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The Structure of Sensory Imagination

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

THE STRUCTURE OF SENSORY IMAGINATION

By

Nicholas Wiltsher

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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THE STRUCTURE OF SENSORY IMAGINATION

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The Structure of Sensory Imagination

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My dissertation concerns sensory imagining: experiences like imagining a colorful parrot, or imagining its squawk. Just as with perception, there are three sorts of question to be asked about imagination. First, what is it like, phenomenologically, to imagine? Second, what can we do by imagining? Third, what is the essential nature of the experience? There are many theories about perception's nature, which explain its phenomenology and capacities. By contrast, there is some work on imagination's phenomenology, and a lot of work about its putative capacities, but very few theories of its nature. In the dissertation, I give a theory of imagination's nature, taking as explananda facts about its phenomenology and some of its capacities.

The most striking facts about imagination's phenomenology concern its quasi-perceptual nature: ways in which it is like and unlike perception. Imagining is like perceiving, in that it is sensory, perspectival, and presentational: objects seem to appear to one. But it is unlike perceiving, in that the objects of imagination seem to be dependent on the subject, and in that investigation of the objects will not reveal anything more about their nature.

These observations are sufficient to rule out three simple views of imagination. According to denialism, there is not really any such thing as sensory imagining. According to the perceptual model, imagining is very much like perceiving, differing only in vivacity. According to the pictorial model, imagining is like seeing an internal picture. None of these models adequately accounts for the phenomenology of imagining. For example, unlike when we perceive, our visual field need not be replete when we imagine. And unlike when we see a picture, we can't attend to both the object and the vehicle of a mental image. The challenge is to improve on these models.

To do so, I first examine the sensory nature of imagination. I argue that the Humean intuition that you can first experience a color by imagining it amounts to the claim that you can secure *de re* reference to sensible properties by

imagining them. This in turn means that dependency views, like M.G.F. Martin's, on which imagining constitutively depends on perceiving, are false. I also argue that this *de re* capacity of imagination cannot be explained by content views, on which to imagine is to stand in an attitude-like relation to a propositional content. I argue that a relational view of experience of sensible properties is the best way to explain this capacity.

Since imagining involves a relation to sensible properties, it might also involve a relation to an extraordinary object which has sensible properties. I consider three such proposals regarding imagination: sense-data, Meinongian, and sensible profile views. I argue that none of these proposals is adequate. Each recapitulates problems with the simple perceptual and pictorial models.

I argue that instead of a relational view, we should adopt a view on which sensible properties are structured by intentional content intrinsic to imaginative experiences. Starting from A.D. Smith's account of the nature of perceptual intentionality, I argue that the subjectivity of imagined objects can be explained by adopting Sartre's notion of positing, and the idea that sensible properties are predicated of posited objects.

This intentional view faces two problems. The first is that it makes what might seem a dubious appeal to intentional objects. The second is that it seems to be a theory of how we imagine appearances, rather than objects. I argue that the first problem is not pressing; talk of intentional objects is not ontologically pernicious. The second problem is more serious.

To address it, I argue that all the views of imagination thus far discussed are variants of the additive view, on which to imagine is to apply conceptual content to an ambiguous mental image. However, additive views are bound to fail as views of imagination. The root of their problems is the idea that imagining involves multiple intentional experiences which are somehow amalgamated. I propose instead an approach to imagination which draws on Gestalt psychology. Imaginative experiences consist of a range of parts, which are seamlessly synthesized into a whole experience. The whole experiences are intentional, but the parts are not; they inherit their intentionality from the whole. It is not the case that one generates an image and then applies intentional content to it; rather, the image, the intentionality, and the rest of the content come combined. I argue that this approach not only helps to explain how imaginative experiences can be about particulars, but also promises to be fruitful in explaining features of imagination, in part via the Gestalt idea of *Prägnanz*.

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Introduction

This thesis is about sensory imagination: experiences, with qualitative phenomenology, of absent objects. In visual terms, such experiences are often described as “picturing to yourself”, or “seeing with the mind’s eye”. Similar expressions are not as common regarding other sensory modalities; nevertheless, it seems clear enough that you can imagine sounds and feels, and there is good evidence that you can also imagine tastes and smells.¹

Sensory imagining contrasts with what you might call propositional imagining. Propositional imagining is a sort of imagining that does not involve qualitative, sensory phenomenology. It is often what people mean when they say that they suppose, conceive, or fancy something; and it may well be involved when people suspect, conjecture, and so on. ‘Propositional’ may in fact turn out to be an unfortunate term, since some philosophers think that states with sensory phenomenology involve (something like) propositions. But here, the word is meant to mark the fact that (roughly)

¹Stevenson and Case conclude from an extensive review of the psychological literature on “olfactory imagery” that you can indeed imagine tastes and smells, though perhaps to a lesser degree of acuity than sights and sounds, which should not be surprising, given the relative acuities of the associated perceptual capacities. Ryle argues much the same thing from the comfort of his armchair. Richard J. Stevenson and Trevor I. Case. “Olfactory Imagery: A Review”. In: *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 12.2 (2005), pp. 244–264; Gilbert Ryle. *The Concept of Mind*. Hutchinson, 1949, ch. 8.

this sort of imagining involves sentences, rather than sensory properties. For the main, I will not be concerned with propositional imagining.

