific applications of the notion of imagination, including modal epistemology, cognitive resonance, mindreading and imaginative identification.

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1 Introduction

Many theorists have pointed out that imagination, or at least a salient type of imagination, is bound to the "experienceable".[1] In this sense, we can imagine only what can be experienced. For instance, we can visually imagine only what can be seen and auditorily imagine only what can be heard. To capture the latter examples, philosophers often talk of vision-like and audition-like imagination. More generally, the relevant type of imagination is *experience-like* or (as we shall also say) *experiential*, whether or not one believes that experiential imagination exhausts the field of possible imaginings.

However, the precise sense in which imagination is experiential remains a deep and complicated issue. In this essay, we would like

[1] This is a widespread claim that dates back to Plato and Aristotle and pervades the history of philosophy. See White (1990) for a good survey and a critical view of the standard picture (suggested by etymology) according to which imagination is akin to perception only. Among contemporary philosophers see also, for instance, Wollheim (1984), Williams (1976), Casey (1976), O'Shaughnessy (1980), Vendler (1984), Peacocke (1985), Walton (1990), Mulligan (1999), Kind (2001), Currie & Ravenscroft (2002), Martin (2002), Noordhof (2002), Chalmers (2002), Carruthers (2002), McGinn (2004), Goldman (2006), Byrne (2010).

to inquire into the scope of experiential imagination. In particular, we want to relate the notion of experiential imagination to two important distinctions present in the contemporary literature on imagination, namely the distinction between sensory and cognitive imagination (Currie & Ravenscroft 2002; McGinn 2004) and the distinction between subjective and objective imagination (Vendler 1984; Dokic 2008). We aim at proposing, eventually, a systematic and hopefully enlightening taxonomy of the varieties of experiential imagination.

The essay is structured as follows: Section 2 tackles the broad phenomenological sense in which our imaginings are experiential. Sensory imagination will emerge as an important sub-type of experiential imagination.

Section 3 individuates two more fundamental sub-species of experiential imagination, namely objective and subjective imagination. We shall point out that this distinction maps onto an independently motivated distinction in the field of non-imaginative mental states, namely that between external and internal experiences. While external experiences (such as vision) are only accidentally *de se*, internal experiences (such as proprioception or agentive experience) are essentially or at least normally *de se*. The upshot will be that sensory imagination is best seen as a paradigmatic case of objective imagination.

Section 4 discusses the distinction between objective and subjective imagination, as Zeno Vendler introduces it on the basis of intuitive contrast examples. We shall show that Vendler's distinction diverges from ours, since it seems to hinge on a distinction between two ways the self can be involved in our imaginings. We shall suggest that the latter distinction is in fact orthogonal to our distinction between objective and subjective imagination (section 4.1). Moreover, upon closer look, the contrast examples offered by Vendler motivate our construction of the objective versus subjective distinction, which will prove to be more fruitful for the theory of imagination (section 4.2).

Section 5 presents the notion of cognitive or belief-like imagination and gives some reason to resist its interpretation as a form of non-ex-

periential imagination. Cognitive imagination can be construed as experiential, provided that at least some of our occurrent beliefs are conscious. Moreover, if belief is an experience, it is clearly an external experience. Therefore, cognitive imagination will emerge as a sub-species of objective imagination, along with sensory imagination.

Section 6 further investigates the domain of subjective imagination and its heterogeneity. We shall suggest that, along with proprioception, agentive experience, introspection, and feeling pain, subjective imagination may re-create other internal ways of gaining information about one's mental states, including beliefs.

Although much of our discussion in this essay belongs to conceptual clarification informed by phenomenological considerations, section 7 briefly describes several upshots of our account with respect to modal epistemology, cognitive resonance phenomena, mindreading, and imaginative identification. It is our contention that the relevance of the conceptual distinctions proposed by our taxonomy of experiential imagination has been crucially neglected in many important philosophical and scientific applications of the notion of imagination.

2 Experiential and sensory imagination

Let us start with Christopher Peacocke's analysis of imagination, which can help us to delineate what we mean by "experiential imagination." Peacocke (1985) puts forward what he calls the "General Hypothesis" about imagination, or GH (General Hypothesis) for short:

> GH $=_{Df}$ To imagine something is always at least to imagine, from the inside, being in some conscious state (Peacocke 1985, p. 21).

Peacocke does not offer an explicit definition of the phrase "from the inside", but we shall follow Kendall Walton's interpretation and assume that "the question of whether an imagining is from the inside arises only when what is imagined is an experience (broadly construed)" (Walton 1990, p. 31). For instance, I may ima-

gine being a descendant of Napoleon, but, according to Walton, my imagining does not essentially involve the perspective of any experience properly speaking. There is nothing it is like to be a descendant of Napoleon.[2] So there is no question of imagining "from the inside" having this relational property. In contrast, when I visually imagine a white sandy beach, my imagining involves an experiential perspective. I imagine "from the inside" a specific visual experience.

Peacocke's notion of imagining from the inside is broadly related to other notions in the philosophical literature on imagination. For instance, Gregory Currie and Ian Ravenscroft introduce the notion of *recreative imagination* as the capacity to have "states that are not perceptions or beliefs or decisions or experiences of movements of one's body, but which are in various ways like those states—like them in ways that enable the states possessed through imagination to mimic and, relative to certain purposes, to substitute for perceptions, beliefs, decisions, and experiences of movements" (Currie & Ravenscroft 2002, p. 12). Similarly, Alvin Goldman puts forward the notion of *enactment imagination* (or *E-imagination*) as "a matter of creating or trying to create in one's own mind a selected mental state, or at least a rough facsimile of such a state, through the faculty of the imagination" (Goldman 2006, p. 42).[3]

Many other philosophers have held the view that imagination is the capacity to "modify" non-imaginative kinds of mental state (Husserl 1901; Meinong 1902; Mulligan 1999; Weinberg & Meskin 2006a, 2006b), where the relevant modification is to be understood as the "preservation" of some features of the non-imaginative states, such as part of their functional roles, despite phenomenological discrepancies or different overall cognitive underpinnings. This view is independent of a strong kind of simulationism, according to which each of several types of imagination shares with a proper non-imaginative *counterpart* some cognitive mechan-

ism (or set of information-processing systems), which is redeployed off-line.

To recapitulate, according to the terminology used in this essay, imagination is the general capacity to produce *sui generis* occurrent mental states, which we call "imaginings". Whenever a subject imagines something, she is in a particular mental state of imagining. What type of mental state the subject is in depends on the non-imaginative conscious state that is re-created. Here we want to remain as neutral as possible with respect to the relationship between imaginings and their analogues in the non-imaginative mental realm. 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 (and perhaps also the other way around, as we shall suggest toward the end of the essay).

From now on, instead of using Peacocke's phrase "imagining from the inside", which is potentially misleading (see footnote 16 below), we are going to use phrases of the form "X-*like* imagination", or "*re-creating* X" in imagination, where X is a type of non-imaginative state (as in "vision-like imagination", or "re-creating a proprioceptive experience"). However, our use of these phrases should not be interpreted as carrying all the commitments of simulationist or recreative theories of imagination (whence the presence of the hyphen in "re-creating").

GH turns out to be a general definition of imagination as essentially involving the perspective of a conscious experience—precisely what we call "experiential imagination". Peacocke then introduces a more specific hypothesis precisely in order to identify sensory imagination as a sub-domain of experiential imagination.[4] He himself calls this hypothesis the "Experiential Hypothesis",

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2 Throughout the paper, we assume that experiences are conscious mental states.

3 Goldman himself acknowledges that these two treatments of imagination are similar (Goldman 2006, p. 52, fn. 21).

4 What is the relationship between sensory imagination and mental imagery? The latter phenomenon is at the heart of the well-known debate about the format of representations involved in cognitive tasks such as mental rotation (see Kosslyn 1980, 1994; Tye 1991; Pylyshyn 2002; Kosslyn et al. 2006). This debate concerns the kind of *content* of the relevant representations, and one of the issues is whether such content is propositional or iconic. In contrast, the notion of sensory imagination is defined here by reference to the psychological *mode* of the re-created mental state, namely a conscious perceptual experience. For our purposes we can leave open the nature of the contents of sensory imaginings.

but in order to avoid confusion and make it clear that only sensory imagination is at stake, we are going to call it the "Sensory Hypothesis" (or Sensory Hypothesis (SensH) for short), and rephrase it as follows:

> SensH $=_{Df}$ To imagine something sensorily is always at least to re-create some sensory experience.

For instance, imagining being in front of the Panthéon or at the helm of a yacht (Peacocke's examples) may involve re-creating some visual experience as of being in front of the Panthéon or at the helm of the yacht.

Sensory imagination is not confined to vision. In Peacocke's words, SensH deals with "imaginings describable pre-theoretically as visualizations, hearings in one's head, or their analogues in other modalities" (Peacocke 1985, p. 22).[5] A similar definition of sensory imagination can be found in the work of other philosophers (Kind 2001; Noordhof 2002; McGinn 2004). The same type of imagination has also been labeled "perception-like" (Currie & Ravenscroft 2002), "perceptual imagination" (Chalmers 2002), and even "experiential imagination" (Carruthers 2002).

To the extent that SensH is concerned only with cases in which the subject re-creates a specific type of experience, namely sensory experience, it deals with a sub-type of experiential imagination as covered by GH, namely sensory imagination. At this point, the question arises as to what other types of experiential imagination there are beyond the sensory type. Walton suggests that the notion of experience at stake in GH should be interpreted in a broad way, and we may wonder about its precise breadth.

3 Objective and subjective imagination

Peacocke himself intends GH to cover genuine instances of experiential imagination that are not covered by SensH—what we shall call non-sensory

imagination. For instance, one can imagine "the conscious, subjective components of intentional action" (Peacocke 1985, p. 22). On Peacocke's view, imagining playing the Waldstein sonata may involve re-creating a non-sensory experience, namely the intimate experience one has of one's own action while or in acting.

Of course, the precise nature of what we may call "motor imagery" is controversial.[6] Currie and Ravenscroft suggest that "motor images have as their counterparts perceptions of bodily movements. They have as their contents active movements of one's body" (Currie & Ravenscroft 2002, p. 88). So on Currie and Ravenscroft's suggestion, imagining playing the Waldstein sonata involves re-creating the perception of bodily movements.

Certainly, in order to imagine performing an action, it is not enough to re-create a *visual* experience of the appropriate bodily movements—otherwise, the relevant type of imagining would belong to sensory imagination after all. Alternatively, one might suggest that motor imagery involves re-creating a *proprioceptive* experience of the appropriate bodily movements. However, such imagining does not entail re-creating an agentive experience, even if it may accompany the latter. In a similar vein, Goldman claims that motor imagery "is the representation or imagination of executing bodily movement" and has as its counterpart "events of motor production, events occurring in the motor cortex that direct behavior" (Goldman 2006, pp. 157–158). Following Goldman, we can say that imagining playing the Waldstein sonata may involve re-creating an execution of the appropriate bodily movements.

In fact, an ordinary case of imagining playing the Waldstein will probably involve (at least) three types of imagining:

- Imagining *seeing* movements of one's fingers on the keyboard.
- Imagining *having a proprioceptive experience of* these movements.
- Imagining *playing* the sonata.

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5 At this point we can count at least the five senses (vision, audition, touch, taste, and olfaction) as sensory modalities. Later on, we shall suggest that a sensory modality involves an *external* perceptual perspective on the world. This excludes proprioception and the sense of agency as sensory modalities, insofar as they involve *internal* perspectives on oneself.

6 See section 7.2. As Thomas Metzinger reminded us, the existence of motor imagery has been acknowledged by twentieth century phenomenology. For instance, Karl Jaspers has coined the German term "Vollzugsbewusstsein", which can be translated as "executive consciousness".

The three types of imagining are typically entangled within a single imaginative endeavor. That is, someone who imagines playing the sonata will typically imagine having a proprioceptive experience of her fingers running on the keyboard but also various sensory experiences: visual experiences of her moving fingers and auditory experiences of the music. Still, each type is essentially distinct from the others, and might even be dissociable in special circumstances (although we do not want to insist too much on the possibility of such dissociation). Suppose for instance that one imagines one's limbs being remotely controlled. One can imagine from a proprioceptive perspective one's arms and legs going through the motions characteristic of playing the piano without imagining oneself playing the piano. In this case, (ii) is instantiated but (iii) is not. More controversially, suppose that one imagines oneself being selectively anesthetized, or in the situation of a deafferented subject.[7] Perhaps one can then imagine playing the piano without imagining having a proprioceptive experience; (iii) but not (ii) would be instantiated. Given the role of proprioceptive feedback in the ordinary execution of action, it is probably hard if not impossible to imagine playing a whole sonata in the absence of any proprioceptive-like imagining, but the relevant dissociation is in principle possible for simpler actions, such as stretching one's finger. Finally, it seems possible to imagine playing the piano without re-creating any visual or auditory experience. For instance, one can imagine playing the sonata with one's eyes closed or one's ears blocked. Here, (iii) is instantiated but (i) is not. Again, given the role of sensory feedback in the ordinary execution of action, it might be hard to form such a selective imagining, especially if the action gets complicated.

The upshot of the foregoing discussion is that only (iii) is a genuine case of motor imagery. It involves the re-creation of what philosophers of action call the "sense of agency" or the "sense of control" (see e.g., Haggard 2005 and Pacherie 2007). Since the sense of agency or control is a conscious experience, motor imagery clearly falls under the umbrella of experiential imagination.

Moreover, to the extent that motor imagery is (at least in principle) dissociable from sensory imagination, even if it typically depends on the latter, it is a case of non-sensory imagination.[8]

What about (ii)? Proprioception is arguably a mode of perception; it is a way of perceiving the spatial disposition of one's body.[9] In this respect, (ii) is like (i), which is a case of sensory imagination. However, proprioception is also essentially or at least normally a way of gaining information about oneself; what proprioception is about is a bodily state of oneself. In this respect, (ii) is more like (iii), which also involves a way of gaining information about oneself, and more precisely one's actions.[10]

What unifies (ii) and (iii) as cases of non-sensory imagination is the fact that what is re-created is a (non-imaginative) *internal* experience. An internal experience is essentially or at least normally *de se*, in the following sense: it is supposed to be about a mental or bodily state of oneself. Proprioceptive and agentive experiences are both internal in this sense. At least in normal circumstances, one cannot have a proprioceptive experience of another's body or a sense of agency for another's action. In contrast, all cases of sensory imagination are such that what is re-created is a (non-imaginative) *external* experience. An external experience is typically about the external world and is only accidentally *de se*. For instance, vision is an

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7 Deafferented patients have lost the sense of proprioception; see e.g., Cole (1995) and Gallagher (2005).

8 Even if it turns out that motor imagery is constitutively dependent on sensory imagination, it is clearly not fully sensory, as we will shortly show. Note also that if motor imagery can be conceived as the re-creation of an essentially active phenomenon, namely the sense of agency or control, it need not be itself active. Although we cannot dwell on this issue here, imaginings can be either active, when we deliberately imagine something, or passive, as for instance when we are lost in an episode of mind wandering (see footnote 22).

9 If proprioception is a case of perception, there must be proprioceptive experiences. This has been contested, especially by Anscombe (1957). However, in our view, Anscombe conflates two different claims. The first claim, which we accept, is that there are no proprioceptive *sensations*. Proprioception is not a case of sensory perception. The second claim, which we reject, is that proprioception does not involve any conscious *experience*. Even if there are no proprioceptive sensations, we are consciously aware of the positions and movements of our body.

10 The idea that there are "self-informative methods," i.e., ways of finding out about oneself, is pervasive in John Perry's theory of self-knowledge; for a recent statement, see Perry (2011). As Perry makes clear, these methods can be either metaphysically or merely architecturally guaranteed. François Recanati makes use of a similar idea in his account of perspectival thought (Recanati 2007) and mental files (Recanati 2012); for instance, he writes: "In virtue of being a certain individual, I am in a position to gain information concerning that individual in all sorts of ways in which I can gain information about no one else, e.g. through proprioception and kinaesthesis" (Recanati 2007, p. 262).

Objective imagination	Subjective imagination	
Sensory imagination	**Proprioception-like imagination**	**Action-like imagination**
I re-create in imagination a visual experience of *my fingers running on the keyboard* I re-create in imagination an auditory experience of *music* I re-create in imagination a multimodal experience of *the music as caused by the motions of my fingers*	I re-create in imagination a proprioceptive experience of *my fingers running on the keyboard*	I re-create in imagination the action of *running my fingers on the keyboard* I re-create in imagination the action of *playing the sonata*

Figure 1: Types of imagining involved in playing a sonata

external experience; it is a way of gaining information about one's immediate surroundings, whether or not one also sees oneself.[11]

These considerations allow us to give a more fine-grained analysis of the realm of experiential imagination based on the external versusinternal contrast, rather than the sensory versus non-sensory contrast. In a nutshell, we can say that experiential imagination comes in two varieties. Experiential imagination can re-create: (a) some external experience—e.g., a way of gaining information about the world (e.g., I imagine *seeing* Superman flying in the air), and (b) some internal experience—e.g., a way of gaining information about oneself (e.g., I imagine *having a proprioceptive experience of* flying in the air). Following Jérôme Dokic (2008), we shall call (a) "objective imagination" and (b) "subjective imagination"; see figure 1.[12]

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11 This is an oversimplification, since many ordinary experiences have presumably both internal and external aspects. On the one hand, vision might involve both exteroception and interoception (Gibson 1966). On the other hand, proprioception and other forms of bodily experience often rely on visual information (Botvinick & Cohen 1998; de Vignemont 2013). Still, the external aspect of many ordinary visual experiences is clearly dominant, while visually aided proprioception remains essentially a way of gaining information about oneself, and thus is an internal experience in our sense.