Now that the subject matter of the thesis is a little clearer, I will for the most part drop the qualification ‘sensory’ in what follows. But unless explicitly stated, sensory imagination will be the topic. I will now say a little more about what I want to explain about sensory imagination, and why.²

To imagine something is to have a certain kind of experience. Questions about experiences fall into three broad categories. In the first category are phenomenological questions: what is it like for the subject to have experiences of that kind? The second category comprises capacity questions: what does having experiences of that kind allow us to do? The third category includes essence questions: what is the distinctive fundamental nature of that kind of experience? Essence questions can perhaps be answered by simply pointing to a distinctive capacity or phenomenological feature, but more usually, they are posed as inquiries into experiences’ nature or structure, which underlies their capacities and phenomenology.

There can be several compatible and complementary answers to phenomenological questions and capacity questions, if the answers each focus on some particular element of phenomenology, or on a particular capacity. This is possible because experiences can have complex phenomenology with several elements, and can have several distinct capacities. By contrast, for any kind of experience, there can only be one correct

²I have identified two sorts of imagining, and set aside one. More fine-grained taxonomies are available. For example, Dorsch identifies four sorts of imagining. If one were to follow Dorsch’s taxonomy, I am centrally concerned with sensory imagining and some sorts of experiential imagining, and not much occupied by emotional or intellectual imagining. See Fabian Dorsch. *The Unity of Imagining*. Frankfurt: Ontos, forthcoming, pp. 27-42.

answer to the question of what its essential nature is.³ My concern in this thesis is to give a theory of the essential nature of sensory imagination: to say what it is to imagine something.

A comparison with perception will make the task I have in mind more clear. In the philosophy of perception, there is a fair amount of work on phenomenological questions: whether, for example, round coins viewed from oblique angles look or appear to be elliptical.⁴ There is also a fair amount of work on capacity questions: whether, for example, seeing some object puts you in a special direct epistemological relationship with facts about it.⁵ Often, answers to such questions are used in arguments intended to provide an answer to the essence question, a theory of the nature of perception. So for example, a sense-data theorist might use the alleged phenomenological fact that round coins appear elliptical to argue that there is a necessary distinction between appearance and reality, and thence to argue that this distinction can only be explained if to perceive is to stand in a direct relation to an extra-ordinary object, causally related to a real ordinary object, which manifests an appearance to the subject. The sense-data theorist may (in fact, should) go on to explain the nature of

³You might think that, say, a complete neuro-physiological description of a kind of brain state and a complete account of the conscious nature of a kind of experience could both be correct accounts of the essential nature of a certain kind of state, just accounts at different levels of description. My assertion is that there could only be one correct account of the latter kind, that is, one correct account of the conscious nature of a kind of experience.

⁴This was part of the issue concerning appearances between Ayer and Austin; see A.J. Ayer. *The Problem of Knowledge*. London: Macmillan, 1956; John Austin. *Sense and Sensibilia*. Ed. by G.A. Warnock. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

⁵Armstrong and Dretske, in different ways, hold that seeing is intimately connected with knowledge and belief; see David M. Armstrong. *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*. London: Routledge, 1968; David M. Armstrong. *Belief, Truth and Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1973; Fred Dretske. *Knowledge and the Flow of Information*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981. For discussion, see A.D. Smith. "Perception and Belief". In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62 (2 2001), pp. 283–309.

this extra-ordinary object, and perhaps also to examine the implications of the view for capacity questions. For example, the sense-data theorist might explain what category of thing their extra-ordinary objects fall under (mental things, perhaps); and they might examine whether their view implies that perception does not give us a special sort of direct, non-inferential access to facts about ordinary objects, since it only involves direct acquaintance with extra-ordinary objects.

In this sense-data example, an answer to a phenomenological question serves as an explanandum in an argument for a theory proposed as the best explanans; the theory is then used to give an answer to a capacity question. But things might go differently. For example, you might argue that perception lets us know the world directly, and then argue that this capacity of perception can only be explained if perception is a direct relation to the world. So both phenomenological facts and facts about the capacities of mental states can serve as elements in arguments aimed at answering essence questions.