12 To make our terminology as clear as possible, the distinction between internal and external experiences concerns the realm of non-imaginative states, while the analogous distinction between subjective and objective imagination concerns the realm of imaginative

We may thus introduce two other hypotheses subordinate to GH, which we call the Objective Hypothesis (ObjH) and the Subjective Hypothesis (SubjH):

ObjH $=_{Df}$ To imagine something objectively is always at least to re-create some external experience.

SubjH $=_{Df}$ To imagine something subjectively is always at least to re-create some internal experience.

Sensory imagination forms an important subclass of experiential imagination, but it can also be seen as a paradigmatic case of objective imagination, since it involves re-creating an *external* experience. Experiential imagination is not merely objective imagination, since another sub-class of experiential imagination, namely subjective imagination, is constituted by cases in which an *internal* experience is re-created. For instance, imagining having one's legs crossed or driving a Ferrari may involve re-creating some internal non-sensory experience, namely a proprioceptive and/or agentive experience as of having one's legs crossed or driving a Ferrari.

To sum up, we have identified two important varieties of imagination that seem to exhaust the domain of experiential imagination: objective and subjective imagination.[13] We have argued that this distinction, which gives rise to phenomenologically different imaginings, traces back to an independent distinction within the domain of non-imaginative experiences, between external and internal experiences. We have also claimed that sensory imagination, which is the variety of experiential imagination most commonly recognized, should be seen as a paradigmatic example of objective imagination. More should be said about the distinction between objective and subjective imagination. For instance, questions arise as to whether sensory imagination exhausts the field of objective imagination and as to whether

subjective imagination encompasses more than proprioceptive or agentive experiences.

The remainder of the paper is devoted to further clarification of the notions of objective and subjective imagination. We shall begin with a comparison between our own proposal and Zeno Vendler's observations about imagination.

4 Vendler's varieties of imagination

A well-informed reader might think that our distinction between objective and subjective imagination is the same as a homonymous distinction introduced by Vendler (1984). Certainly Vendler intends to capture two phenomenologically different ways of imagining, which potentially correspond to our distinction between external and internal experiential perspectives (perspectives on the world and perspectives on oneself). However, he also gives a *prima facie* interpretation of the distinction between objective and subjective imagination, which has more to do with the way the self is involved in our imaginings than with the distinction between external and internal experiences. On this interpretation, Vendler's notions of objective and subjective imagination arguably diverge from ours. Let us start with Vendler's interpretation of these notions (section 4.1) and then move to a deeper analysis of the contrast examples offered by Vendler in order to motivate his distinction (section 4.2). In so doing, we shall show that our construction of the objective versus subjective distinction is more helpful in order to map the realm of experiential imagination.

4.1 Two kinds of self-involvement

Vendler (1984) suggests that the phrase "S imagines doing A" invites what he calls "subjective" imagination, while the phrase "S imagines herself/himself doing A" can be used to describe "objective" imagination. *Prima facie*, Vendler seems to interpret the distinction between subjective and objective imagination in terms of two ways in which the self can be involved in our imaginings—implicitly or explicitly.

Subjective imagination concerns cases in which the self is implicitly involved in the imagining, whereas objective imagination concerns

states. The question of whether imaginings themselves can be said to be internal or external is not raised in this essay.

[13] Note that our definition leaves open the possibility that a particular imagining is both objective and subjective, to the extent that the re-created experience has both external and internal aspects (see footnote 11).

cases in which the self is explicitly involved in the imagining. This is why the phrase "imagining doing A", which does not explicitly mention the agent of the action A, is best used to describe subjective imagination, whereas the phrase "imagining *myself* doing A", which explicitly mentions myself as the agent of the action A, is more suitable to the description of objective imagination.

The self is implicitly involved in an imagining when it fixes the point of view internal to the imagined scene without being a constituent of that scene. One can imagine seeing the Panthéon from the other end of rue Soufflot without imagining oneself as another object in the scene. Still, the scene is imagined from a specific point of view, as defined by a virtual self. One can also imagine seeing oneself in front of the Panthéon. In such a case, the self is a constituent of the imagined scene—it is explicitly represented as a part of the imagining's content.

Of course, when one imagines seeing oneself in front of the Panthéon, one's imagining also involves the self implicitly. One imagines a scene from the perspective of a virtual self, which is distinct from oneself as a constituent of the scene. As a consequence, Vendler makes clear that subjective and objective imagination are not mutually exclusive. Commenting on Vendler's distinction, François Recanati concurs, writing that "the objective imagination is a particular case of the subjective" (Recanati 2007, p. 196).

It should be sufficiently apparent that the distinction between implicit and explicit self-involvement is a matter of the imagining's *content* and more precisely deals with the issue of how the self is involved in imagination. In contrast, the distinction between internal and external experiential perspectives has to do with the *mode* re-created in imagination, respectively an external and an internal experience. Therefore, the two distinctions answer different questions and turn out to be orthogonal.

First, objective imagination can involve the self either implicitly or explicitly (but not both at the same time). This is easily seen by considering the Panthéon example. Peacocke

himself suggests another relevant case. He observes that the phrase "imagining being seated on a horse" is ambiguous between adopting the point of view of the rider (namely oneself) and adopting the point of view of someone else who could see the rider (see Peacocke 1985, p. 23). If the relevant perspective is that of the rider (namely oneself), the self need not be a constituent of the imagined scene—in this case (where the rider does not see any part of her body), it is implicitly involved in the imagining. In contrast, if the relevant perspective embraces oneself as the rider, the self is explicitly involved; it figures in the content of the imagining. However, both interpretations involve *visual* (i.e., external) perspectives, so what is at stake is a distinction within *objective* imagination rather than a contrast between subjective and objective imagination.[14]

Second, it is at least arguable that subjective imagination can involve the self either implicitly or explicitly. Suppose that one subjectively imagines swimming in the ocean. One may re-create the internal experience of what Marc Jeannerod & Elisabeth Pacherie (2004) call a "naked" intention (in action), which precisely does not involve an explicit representation of the agent. In this case, no self is part of the representational content of one's imagining. One subjectively imagines swimming without imagining the agent as such, whether oneself or anyone else. However, one might also re-create a more complex internal experience, whose content embraces oneself as the agent of the action of swimming. Accordingly, in this case, the self (oneself) is explicitly represented in the content of one's subjective imagining. One subjectively imagines a particular agent swimming; in Vendler's example, that particular agent is oneself.

One might object to the last point and claim that the self is never an object of internal experience. One can have at best internal experiences of particular mental states, such as inten-

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14 One might object that both cases involve subjective imagination, since the visual perspective of the rider, even if she does not see her own body, is tied to her proprioceptive experience; see the *caveat* voiced in footnote 11 above. Again, it might be that the distinction between subjective and objective imagination has really to do with the distinction between re-creating predominantly internal and re-creating predominantly external experiences.

Experiential Imagination	
Explicit self-involvment	**Implicit self-involvment**
Subjective — I re-create in imagination a proprioceptive and/or agentive experience of *myself flying in the air*	I re-create in imagination a proprioceptive and/or agentive experience of *flying in the air*
Objective — I re-create in imagination a visual experience of *myself being seated on a horse*	I re-create in imagination a visual experience of *being seated on a horse*

Figure 2: Explicit and implicit self-involvement in subjective and objective imagination

tions in action, but never of oneself having those mental states. However, this is a substantial claim that certainly needs to be backed up by careful arguments. Note that the assumption that the self can figure in the content of an internal experience is in principle compatible with the Humean point that the self cannot be introspected. Introspection, conceived as a form of inner perception, is only one type of internal experience. Perhaps there are non-introspective cases of internal experience whose explicit contents cannot be fully specified except by using the first-person pronoun. For instance, one might argue that at least some cases of proprioception as well as internal experiences of controlling one's body as a whole give us access to one's self, or at least to the boundaries between oneself and the rest of the environment.[15]

Consider other examples offered by Vendler. When you imagine yourself eating a lemon by imagining your pinched face, your imagining is

explicitly self-involving and might be fulfilled via objective imagination, such as visual imagination, but also via subjective imagination, such as proprioceptive imagination, at least to the extent that it recreates an internal experience of your bodily self. What about imagining implicitly involving the self? If while imagining eating a lemon, the subject imagines the action of eating a lemon and nothing else, she is exploiting her subjective imagination, insofar as she is re-creating an agentive perspective. It seems possible to imagine eating a lemon via objective imagination too, for instance by re-creating a visual experience as of an action independently of any identification of the agent.