My aim in this thesis to give an account of the nature of sensory imaginative experiences, in the manner of accounts of perceptual experience. I aim to explain what the nature of the mental state involved must be, given what imaginative experiences are like. In the course of considering possible explanations, I will also inquire into the putative objects of imagination – things separate from mental states that might be constitutive parts of imaginative experience. As this brief sketch suggests, I take my main explananda to be aspects of the phenomenology of imagination. I will draw on, but not treat as key explananda, certain reasonable ideas about the capacities of imaginative experiences. The question of why I am concentrating on phenomenology,

rather than capacities, is worth addressing briefly before I begin the main work of the thesis.

It is a fairly challenging task to get a firm grasp on the central phenomenological features of sensory imaginative experiences. But it is even harder to set out an uncontentious account of imagination's capacities. A role for sensory imagination, or something like it, has been adduced in a variety of contexts; for example, in accounts of artistic representation and aesthetic experience, debates about the relation of conceivability to possibility, discussions of the nature and role of thought experiments, and so on. Some of these roles – thought experiments, conceivability – pertain to the very nature of philosophical method, and this is not to even mention the role that imagination has sometimes been supposed to play in perceiving and thinking (which I will discuss in the following chapter).⁶

Now, it is not obvious that *sensory* imagination is being invoked in each of these contexts, but imagination certainly is. However, in each of the areas I have mentioned, there is not simply a debate about how imagination fulfills its role; there is also a debate about whether imagination fulfills any role at all. Compare, again, perception.

There is plenty of debate about how perception might furnish us with knowledge about

⁶As examples of all of the above, and by no means an exhaustive list: Walton, Scruton, and Dufrenne all think imagination is centrally involved in experience of art: Mikel Dufrenne. *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*. Trans. by Edward S. Casey. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1953/1973; Roger Scruton. *Art and Imagination*. London: Methuen, 1974; Kendall L. Walton. *Mimesis as Make-Believe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

The questions about conceivability and thought experiments are arguably as old as philosophy, but the widespread attention they currently enjoy was sparked by Kripke's thoughts about the relation between what we can imagine and what is possible. Gendler and Hawthorne have edited a volume which provides a good overview of the issues. See Saul Kripke. *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972; Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne, eds. *Conceivability and Possibility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

the world; there is almost no debate about whether perception does, somehow, enable us to know about the world.

The point here is that trying to build a theory of sensory imagination by starting from a statement of its capacities – the roles it plays in various contexts – is to try building a theory on contested ground. Better, it seems, to start from a relatively uncontroversial point. This is why I adopt phenomenology, rather than capacities, as my starting point.

Nevertheless, I will at times appeal to the capacities of sensory imagination, in what I take to be cases where it cannot be disputed that imagination is involved. And this sort of appeal suggests that, despite being about the phenomenology of imagination, the theory I give in this thesis can be usefully applied to questions about imagination's capacities.

In the areas of philosophy I just mentioned where imagination is accorded a role, discussions often rely on a sketchy or “place-holder” theory of imagination. One example of this is Kendall Walton's account of aesthetic experience, on which to appreciate a piece of art is to engage in a form of make-believe. Walton explains that the ability to do this is dependent on imagination, yet offers only a very brief characterization of what a theory of imagination adequate for his purposes would be, and says explicitly that he is using the term as a place-holder pending a more developed theory. The same goes for many or most of the areas of philosophy I mentioned above.

How can a theory of the phenomenology of sensory imagination help to fill in these sketches? Well, though I am concentrating on sensory imagining and its phe-

nomenology, I take that phenomenology to involve more than mere appearances. As I will explain in the first chapter, much of the debate about mental imagery has concentrated on the bare fact that imagination can produce images, and elided the fact that these are images of things – often, of particular things. I take this fact to be one of my explananda, and so I am bound to give some account of how imagination can be more than a sort of inner cinema, but a way of relating to the world. This world-relation, its nature and its scope, is the element of imaginative experiences which might account for how it plays the roles mentioned above. So in explaining how sensory imagination can be about particular worldly items, I will be at least laying the foundation for an explanation of how imagination is related to the world, and thus a foundation for explaining how it might (or might not) fulfill the roles that have been adduced for it.

To sum up, then. I am aiming to give an account of the nature of imaginative experiences: what the essence of the mental state involved is, whether objects separate from the mental state are constitutively involved in the experience, and how imagining might relate to the world. I will appeal, at times, to capacities of imagination, but for the most part, I will concentrate on its phenomenology. Nevertheless, I take it that the theory I articulate contributes to the task of elucidating how imagination might have some of the capacities that have been ascribed to it.

I will now briefly outline the structure of the thesis, before moving on in the next chapter to a discussion of my explananda.

The thesis

The thesis can be understood, in a sense, to move from simple imaginative experiences to complex ones. In the first chapter, I set out the explananda that will occupy me for the rest of the thesis. I argue that imagination is quasi-perceptual. This term encapsulates the ways in which imaginative experiences are similar to perceptual and hallucinatory experiences, and the ways in which they are different. Imaginative experiences share with those other experiences the properties of being sensory, and being presentational. But imagined objects appear to be dependent on the subject; they do not admit of expectations and disappointments, and they seem to appear in a sort of subjective space. I argue that these basic observations about imagination are sufficient to discredit three simple views of imagination: denialism, the perceptual model, and the pictorial model.

In the second chapter, I start to address quasi-perception by examining what imagination's nature must be, since it is sensory. I argue that the sensory nature of imagination means that it can be a source of *de re* reference to sensible properties. I then argue that this capacity cannot be accounted for by M.G.F. Martin's dependency thesis, and that this suggests the theory to be pursued is one on which imagination shares some structural features with perception, but is not derivative of it. I set out a taxonomy of views of perception on which the experience shares structural features with hallucination and (perhaps) imagination, dividing the views into three groups: relational, intentional, and content views. I then argue that content views cannot account for the *de re* capacity. I further argue that the only way in which the

capacity can be accounted for is if imagination involves a genuine relation to sensible properties.

This conclusion seems to suggest that a relational view of imagination, on which the experience involves awareness of some extraordinary item, is the most likely candidate. However, a relational theory is not forced by the conclusion about sensible properties; and in the third chapter, I argue that a range of relational theories fail individually to account for the phenomenology of imagination. I consider sense-data views, Meinongian views, and Mark Johnston's sensible profile account. Each approach, I argue, faces insurmountable problems.

This failure of a range of relational views suggests that an intentional view might be a better alternative. On an intentional view, imagination is an experience in which intentional content intrinsic to the experience delivers the appearance of an intentional object. I argue in chapter four that an intentional account of imaginative appearances can successfully account for their unique features. I start by setting out A.D. Smith's account of the intentional features of perceptual experience. Then I elaborate on the discussion of imagination's features in the first chapter to give an account of the intentional features of imaginative experience. I argue that imagining involves the active positing of an intentional object, of which sensible properties are predicated, such that an appearance of that object is manifest in the experience. I argue that these ideas of intentional positing and intentional predication underpin the two ways in which imagined objects appear subjective: the subjective space they occupy, and the phenomenon of quasi-observation.

In the latter part of the fourth chapter, I raise two problems which this view shares with Smith's account of hallucination. The first is the problem of saying something about the ontology of intentional objects without ascribing to them any form of substantial existence. The second is the problem of explaining how the experiences come to be of particular objects, rather than of mere appearances. I argue that Smith's answer to the first problem can be straightforwardly adopted; there is nothing ontologically committal about talk of intentional objects. However, his approach to the second problem, which is essentially to deny that hallucinations ever can have more than appearances as their objects, is not adequate for explaining imagination. A theory of imagination needs to allow for the possibility that the experience is of more than appearances.

The fifth chapter is taken up with progressively more detailed attempts to deal with this problem. I first explore the prospects of what I term the additive view, on which to imagine is to have an image in mind to which one applies conceptual content. I argue that, for all its popularity and simplicity, this view is nothing more than a reiteration of the pictorial model, and cannot stand. As an improvement on it, I use Johnston's notion of cathexis and elements of Sartre's doctrine of the analogon to develop the aggregative view, on which to imagine is to posit an intentional object, with a variety of types of intentional content ensuring that that what is posited is not an appearance, but a replete object. This avoids the additive view's pictorial problems, since the intentional object is built into the image. However, the aggregative view faces its own problems. Chiefly, they concern its evidential basis: there is

simply no direct introspective evidence that imagining consists in the amalgamation of various proto-intentional parts.

I suggest, in the final part of the chapter and of the thesis, that the root of the problem is not the structure of the aggregative view, but the theoretical approach it presumes. What I suggest instead is that imaginative experiences should be treated as *gestalten*. This means, among other things, that the whole experiences, which are intentional, do not derive their intentionality from the parts that make them up. Rather, the parts become intentional in virtue of their membership in the whole. Further, because the properties of the whole are different from the properties of the parts, it should not be expected that there is direct evidence of the existence of parts manifest in imaginative experiences. To assuage the worry that this is not much more than an evasive maneuver, I present an indirect argument using the Gestalt theoretic principle of *Prägnanz* to suggest that first, imaginative experiences do indeed involve parts; and second, that the theoretical idea that they are structured according to Gestalt theory principles promises to be fruitful in explaining some puzzling phenomena of imagination. I finish the thesis with a summary conclusion which indicates some ways in which the theory I have developed might be applied.