To sum up, while the distinction between subjective and objective imagination seems to capture two forms or modalities of imagination, the distinction between two kinds of self-involvement, although important in itself, is less relevant to a taxonomy of experiential imagination. The orthogonality of these distinctions is shown again in figure 2. In the following sub-

15 For relevant discussion, see e.g., Cassam (1999), Bermúdez et al. (1995), Bermúdez (1998), Metzinger (2003), and Peacocke (2014).

section we shall further motivate our hypothesis that Vendler's own contrast examples are best understood in terms of the independently motivated distinction between internal and external experiences.

4.2 Vendler's examples revisited

Aside from his interpretation of subjective imagination as implicitly self-involving and objective imagination as explicitly self-involving, Vendler clearly draws our attention to two ways of imagining a given action, which have quite different phenomenological profiles. In his own words:

> We are looking down upon the ocean from a cliff. The water is rough and cold, yet there are some swimmers riding the waves. 'Just imagine swimming in that water' says my friend, and I know what to do. 'Brr!', I say as I imagine the cold, the salty taste, the tug of the current, and so forth. Had he said 'Just imagine yourself swimming in that water', I could comply in another way, too: by picturing myself being tossed about, a scrawny body bobbing up and down in the foamy waste. (Vendler 1984, p. 43)

As some of Vendler's other examples show, the relevant distinction is not restricted to imagining actions:

> In order to familiarize yourselves with this distinction, imagine eating a lemon (sour taste), and then imagine yourself eating a lemon (pinched face); imagine being on the rack (agony), and then yourself being on the rack (distorted limbs); imagine whistling in the dark (sensation of puckered lips), and then yourself whistling in the dark (distance uncertain, but coming closer); and so forth. (Vendler 1984, p. 43)

It is not immediately clear what is common to all cases of subjective or objective imagination in Vendler's examples. Consider the suggestion

that the relevant distinction can be explained at the level of the *states* represented by the imaginings. Subjective imagination would involve imagining states that *cannot* be imagined objectively. For instance, in imagining swimming in the water, I also imagine proprioceptive experiences, which (one might argue) cannot be imagined objectively. How could we *visually* imagine such experiences, which are essentially *felt*?

However, it is not obvious that the essence of the distinction between subjective and objective imagination can be fully captured by reference to the imagined states. One can imagine having one's legs crossed via subjective imagination, but also via objective imagination. The first type of imagining is akin to proprioception (one imagines feeling one's legs crossed), while the second type of imagining is akin to vision (one visualizes oneself with one's legs crossed). Yet these imaginings are about the same bodily condition—having one's legs crossed.

Similarly, the very same action of swimming in the ocean can be imagined subjectively or objectively. The case of pain is more controversial, but if one can be visually aware that someone is in pain (by observing pain-related behavior), then one can imagine the very same pain state either subjectively or objectively. The difference between the relevant imaginings must lie elsewhere.

We are now in the position to see that we were on the right track and that Vendler's contrast examples are plausibly construed as involving different experiential perspectives on a given scene, either internal (perspectives on oneself) or external (perspectives on the world). Subjective imagination has to do with the former, and objective imagination with the latter. This is easily seen by considering the example of imagining whistling in the dark. Vendler contrasts the subjective case, in which the subject imagines the sensation of puckered lips, with the objective case, in which the subject imagines the distance uncertain, but coming closer. In other words, what Vendler seems to contrast is proprioception-like imagination with auditory imagination or, in our terminology, an internal experiential perspective with an external one.

More generally, Vendler seems to be concerned with the difference between, on the one hand, imagining doing an action (e.g., swimming, eating, whistling, etc.) or having pain (e.g., agony), where what the imaginer re-creates is the relevant experience and, on the other hand, imagining pieces of behaviour that reveal the very same experience (e.g., visualizing an eating mouth or a body in agony), where what the imaginer re-creates is an external perspective on the relevant experience.[16]

Let us note that, in order to make his contrast more realistic, Vendler gives us complex examples, where more than one experience is involved. So for instance, his example of imagining swimming in the ocean clearly belongs to subjective imagination, since the re-creation of a proprioceptive and/or agentive experience is involved. As Vendler suggests, though, when you fulfill this imagining you can also re-create various external experiences, such as "the cold, the salty taste, the tug of the current, and so forth". The same is true in the case of imagining eating a lemon. When you imagine eating a lemon, you re-create in imagination an internal experience (e.g., the proprioceptive and/or agentive experience of eating), but your imagining can be accompanied by others that re-create external experiences (e.g., the sour taste, the yellow lemon).

The discussion of Vendler's distinction has led us to strengthen our taxonomy of experiential imagination. So far we have seen that, first, all cases covered by SenH seem to be cases of objective imagination (and thus covered by ObjH), which involves re-creating some external experience. Second, all cases covered by SubjH arguably involve re-creating some internal experience.

However, another important type of imagination emerges from the literature on imagin-

ation, namely cognitive imagination, which has been defined as belief-like and typically contrasted with sensory or even experiential imagination.

5 Cognitive imagination

Many authors contrast sensory imagination with cognitive imagination ("imagining that," or "propositional imagination"), which has been defined as belief-like (Mulligan 1999; Currie & Ravenscroft 2002; McGinn 2004; Goldman 2006; Weinberg & Meskin 2006b; Arcangeli 2011a).[17] Cognitive imagination seems to be relatively autonomous from sensory imagination. For instance, one can imagine that poverty has been reduced in the world independently of re-creating any visual, auditory, tactile, etc., experience. Of course the autonomy of cognitive imagination relative to sensory imagination echoes the autonomy of belief relative to sensory perception (one can believe that poverty must be reduced in the world without perceiving anything).

Cognitive imagination is by essence non-sensory, but given our previous discussion, it does not exhaust the field of non-sensory imaginings. Re-creating in imagination some internal experience is presumably non-cognitive (in the relevant sense of being belief-like), but it is non-sensory as well. Thus we have, at least *prima facie*, three types of potentially dissociable imagination: sensory non-cognitive imagination (e.g., I imagine hearing a piece of music, such as Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche*), non-sensory non-cognitive imagination (e.g., I imagine having the proprioceptive experience of being one-armed), and non-sensory cognitive imagination (e.g., I imagine that Maurice Ravel has created a piano piece especially for me).

One might argue that cognitive imagination is not only non-sensory but non-experiential as

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16 A similar point is made by Mike Martin when he draws a distinction between "cases in which there is just an itch in the left thigh" in imagination and cases "in which one imagines some person whose behaviour reveals that they have an itch" (Martin 2002, p. 406, fn. 35; see also Dorsch 2012). However, according to his terminology, only the former cases count as being "from the inside". Very often in the literature, the phrase "imagining from the inside" is used in this narrow sense (to refer to subjective imagination in our terminology) more than the broad sense meant by Peacocke (which refers to experiential imagination as a whole).

17 In fact, Mulligan speaks of a judgement-like, rather than a belief-like, type of imagination, which he calls "supposition". It is not entirely clear whether his notion of supposition can be equated with what we call "cognitive imagination." Very often in the literature, supposition is taken to be belief-like and, as such, nothing but cognitive imagination (Nichols & Stich 2003; McGinn 2004; Goldman 2006). An alternative view is that supposition is a *sui generis* type of imagination akin to *acceptance* rather than belief (Arcangeli 2011b). However, for present purposes we will skip this issue and consider only belief-like imagination.

well and as such lies outside the scope of GH. According to a standard view, beliefs, even if they can be occurrent, are not conscious experiences strictly speaking. On this view, an occurrent belief may be accompanied by various experiences (mental images, feelings, emotions, etc.), but there is nothing it is like to have a belief.[18] Now this view has recently come under attack by philosophers who acknowledge the existence of a doxastic phenomenology, i.e., a kind of phenomenology characteristic of belief (see the debates on cognitive phenomenology in Bayne & Montague 2011). On this alternative view, there is something it is like to have an occurrent belief, which is reducible to neither sensory nor affective phenomenology. At least some occurrent beliefs would be *sui generis* conscious experiences.[19]

If the alternative view is broadly correct, some beliefs lie within the scope of GH.[20] In order to capture cognitive imagination as a putative form of experiential imagination, let us introduce another specific hypothesis subordinate to GH, which we call the Cognitive Hypothesis (C):

> CogH $=_{Df}$ To imagine something cognitively is always at least to re-create a conscious occurrent belief.

For instance, cognitively imagining that quantum physics is false or that this pen is an alien involves re-creating the conscious occurrent belief that quantum physics is false or that this pen is an alien. In general, one may surmise that anything that can be consciously believed can be cognitively imagined.

We have suggested that experiential imagination divides into two sub-domains only, namely subjective and objective imagination (covered by SubjH and ObjH, respectively). In addition, sensory imagination (covered by SensH)

emerged as a species of objective imagination and non-sensory non-cognitive types of imagination (e.g., proprioception-like and agentive-like imagination) have been described as paradigmatic cases of subjective imagination. What about cognitive imagination (covered by CogH)? Is it a type of objective or of subjective imagination? Or should we acknowledge a third class of experiential imaginings that are neither objective nor subjective?[21]

We have introduced the distinction between objective and subjective imagination as the imaginative analogue of the distinction between external and internal experience. As we have seen, many external experiences are ways of gaining information about the world, and many internal experiences are ways of gaining information about oneself. Now one might claim that belief, unlike perceptual or introspective experience, is not individuated in terms of ways of gaining information. Of course some of our beliefs result from various ways of gaining information about the world and ourselves, but it is logically possible to have a belief that is not the result of any source of information. Does it follow that belief as an experience is neither external nor internal? Not really, for an external experience has been more fundamentally defined as being accidentally *de se*, whereas an internal experience is essentially or at least normally *de se*. In this more fundamental sense, if belief is an experience, it is clearly an external experience: one can believe all sorts of states of affairs that do not involve or concern oneself. It follows that cognitive imagination, as the re-creation of an external doxastic experience, is better seen as a sub-species of objective imagination, along with sensory imagination. Objective imagination then emerges as a heterogeneous domain, but where at least two clearly different types of imagining can be distinguished (see figure 3).

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18 See Metzinger (2003), Tye (2009), and Carruthers & Veillet (2011). Note that the standard view can lead to different attitudes toward the notion of cognitive imagination. On one attitude, cognitive imagination exists but is non-experiential. On another attitude, cognitive imagination does not exist or wholly reduces to sensory imagination (if, for instance, it is construed as auditory verbal imagination).

19 Crane (2013) defends a closely related view, according to which episodes of thinking, although not beliefs themselves, are phenomenally conscious. CogH can easily be adapted to accommodate Crane's view.

20 In conversation, Peacocke confirmed that he intends GH to cover at least some cases of belief-like imagination.

21 Moreover, the question of whether these varieties of imagination exhaust the field of experiential imagination remains open. In order to answer it we would have to inquire as to whether there are other types of imagination, such as desiderative or desire-like imagination (see Currie & Ravenscroft 2002 and Doggett & Egan 2007 for a positive view, and Weinberg & Meskin 2006a and Kind 2011 for a critical view), affective or emotion-like imagination (see Goldman 2006 for a positive view, and Currie & Ravenscroft 2002 for a critical view) and judgement-like or acceptance-like imagination (see footnote 17). For lack of space, we have to defer this inquiry to another occasion.
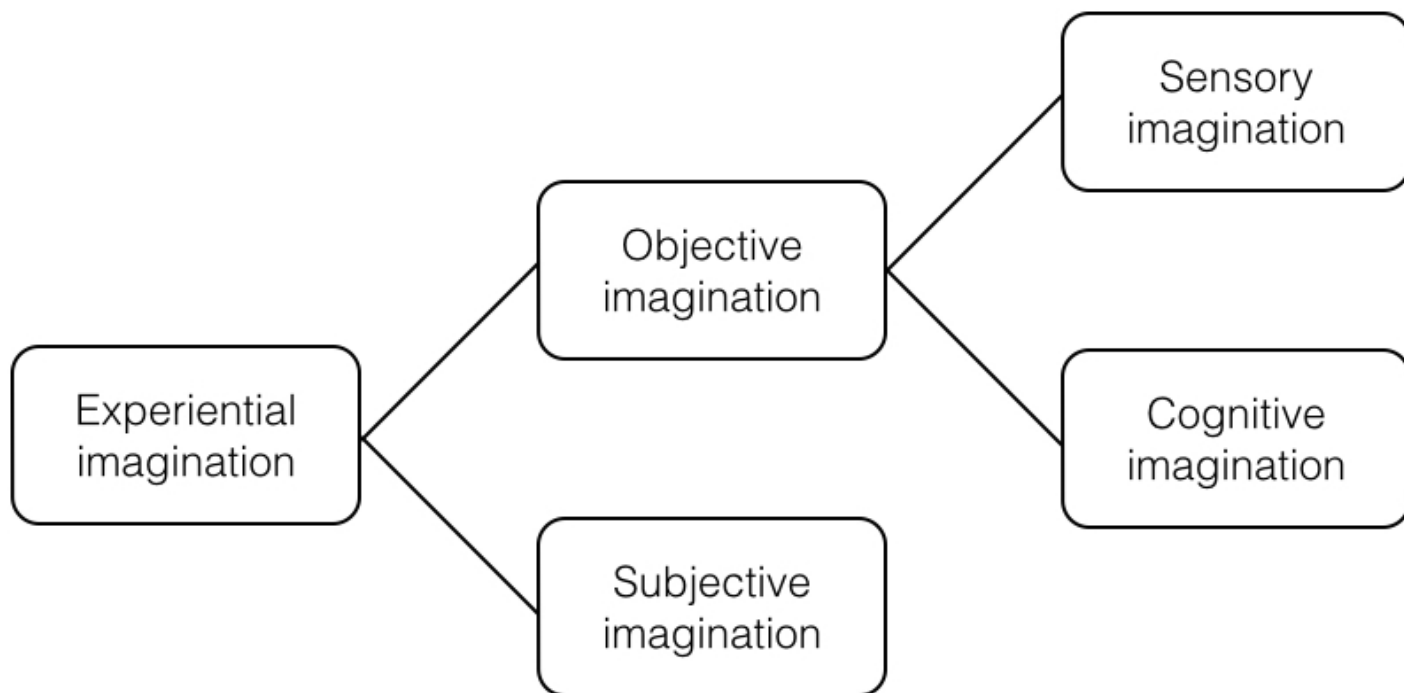
Figure 3: The varieties of experiential imagination

6 The scope of subjective imagination

As we have seen, subjective imagination involves re-creating various ways of gaining information about ourselves, such as proprioceptive or agentive experience. Now we also have ways of gaining information about our own sensory experiences, as well as about our own beliefs. We seem to be able to form self-ascriptions of the form "I see x" or "I believe that p" without relying on independent background beliefs. The nature of this ability is controversial. Some philosophers claim that both sensory experiences and beliefs can be introspected (e.g., Goldman 2006). Thus, we should be open to the possibility of re-creating in imagination an introspective experience of a visual experience or an occurrent belief. Other philosophers reject the notion of introspection altogether and consider that self-ascription of sensory experience or belief can follow a purely theoretical procedure known as an "ascent routine" (see Evans 1982 and Gordon 1995 for the case of belief, and Byrne 2010 for suggestions about how to extend the ascent routine to sensory experience).

The question arises as to what types of internal experience can be re-created in imagination, i.e., what the scope of subjective imagination is. In a sense, this question is hostage to an independent theory of internal experience, appropriate to sensory experience or belief. Obviously, we cannot settle the matter in this exploratory essay. Still, before moving to the penultimate section, we would like to suggest that phenomenologically accessible distinctions within the realm of imagination might be conceived as (usually neglected) constraints on a correct theory of internal experience. We shall focus on belief, but similar observations can be made for the case of sensory experience.

There is some phenomenological evidence that subjective imagination can capture an internal perspective on at least some beliefs. Consider an atheist who tries to imagine what it is like to believe in God. One might argue that this involves re-creating some internal experience of an occurrent belief in God. At least the atheist's imagining seems different from two other types of imagining, namely imagining believing in God and imagining believing that one believes in God.

First, it is different from re-creating in imagination an occurrent belief in God, which would be an example of cognitive imagination. The latter imagining does not have belief as a constituent of its content; one cognitively imagines God himself, rather than some belief in

his existence. In general, an imagining that re-creates the non-imaginative state M need not have M as part of its content; the imagining itself is an imaginative re-creation of M, but it is not about M (Currie & Ravenscroft 2002, p. 27; see also Burge 2005, p. 63, for the corresponding point about sensory imagination). In contrast, the atheist's imagining essentially has belief as one of the constituents of its content; one imagines a particular belief in God. A related difference is that re-creating an occurrent belief in God is re-creating an external experience of a God-involving world. However, the atheist might want to imagine what it is like to believe in God without taking a stance on the presence of God in the imaginary world. Her imagining is focused on the belief in God, independently of whether it is true or false (even though as an atheist she believes it to be false).