Chapter 1

The Explananda

Imagine a horse. Imagine its brown coat, the sound of its whinny, the texture of its flank, and so on. Now imagine a particular horse: imagine Red Rum, or Rocinante. All of these are, I take it, eminently possible imaginative projects. Between them, they raise two general questions. First, what is different about imagining a horse, as opposed to perceiving a horse? Second, how can the experience be about particular horses? Or is it merely about the appearances of horses which may be taken for particulars?⁷

⁷I am going to use five particular horses for many of my examples throughout the thesis. It will be helpful to set out immediately the relevant characteristics of my selections; their relevance should become clear later.

RED RUM was a real racehorse, successful in the 1970s, probably the best racer over jumps ever to run in the UK. He was a bay: a reddish-brown color.

DESERT ORCHID was also a real horse. He raced in the 1980s, and is Red Rum's only real contender for the title of best jumper ever. He was a pale gray, almost white color.

ROCINANTE is Don Quixote's horse in Cervantes' novel. Though Cervantes tells us that Rocinante is a tired old workhorse, he at no point specifies what color the horse is.

BLACK BESS is the fictional horse of the real highwayman Dirk Turpin; she was invented as part of the wild embellishments of Turpin's story that proved profitable for several writers in the hundred years or so following his execution in 1739. Black Bess is, naturally, black.

BLACK BEAUTY is a fictional horse, the eponymous narrator of Anna Sewell's 1877 novel. As with Black Bess, the pertinent facts are that he is fictional, and black.

In the present chapter, I set out what I take to be the key phenomenological facts about imaginative experiences. Most of these facts pertain to the differences between imaginative appearances and perceptual appearances. I will sum these up in a handy phrase: imagination is quasi-perceptual. It is somewhat like perception, but it is also and always unlike perception. My set of explananda will consist in the principal ways in which the two experiences are alike and unlike. In the course of setting out these explananda, I will also argue against theories on which imagination is a derivative form of some other kind of mental state, and thus has no distinctive essential nature of its own.

The sketch I just gave of the explananda does not explain why, exactly, I am also so concerned about the question of imagination's possible direction towards particulars. I have just expressed myself in terms of appearances. And it is true that the bulk of this thesis is concerned with imaginative appearances. But I think it is important to address the particularity of imagination if a theory is to be of more than parochial interest: that is, if it is to do more than contribute to debates about the nature of imagination, to perhaps start to explain the capacities of imagination. The relation between sensory imagination, understood just in terms of making absent things appear, and theories about imagination's capacities more generally is far from clear. But a brief history of the concept of imagination will help to clarify both that relationship, and the context in which I am working. So I will first give this brief history in section one, and then move on to outlining explananda and arguing against simple theories in sections two to five.

1.1 A brief history of imagining

The term ‘imagination’ has a curious history. When first introduced, it denoted a quite specific capacity of mind, but in the course of several hundred years, it has become a much more capacious word, encompassing a range of mental activities. ‘Imagination’ is first recorded in written English in the late 1300s, and is used specifically to denote a mental faculty which allows us to ‘see’ absent things.⁸ For example, the Parisian scholastic philosopher Bartholomæus Anglicus, in John Trevisa’s 1398 translation, explains that in comparison to the body, the soul has several distinct properties. Among them are feeling, which allows the soul to desire and despise; reason, which allows the soul to distinguish between good and evil, and between true and false; bodily wit, which allows the soul to be aware of material things while they are present; and “the third is imagination, whereby the soul beholds the likeness of bodily things that are absent”. It is clear here that imagination is taken to be a faculty of mind, on a par with reason, which manifests the appearance of physical objects which are not present.⁹

⁸Tye suggests that something like this was also Aristotle’s view; according to Tye, Aristotle thought imagining was picturing absent things, and nothing much more than this. If so, the ‘original’ use predates the term’s introduction to English, as you might expect given its Latinate roots. See Michael Tye. *The Imagery Debate*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991, pp. 2-3. Lucretius’ discussion of images in Book IV of *De Rerum Natura* seems to suggest he also has something like a pictorial theory of mental images in mind, though this is a matter of interpretation and translation that I cannot go into here. See Lucretius. *The Nature of Things (De Rerum Natura)*. Trans. by David R. Slavitt. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008, pp. 139-146.

⁹Though Trevisa’s translation dates from 1398, the original Latin text is dated 1240. I have modernized the spelling, orthography, and some words in the quotation. The original reads: “þe þridde hatte ymaginacioun, þerby þe soule biholdeþ þe liknes of bodiliche þinges þat beþ absent.” See Bartholomæus Anglicus. *On the Properties of Things (De Proprietatibus Rerum)*. Ed. by M.C. Seymour. Trans. by John Trevisa. Vol. I. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1398/1975, p.95, lines 7-17.