Second, the atheist's imagining is different from re-creating an occurrent higher-order belief that one believes in God, i.e., imagining that one believes in God. Intuitively, the former imagining is more specific than the latter (which is another example of cognitive imagination). Imagining having the higher-order belief that one believes in God involves re-creating an external experience of one's belief in God. However, the atheist is not merely imagining that she or someone else has a belief in God. She wants to get into the believer's mind and re-create in imagination an *internal* perspective on some occurrent belief in God.

In the context of GH, the apparent existence of cases of subjective imagination where the re-created experience is an internal experience of belief can be seen as a constraint on a correct account of the way we gain information about our own beliefs. The introspective account can offer a straightforward explanation of the atheist's imagining as involving the re-creation of an introspective experience, as opposed to a mere higher-order belief, about the belief in God. *Prima facie*, the ascent-routine account has fewer resources to give justice to the relevant phenomenology. It might not be impossible to do so, though, if experiential imagination can also re-create complex cognitive processes such as going through an ascent routine. Again, we

have to leave the discussion for another occasion. It is enough for our purposes to gesture toward the possibility of extending the scope of subjective imagination to encompass more or less specific internal perspectives on beliefs, even if further argument is certainly needed.

7 Some applications

In this penultimate section, we would like to briefly illustrate how the fate of important claims about imagination made by philosophers and scientists depends on something like our taxonomy of experiential imagination. Although we believe that this taxonomy has philosophical value in its own right, we also would like to show that it is connected to central issues in philosophy and cognitive science. These issues concern, respectively, modal epistemology (section 7.1), cognitive resonance (section 7.2), mindreading (section 7.2), and imaginative identification (section 7.4). Our discussion in what follows, though, can only be rather programmatic in contrast to the rest of the essay.[22]

7.1 Modal epistemology

Imagination has been traditionally construed as providing evidence for modal claims. For instance, many philosophers since Descartes have suggested that what can be imagined is metaphysically possible. On the other hand, imagination has been shown to produce various sorts of modal illusions (Kripke 1980; Gendler & Hawthorne 2002). The main challenge faced by proponents of an internal relation between imagination and possibility (perhaps via conceivability) is thus to distinguish proper and improper

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[22] This is only a selection of issues where we think our phenomenological and conceptual distinctions are relevant. We wish we had space to discuss other topics of relevance to the theory of imagination, such as mental time travel (Schacter & Addis 2007), dreams (Windt 2014), and mind wandering (Metzinger 2013). For instance, there are interesting issues having to do with the apparent lack of reflexivity of mind wandering episodes, and the tendency for the mind wanderer to identify herself with imagined protagonists (Metzinger 2013). A speculative hypothesis is that the passivity of mind wandering episodes causes various metacognitive errors, such as the error of confusing a case of subjective imagination with a genuine case of internal experience, which leads the imaginer to self-identify with the subject of the imagined mental state. Again, we have to leave this fascinating issue to another occasion.

uses of imagination, i.e., those uses that provide, and those that do not provide, evidence for modal claims. One might suggest, for instance, that proper uses of imagination require a certain format that other uses lack (Nichols 2006; Weinberg & Meskin 2006b).

In our view, there is an additional criterion that must be taken into account in these debates, which concerns the type of non-imaginative state that is re-created by the relevant imaginings. It might be that only some types of imagination are internally related to modal properties. For instance, it is not clear that cognitive imagination is essentially related to possibility. Assuming the correctness of our claim that cognitive imagination re-creates belief, the fact that one can cognitively imagine that p is no more evidence that p is possible than the mere fact that one believes that p. After all, one can believe all sorts of metaphysically impossible states of affairs (such as that Hesperus and Phosphorus are distinct celestial bodies).

The challenge is then to identify the types of imagination, if any, that are essentially or at least reliably related to what is metaphysically possible. One hypothesis, voiced by Dokic (2008), is to focus on types of imagination that re-create states of (actual or potential) knowledge. On this hypothesis, some uses of imagination are guides to possible contents because they are guides to the possibility of *knowing*. To the extent that sensory perception is commonly thought to be a source of knowledge, sensory imagination could be reliably linked to the possibility of what is imagined in this way (see also Williamson 2008).

This is not to say that cognitive imagination has no role to play in providing evidence for modal claims. Just as belief can be grounded on sensory perception and thereby be counted as knowledge, a single imagining might re-create not only belief and perception separately, but the complex mental state of believing that p on the basis of suitable sensory evidence (see Dokic 2008). The resulting imagining would be neither purely sensory nor purely cognitive, but to the extent that it re-creates a non-imaginative state of knowledge, its content might be bound to what is metaphysically possible.

7.2 Cognitive resonance

If we are right, there is a phenomenologically accessible distinction between objective and subjective imagination. What it is like to visually imagine an action or a painful experience is typically different from what it is like to subjectively imagine acting or having pain. However, this distinction is rarely made explicit in the scientific literature on the neural underpinnings of imagination. Let us consider the case of action. It has been a remarkable discovery that observing and executing an action involve (at least sometimes) the same resonance system in the brain, and more precisely the same "mirror neurons," corresponding to types of action such as grasping, reaching, or eating (Rizzolatti et al. 1996; Rizzolatti et al. 2001). What about imagining an action? Marc Jeannerod claims that "imagining a movement relies on the same mechanisms as actually performing it, except for the fact that execution is blocked" (Jeannerod 2006, p. 28). Does this claim concern objective imagination, subjective imagination, or both? On the one hand, his notion of "motor imagery", defined as "the ability to generate a conscious image of the acting self" (p. 23), strongly suggests that he is talking about subjective imagination. Motor imagery seems to underlie the imaginative recreation of an internal experience of action, such as the intimate experience we have while executing an action or controlling our bodily movements. On the other hand, Jeannerod makes clear that the "action representations" involved in motor imagery can also operate during action observation (p. 39). To the extent that visually imagining an action is analogous to observing an action, one may surmise that objective imagination too involves the relevant action representations.[23]

What we would like to know, of course, is which action representations are common to both objective and subjective imagination of an action, and which action representations are specific to

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23 There is also the interesting case of observing one's own action in a mirror. The question here is whether the observer is aware that she is observing her own action. If the answer is negative, then the re-creation of the relevant experience belongs to objective imagination. If the answer is positive, as for instances when one uses visual information to control one's action (think of a man shaving in front of the mirror), then the re-creation of the relevant experience may also belong to subjective imagination (see footnote 11).

subjective imagination. Here as elsewhere, we think that phenomenological considerations can at least guide scientific investigations into the neural underpinnings of our ability to imagine actions, whether imaginatively observed or imaginatively executed.

7.3 Mindreading

We also think that much of the once-hot debate between the "theory theory" and the "simulation theory" of mindreading has missed the distinction between objective and subjective imagination, or at least its significance. Mindreading is often described as involving ways of "putting oneself in another person's shoes" (Goldman 2006). However, as many have observed, that colloquial phrase can be used to refer to two different projects. One might try to understand either what one would do if one were in the other's situation or what the other will do. The difference between these meanings has been conceived as depending on whether one performs the right "egocentric shift" and succeeds in mimicking the other's mind (Gordon 1995). If we are right, there is another distinction that is crucial to simulation-based mindreading, namely the objective versus subjective imagination distinction. We might perform the right egocentric shift but imaginatively re-create only the other's external experiences. For instance, we might imaginatively adopt the other's visual point of view and try to understand what he or she is actually seeing. In doing so, though, we imaginatively adopt a perspective that is not necessarily the other's perspective. Visual perspectives can be shared. It is only if we re-create at least some of the other's internal experiences that we imaginatively adopt a perspective that can only be that of the agent. Unlike external experiences, internal experiences cannot be shared.

Why is it important for the success of mindreading that the mindreader re-creates also internal experiences of the other person? Let us consider the case of pain. To the extent that both objectively and subjectively imagining another person in pain may trigger the same resonance (affective) mechanisms, we can argue

that they are on par with respect to the imaginer's *understanding* of the other's experience (Gallese 2003). We surmise that the relevant difference between objectively and subjectively imagining the same painful experience concerns the *dynamics* of mindreading. Recreating an internal perspective on pain will spontaneously give rise to other subjective imaginings involving the recreation of the mental consequences of pain in the other. Objective imagination of another person in pain will likely develop in different directions. For instance, if we re-create a visual experience as of someone in pain, we will be inclined to re-create other visual experiences of the consequences of pain. More generally, someone who would be able to re-create only external experiences of pain would be blind to the internal consequences of pain. In contrast, subjective imagination promises to yield a better view of the other's inner life as it unfolds in time.

7.4 Imaginative identification

In this essay, we did not explicitly mention an intriguing phenomenon in the field of imagination, namely our ability to *imagine being someone else*, or imaginative identification. For instance, we can imagine being Napoleon seeing the desolation at Austerlitz and being vaguely aware of one's short stature (Williams 1976, p. 43). Recanati calls such cases "quasi-de se imaginings":

> I will, therefore, coin the term 'quasi-de se' to refer to the first person point of view type of thought one entertains when one imagines, say, being Napoleon. The type of imagining at stake is clearly first personal, yet the imaginer's self is not involved […]. The properties that are imaginatively represented are not ascribed to the subject who imagines them, but to the person whose point of view she espouses. (Recanati 2007, pp. 206–207)

How can an imagining be both first-personal and not genuinely (but only "quasi") *de se*? If we can imagine being Napoleon just by recreat-

ing his visual experience of the desolation at Austerlitz, it is not obvious that quasi-*de se* imagination is necessarily first-personal. Since visual perspectives can be shared, our visual imagining can re-create anyone's perspective. In other words, objective imagination (i.e., the re-creation of external perspectives) would not be sufficient to generate quasi-*de se* imaginings. Perhaps Recanati implicitly ties quasi-*de se* imagination to subjective imagination so that imagining being someone else involves the recreation of at least some internal experience. Again, in contrast to external perspectives, internal perspectives cannot be shared. For instance, a subject imagining to be Napoleon might, on the one hand, see in imagination the desolation at Austerlitz (i.e., an external perspective is re-created) and, on the other hand, be vaguely aware of his short stature and his hand in his tunic (i.e., an internal, proprioceptive perspective is re-created).

In what sense would subjective imagination be first-personal, then? One view is that the quasi-*de se* case somehow derives from the genuine *de se* case, in which we imagine ourselves having various external and internal experiences. On this view, there is an asymmetrical dependence between quasi-*de se* and genuine *de se* imagination: even if the former is not merely a type of the latter, imagining being someone else having such-and-such experiences depends on the ability to imagine oneself having these experiences.

However, our account of subjective imagination suggests an alternative view, according to which the identity of the subject need not be built into a subjective imagining. Consider the case of action again. The constraint imposed on subjective imagination, that the imagined perspective on the action can only be that of the agent, leaves open whose self is involved. That the action is my action, or someone else's, is an additional fact in the imaginary world. In other words, subjective imagination can be neutral as to the identity of the self that occupies the relevant internal perspective. As a consequence, the same neutral imagining can give rise to either quasi-*de se* or genuine *de se* imagination, depending on

the imaginary project at stake.[24] Subjectively imagining oneself swimming and subjectively imagining another person swimming both rest on the same type of imagining, i.e., the recreation of an internal experience of the action of swimming. We take this neutrality to be a potential advantage for our analysis of subjective imagination. Subjective imagination can be seen as a basis for the introduction of a notion of self that is conceptually on a par with other selves. In this respect, imagination acts as an antidote to solipsism.

8 Conclusion

In this essay, we have tried to clarify what it means to claim that imagination is experiential. As we have seen, the notion of experiential imagination is not unitary and refers to a variety of phenomena. We have focused our attention on four aspects of this notion.

- First, experiential imagination broadly means that different kinds of experiential states are re-created in the imagination (although we have remained silent about the precise way in which the experiential states are re-created).
- Second, the distinction between external and internal experiences, which is independently motivated in the literature on non-imaginative mental states, has given rise to a helpful sub-division of experiential imagination into two different ways of imagining: objectively and subjectively. *Pace* Vendler, we have argued that this contrast cannot be straightforwardly aligned with two ways in which the self is involved in our imaginings (respectively, explicitly, or implicitly).
- Third, the literature commonly acknowledges two other varieties of imagination, namely sensory and cognitive imagination.

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24 The notion of imaginative project comes from Williams (1976). Imaginings are particular mental states, whereas imaginative projects can bind several imaginings in a coherent endeavour of imaginative world-making. The distinction is relevant even when a single imagining is at stake. Typically, an imaginative project will impose constraints, e.g., of an intentional or stipulative sort, on what is the case in the imagined world in addition to what is explicitly represented in an imagining.

We have pointed out that they should be considered as two sub-varieties of objective imagination, insofar as they both re-create external experiences (respectively, the five senses and at least some occurrent beliefs).

- Fourth, we suggested, more tentatively, that subjective imagination too may be further divided. There would be, on the one hand, the imaginative re-creation of *non-cognitive* non-sensory internal experiences (e.g., proprioception, agentive experiences, introspection, feeling pain) and, on the other hand, the imaginative re-creation of *cognitive* non-sensory internal experiences (e.g., ascent routines).

Of course, more has to be said about the precise domain of experiential states that can be re-created in the imagination, beyond those that we have introduced in this essay. Another question is whether there is something like non-experiential imagination. It might well be that, at the end of the journey, every type of imagining can be shown to belong to experiential imagination. This would have to include the state of imagining being a descendant of Napoleon, which, as we have seen, Walton rates as non-experiential. For instance, one might suggest that it is the state of imagining believing that one is a descendant of Napoleon (understood as representing in imagination a world in which one is a descendant of Napoleon).

Eventually, an analysis of experiential imagination on the lines suggested above should throw light not only on imagination *per se*, but on connected phenomena. As we have tried to illustrate, we believe that traditional and contemporary discussions about the relationship between imagination and possibility, the nature of mindreading, and the ability to imagine being someone else, often rely on oversimplified conceptions of imagination, and that a more fine-grained taxonomy of experiential imagination is needed. We suspect that our taxonomy is beneficial to still other applications of the notion of imagination, but we have to leave the task of justifying our suspicion to another occasion.

Acknowledgements

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Imagination and Experience

A Commentary on Jérôme Dokic & Margherita Arcangeli

Anne-Sophie Brüggen

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 agentive 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 that 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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The Importance of Being Neutral: More on the Phenomenology and Metaphysics of Imagination

A Reply to Anne-Sophie Brüggen

Jérôme Dokic & Margherita Arcangeli

In this reply to Anne-Sophie Brüggen's comments to our target paper, we focus on three main issues. First, we explain that although our account of imaginative re-creation is in many respects metaphysically neutral, it allows for a taxonomy of imaginings that goes beyond mere phenomenological observations and pre-theoretical intuitions. Second, we defend our interpretation of the distinction between objective and subjective imagination and compare it with Brüggen's own suggestions involving the notion of an empty point of view. Third, we insist that the notion of experiential perspective should be construed broadly and include cognitive or belief-like imagination.

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We would like to thank Anne-Sophie Brüggen for her very interesting comments on our paper. In what follows, we try to respond to what we see as the central points raised in her discussion.

1 On the notion of re-creation

In our target paper, we use a notion of re-creation in order to set up a sophisticated taxonomy of experiential imagination. We also profess a certain neutrality with respect to this notion. Anne-Sophie

Brüggen argues that our neutrality is only apparent, and that we in fact oscillate between two substantial notions of re-creation, which have quite different implications for the ontology of imaginings.

Our professed neutrality concerns only the subpersonal underpinnings of imagination. We do not want to commit ourselves to the view that imaginings and their non-imaginative counterparts share neural or functional resources. We do not explicitly vindicate any neutrality with respect to the notion of re-creation at the personal level. However, we intend to be neutral at that level too, in the following respect. In our account, the phrase "X re-creates Y" should be used synonymously with the phrase "X is Y-like", to mean that an imagining of type X has a phenomenal character analogous to the phenomenal character of a non-imaginative state of type Y. For instance, visual imagination is visual-like in the sense that its phenomenal character is more similar to visual perception than, say, auditory perception or belief. In general, what matters for our purposes is that there is a systematic correspondence between the imaginative and the non-imaginative realms; the metaphysical nature of this correspondence is left open.

Now, Brüggen raises an interesting question, namely whether (notwithstanding our intentions) our account shows an oscillation between two different metaphysical conceptions of re-creation. On the first (mode-based) conception, there are different imaginative *modes* corresponding to kinds of experience in the non-imaginative realm. On the second (content-based) conception, which Brüggen attributes to Mike Martin, all imaginings belong to a single imaginative mode but represent different kinds of experience as part of their *contents*.