This specific use of ‘imagination’ to name a faculty by which to almost literally see or perceive the absent was its original and, for some while, its only meaning in English. The more general use of the term to designate an ability to conceive of, consider, or create the absent grows out of this original meaning. The persistence of the core sensory notion is well illustrated by the fact that, until the mid-17th century, ‘imagination’ and terms for its products such as ‘vision’ encompassed both (what we now think of as) visualizations, and also hallucinations. For example, MacBeth’s hallucinated dagger and Titania’s supposed dream in which she was enamored of an ass are both described as ‘visions’. The term ‘hallucination’ first occurs in print in 1646, where Sir Thomas Browne stipulates that it refers to when vision “is depraved and receives its objects erroneously”, contrasted with when vision is abolished entirely (blindness) or diminished somewhat. So it is only from this point on that there is any real sense that hallucination and imagination are distinct mental states.¹⁰

In the hundred years or so following Browne’s delineation of a boundary between imagination and hallucination, the idea that imagination might have capacities beyond the mere replication of sensory experience gains quite some currency. Most prominently, the Empiricists argue that imagination is what bridges the gap between perception of particulars, and ideas of general things. For example, in Hume’s version of the classic Empiricist position, all ideas are copies of percepts; ideas thus retain a

¹⁰Browne was quite fond of introducing neologisms and stipulating their definition. He was also an early adopter of scientific methods. The stipulative definition of ‘hallucination’ occurs in the course of his examination of the received opinion “that molls are blinde and have no eyes.” He concludes that in fact, moles do have eyes and are not blind, via the revolutionary method of examining a mole to see if it has eyes, and then observing whether its behavior is consistent with that of a sighted animal. Sir Thomas Browne. “That Molls are Blinde and Have no Eyes”. In: *Pseudodoxia Epidemica: or, Enquiries into Very Many Received Tenets and Commonly Held Truths*. London: T.H. for Edward Dod, 1646, pp. 151–153

faintly imagistic nature. But ideas cannot be mere copies of percepts, since there is a need for abstract ideas. For example, you can think about horses in general using your general, abstract idea of a horse, and since every percept is a percept of a particular, the abstract idea of a horse cannot be just a copy of a percept. Imagination is given the role in Hume's theory of performing the necessary abstraction such that the general idea 'horse', with appropriate imagistic content, can be abstracted from percepts of particular horses. So imagination starts to take on a fundamental role in the operations of the mind; it is not just a faculty for replication, but a faculty for abstraction and synthesis, though the thought is still that the products of imagination are things with some sort of sensory content: concepts that are somewhat pictorial in nature.¹¹

Through the course of the 18th century, this idea of imagination as a faculty that plays a wide-ranging role in underpinning and facilitating other mental operations takes a firm hold, and in the process, the link between imagination and sensory experience comes undone. This can clearly be seen in the way that Kant, for example, understands imagination. Kant understands imagination as a faculty basic and fundamental to human cognition, contributing to perception, to aesthetic appreciation, and so forth. This is clearly a much wider conception of the role and powers of imagination than the 13th-century scholastic meaning from which it has grown. It is also

¹¹This very brief summary elides a lot of exegetical and interpretative detail. In particular, it glosses over the debate among the British Empiricists about the exact role of imagination and nature of abstract ideas, and it leaves vague what exactly Hume thought about imagination. Though he is often associated with a perceptual view (see below), it is also quite possible to read a pictorial view into what he says. This latter seems to be Tye's interpretation. Tye gives a good, concise summary of the debate among the Empiricists, though he is a little too keen to establish that all their mistakes are a result of their reliance on introspection and "armchair theorizing." See Tye, *The Imagery Debate*, op. cit., pp. 5-11.

not at all obviously concerned solely with the sensory. When Kant says, for example, that imagination synthesizes intuitions with the manifold of perception, it is far from clear that merely sensory material is being synthesized. In fact, Kant accords so much of a role to imagination, in so many heterogeneous contexts, across all three Critiques, that the primary exegetical challenge when it comes to establishing a Kantian theory of imagination is establishing just what the single faculty that can play all these roles really is.¹²

So about when Kant is writing is about the time at which questions about sensory imagination, a faculty of seeing the absent, can be separated from questions of what imagination, in a more general sense, can do. From Kant forward, we can discern two distinct strands of thought about imagination.

First, there is debate, thought, and wild speculation about what imagination allows us to do, where imagination is taken in quite a wide sense. This strand perhaps reaches its apotheosis in the Romantic poets' conception of imagination as the most important faculty; among other traits, it is what allows them, and other persons of sufficient sensitivity, to see into the very nature of things. In a less grand manner, they also emphasize the creative nature of imagination, in addition to its role in reproducing the products of the sense. This is encapsulated in Coleridge's distinction between "fancy," roughly designating the reproductive faculty, and "imagination," designating the creative. So now we have not only a much wider conception of the roles

¹²For an excellent, clear, and original account of what Kant thinks imagination is, what he thinks it does, and how he can be interpreted as offering a unified notion of the faculty, see Sarah L. Gibbons. *Kant's Theory of Imagination: Bridging Gaps in Judgement and Experience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. According to Gibbons, Kant does not think that imagination is necessarily sensory, but he does think it does an awful lot of work in the life of the mind.

and capabilities of imagination, we also have distinctions between types of imagination according to the roles each type plays.¹³ This sort of thinking results in the ideas that imagination, in some sense, not necessarily sensory, is somehow involved with aesthetic appreciation and creation, intuitions of possibilities, and the like.

Second, there is an associated but separate line of inquiry, where the concern is with the nature and role of mental imagery, in which imagination is more narrowly conceived in something more like its original meaning, as just a faculty for calling up mental images of absent things. The picture theory of concepts, derived from the Empiricist idea that concepts are imaginative abstractions from percepts, is a going concern well into the 20th century, though it is called into question towards the end of the 19th. In these debates, though of course the question of whether imagination plays a role in thinking is the point, a lot of the focus is simply on the nature of mental imagery, and indeed whether there really is anything of the sort (since if there is not, the picture theory of concepts must be false). From this sort of debate emerges a strand of research concentrating just on the nature of mental imagery, with not much

¹³Coleridge makes his distinction in Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Biographia Literaria*. Ed. by George Watson. London: Dent, 1965, p. 167. For an admirable, though I think not quite successful, attempt to make a coherent theory of imagination out of what Coleridge and Wordsworth have to say on the matter, see Mary Warnock. *Imagination*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976, Part III. Warnock admits that Coleridge's ideas are a "tangled confusion", which is right; but also credits Wordsworth and him with introducing to England from Germany (that is, from Kant) the theory that "imagination is that which allows us both to express and to understand ideas." *ibid.*, p. 72. I am not sure this is quite right, given the role that the British Empiricists had accorded to imagination, but it is certainly true that Coleridge was a student of philosophy, read Kant closely, and made a substantial contribution to the modern understanding of imagination. Casey also discusses the Romantics; see especially Edward S. Casey. *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 1976, pp. 182-188.

to say about what role it might play in the wider life of the mind, and not much either about the relation of imagery to other sorts of imagination.¹⁴

The point of all this is that 20th and 21st century discussions of imagination and mental imagery are shaped by this historical background. There is a fairly narrow debate about what the nature of mental imagery is, and how it is engendered, and how it related to perception. And there is a rather wider debate about what we can do with imagination: both about what we can do with sensory imagination, and what we can do with imagination more generally. But the two debates are not independent of each other. Most obviously, we might well think that a theory about the nature of mental imagery, of sensory imagination in the narrow sense, will have implications for accounts concerning what we can do with imagination more generally, given the roots of the concept.¹⁵

So the questions I am addressing in this thesis pertain to the nature of sensory imagination. I want to inquire into how we can have experiences of absent objects that bear phenomenological resemblance to perceptual experiences, while being different from them. I take it that the theory I articulate will have some consequences for

¹⁴The late 19th century debate on the nature and role of mental imagery is one of the murkier episodes in the history of philosophy. Notoriously, Galton purported to show that the more educated and refined members of society employ much less mental imagery in their thinking than do the coarser classes. Whatever Galton's intentions, his work was picked up on by a motley of racists, eugenicists, and other undesirables, who wanted to argue that the inferior elements of the human species were so in part because they were incapable of progressing from primitive imagistic thinking to the sophisticated verbal sort. This research has been thoroughly repudiated. See Francis Galton. "Statistics of Mental Imagery". In: *Mind* 5.19 (1880), pp. 301–318; David Burbridge. "Galton's 100: An Exploration of Francis Galton's Imagery Studies". In: *British Journal for the History of Science* 27.4 (1994), pp. 443–463; William F. Brewer and Marlene Schommer-Aikins. "Scientists Are Not Deficient in Mental Imagery: Galton Revised". In: *Review of General Psychology* 10.2 (2006), pp. 130–146.

¹⁵One piece of evidence that the two lines of inquiry I have identified are separate but complementary is the occasional attempt made to bring them together. For example, Thomas tries to do so in Nigel J.T. Thomas. "Are Theories of Imagery Theories of Imagination? An Active Perception Approach to Conscious Mental Content". In: *Cognitive Science* 23.2 (1999), pp. 207–245.

questions about what imagination can be used to do, but for the most part, I do not explore those.

Since, as I have shown, sensory imagination is most naturally thought of as a way to ‘see’ absent objects, the most obvious way to identify its key phenomenological features is to examine what features it shares with perception, and what features are unique to imagination. However, I think that we can achieve a sharper view of what really needs to be explained about imagining by also discussing what separates it from hallucination. Over the course of the next two sections, I first establish what perception, hallucination, and imagination have in common. In so doing, I establish enough to rule out denialism about sensory imagination. I then motivate a crude view of imagination, the perceptual model. The perceptual model is inadequate, because it cannot explain the differences between imagining and perceiving; in explaining what those differences are, I also rule out the perceptual model. The similarities and differences together constitute the explananda of the thesis.