Brüggen suggests (following Martin's 2002 interpretation) that Peacocke's General Hypothesis (1985) already carries a commitment to the content-based conception. We disagree. The phrase "imagining being in some conscious state" (Peacocke 1985, p. 21) does not obviously entail that the conscious state is represented in the content of the imagining. It is compatible with taking the expression "being in some conscious state" to be a modifier of "imagining", just as the internal accusative "a song" is a modifier of "singing" in "singing a song". Perhaps we are wrong about Peacocke's intentions, but we insist that our use of the General Hypo-

thesis can be metaphysically neutral in this sense.

What about the mode-based conception of re-creation? We concede that some of our formulations, especially when we introduce the distinction between objective and subjective imagination, evoke such a conception. As it happens, we have both rejected the content-based conception in other works (Dokic 2008; Arcangeli 2011a, 2011b). However, many aspects of our taxonomy can be re-formulated in terms more amenable to the latter conception. For instance, the distinction between objective and subjective imagination might be construed as a distinction between imaginings that represent external experiences and imaginings that represent internal experiences as part of their contents. Whether all aspects of our taxonomy can be re-formulated in this way is indeed something that should be explored further.

Brüggen eventually recommends getting rid of the notion of re-creation, and going for a purely phenomenological taxonomy based on pre-theoretical intuitions. It is worth contrasting our methodology with hers. In many respects, our taxonomy rests on well-identified phenomenological types. For instance, all visual imaginings are clearly unified under a single phenomenological type. The latter can then easily be related to a kind of experience in the non-imaginative realm, namely visual experiences. In other cases, identifying non-imaginative counterparts is more difficult because the relevant imaginings do not form a well-identified phenomenological type. We agree with Brüggen that there may not be a phenomenology of objective (as opposed to subjective) imagination. Still, there is no need to introduce a metaphysically-loaded conception of re-creation (either mode-based or content-based) to ground the distinction between objective and subjective imagination. It is enough that phenomenological contrasts can be drawn between particular cases of objective imagination and particular cases of subjective imagination in various domains. This is exactly how Vendler (1984) introduces the distinction in the domain of imagining actions. At this point, our method departs from phenomenology and becomes abductive and specu-

lative. In our view, the best explanation of the relevant phenomenological contrasts is that the imaginings correspond to different kinds of experience in the non-imaginative realm, namely external and internal experiences. We need not rely exclusively on pre-theoretical intuitions. Our taxonomy is indeed grounded in particular phenomenological contrasts, but it is also informed by (controversial) theoretical notions, such as the notion of an external (as opposed to an internal) experience.

2 On the distinction between objective and subjective imagination

Brüggen finds our distinction between objective and subjective imagination "very helpful" (this collection, p. 9), but she is worried about the way we flesh out the distinction. We have already answered one of her worries, which is that our account of the distinction carries a commitment to the mode-based conception of re-creation. As we have suggested, our account is compatible with the alternative, content-based conception. Another worry of Brüggen's is that it is unclear how our notions of objective and subjective imagination differ from Vendler's. Brüggen grounds this worry in the fact that our account leaves room for the claim that both objective and subjective imagination always involve the self implicitly (this collection, p. 5).

As far as objective imagination is concerned, our examples certainly suggest that when one objectively (e.g., visually) imagines oneself in an explicit way (e.g., as a rider or as showing a pinched face), one's imagining can also be implicitly self-involving. This does not mean that the imaginer's self is involved twice. Here the imaginer's self is involved only in an explicit way (as we point out all too briefly in the beginning of section 4.1 of our target paper, our definition of implicit self-involvement excludes that the same self that is involved both implicitly and explicitly in a single imagining). The claim that objective imagination is *always* implicitly self-involving does not immediately follow from these examples, but it is admittedly consistent with our account.

Things are more complicated with respect to subjective imagination. We argue that the latter can be either implicitly or explicitly self-involving, although we also acknowledge that the latter is controversial, since it assumes that we can have an internal experience that explicitly represents the self as such. Taking for granted that some subjective imaginings can explicitly involve the self, it is hard to see how they can also be implicitly self-involving. This is so because of the very nature of the re-created internal experience. An internal experience can only be about a (physical or mental) state whose bearer is identical with the bearer of the experience itself. It is not possible to have a proprioceptive experience of another's body, or to introspect someone else's mental states. When a subjective imagining re-creates an internal experience that explicitly represents the self (the imaginer's or someone else's), the latter cannot but be the self of the re-created experience. Thus the imagining is not implicitly self-involving, according to our definition.

Moreover, even granting Brüggen's claim that objective and subjective imagination always involve the self implicitly, we do not see how this leads us back to Vendler's account of the distinction. For us, the key to the distinction is not the distinction between explicit and implicit self-involvement, but rather the distinction between external and internal experiences. Indeed, the latter distinction has to do with aspects of the self, since we have defined an internal experience as being normally *de se*; but, as we have seen, the *de se* nature of internal experiences can be explained independently of whether the self is explicitly or implicitly involved in the relevant imaginings.

Brüggen introduces the notion of an empty point of view as an additional tool for the theory of imagination. For instance, when a subject visually imagines the Panthéon, her imagining involves a perspective that is not occupied by herself or anyone else. In other words, it is not required that there be an observer *in the imaginary world* (the subject can visualize an unseen Panthéon). If this is the right interpretation of Brüggen's notion of an empty point of view, we already have it in our toolbox. For we claim that

the first-person perspective from which the subject is imagining the Panthéon can remain virtual or counterfactual, in the sense that she is imagining a situation from a spatial perspective that a normally-sighted subject *would* have if she were suitably oriented in the imaginary world.

Brüggen suggests that we could use the notion of an empty point of view to "further sharpen" the distinction between objective and subjective imagination (this collection, p. 6). The idea seems to be that objective imagination always involves an empty point of view, while subjective imagination never does. Let us grant that this idea is broadly correct. We still think that our account of objective and subjective imagination as re-creating external and internal experiences can provide a more fundamental explanation. One might claim that subjective imagination creates more ontological constraints on the imaginary world than objective imagination. A subjective imagining represents a state whose bearer can only be that of the re-created internal experience itself. If such a state is ontologically dependent on a bearer, one cannot imagine the former in a world in which the latter does not exist. Thus, subjective imagination imposes the existence of a self in the imaginary world, whether or not the self in question is explicitly represented. In contrast, since objective imagination re-creates an external experience, one might argue that it is free from the specific constraints of subjective imagination, and need not impose the existence of any self in the imaginary world.

Toward the end of her commentary, Brüggen also suggests that the notion of an empty point of view can help us to distinguish between imaginings and non-imaginative experiences. If we understand her correctly, her suggestion is that in contrast to imaginings, non-imaginative experiences *must* involve an occupied point of view. This is an interesting suggestion, and we do not see why we cannot take it on board. Brüggen thinks otherwise and writes: "Dokic and Arcangeli seem to think that imaginings mirror non-imaginative sates with respect to the nature of the point of view involved (again probably partly due to the notion of re-creation)" (this collection, p. 9). However, as detailed above, our account is more neutral and does not carry such a commitment. We do not posit a specific relationship between imaginings and non-imaginative states, but for the sake of argument let us put in a good word for a less neutral view. Even if one claims that imaginings mirror (or simulate) non-imaginative states in the sense that they are dependent on the latter, thus holding an asymmetrical relationship between those kinds of mental states, one is not committed to the conclusion that imaginings mirror every aspect of non-imaginative sates (e.g., the nature of the point of view). Further specifications are needed about what precisely is preserved and according to which mapping function (Arcangeli 2011b).

3 On cognitive imagination

Brüggen is hesitant about our classification of cognitive imaginings as experiential imaginings. Her main reason for being hesitant is not that the notion of cognitive phenomenology is ill-conceived. On the contrary, she is attracted by the view that beliefs have a special phenomenal character. She thinks that cognitive imaginings do not involve an experiential perspective because she construes the notion of experiential perspective quite narrowly, as a spatial egocentric perspective. In our view, Brüggen's construal of the notion of experiential perspective is too narrow. On this construal, many non-cognitive imaginings turn out to be non-experiential as well. Some cases of sensory imaginings, involving auditory, olfactory, or gustatory imagination, do not always clearly involve a spatial egocentric perspective. Many imaginings that re-create internal experiences (excluding perhaps proprioception) do not involve such a perspective either. For our part, we do not see why the notion of experiential perspective should be restricted to the spatial egocentric case.

4 Conclusion

We have not tried to be exhaustive and answer every point raised in Brüggen's rich commentary here. But we still hope that we have dealt with her main concerns. Despite the fact that

our minimal notion of re-creation does not introduce a substantial metaphysical relation between the imaginative and the non-imaginative realms, it should be conceived as a place-holder for such a relation. Our taxonomy can then be taken as a starting-point for, and perhaps a constraint on, a full-blooded theory of the ontology of imagination.

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