1.2 Imagining and perceiving

Sensory imagination is the faculty by which one can make absent objects appear. It is somewhat as if you are seeing the objects in question. In this section, I will set out the ways in which the two experiences are similar, and use these similarities to dismiss denialism.

The first similarity is just that imagining, like both perceiving and thinking, is an experience of an object. When you imagine, as when you perceive, the thing your

experience is about is some object other than your own conscious state. Sometimes, the object is a particular, say Red Rum; sometimes, it is a generic object, like a horse. This latter characteristic is not a feature of perception, since perception can only be directed towards particulars. And indeed, to say that imagining is about some object is simply to say that it is an intentional mental state. This is not a similarity between imagining and perceiving, but a commonality among all mental states.

The first thing that makes imagination like perceiving and unlike other mental states is that it is sensory: it has qualitative phenomenology. This is not yet to say anything about what the phenomenology amounts to beyond being qualitative. The thought is only that imagining seems to involve experience of colors, sounds, smells, and other such sensory qualities. Perception also seems to involve such experience. So this is one clear way in which the two experiences are similar. This may seem so obvious that it does not merit attention, but I will show shortly that some have denied it, and in the next chapter, I will show that explaining it is not so straightforward.

However, the fact that imagining and perceiving are both sensory does not exhaust the things they have in common. In both experiences, you appear to be presented with the object of your experience. Perceiving and imagining both present you with objects as viewed from a certain egocentric position; you imagine, for example, a horse as a horse might be seen from such-and-such an angle and distance. Likewise, the objects of perception are necessarily presented from a certain perspective. As part of this perspectival appearance, objects are also presented as having occluded parts (assuming that they are three-dimensional). As a function of seeing one side of the horse, the other side is occluded; yet part of seeing it as a horse is to take

it that it has that occluded side. One way of summing this up is to say that the objects of imagination and perception alike admit of perspectival variation. There is a sense in which one can expect the object's appearance to change as your viewpoint changes; previously occluded parts will be revealed, and previously apparent parts will be hidden.

Though all I have done so far is to point out similarities between perception and imagination, this is enough to do two things. The first is to establish an explanandum: the two experiences are similar, in ways that I have just explained. The second is to rule out a position on imagination that I will label *denialism*. As the name suggests, denialism about sensory imagination is the view that there is no such thing: that mental imagery simply does not exist, and reports of its existence are the products of suggestion and linguistic confusion. What we think of as mental imagery is really something else; for example, inner mental speech, caused by sub-vocal movements of the larynx.¹⁶ This view is, as one might expect, associated with behaviorist psychologists, keen as they were on discounting any mental phenomenon that could not be analyzed in terms of inputs and behavioral outputs. The view's currency has declined in tandem with that of behaviorism, and I hope I do not have to do anything more to convince the reader that denialism is false, other than to reiterate the manifest fact that sensory imaginative experience – experience something like that of perceiving an object – is possible.

¹⁶This was J.B. Watson's view, as discussed by Tye; see Tye, *The Imagery Debate*, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

1.3 The perceptual model

So given agreement on that point, the next thing to consider is whether the simplest possible explanation of imagination's similarity to perception will do. That explanation is the perceptual model, according to which imagining is derivative of perception. Imaginative experiences are just perceptual experiences, recapitulated with less force and vivacity. As the reference to force and vivacity may suggest, this model is closely associated with Hume, who thought that mental images (or ideas) are just copies of sense-impressions, differing only insofar as they are fainter than the originals.¹⁷ The model explains the similarities between imagining and perceiving, because if imagining is just derived from perceiving, we should expect it to have the same phenomenology.

The perceptual model has been roundly and justly criticized by a number of philosophers. The typical course of criticism proceeds by pointing out the many and manifest ways in which the phenomenology of imagining is unlike that of perceiving, thus demonstrating that one cannot be an etiolated form of the other. I am going to take a somewhat different approach: I am going to consider what separates imagining from hallucinating. This will get me to the same destination, but it will allow me to derive a sharper idea of what needs explaining about the phenomenology of imagination.

The reason that I will arrive at the same destination is that it is commonly supposed in the literature on perception that you can undergo a hallucination that is

¹⁷David Hume. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Ed. by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, Book 1, Part 1, Section 1.

subjectively indistinguishable from perception. This indicates that the two experiences are, in general, phenomenologically similar. Now, if this is so, and if there are phenomenal features of imagination that set it apart from perception, they should also set it apart from hallucination. But some features of imagination that have quite rightly been taken to distinguish it from perception do not distinguish it from hallucination. In other words, they are features that sort the sensory experiences into the wrong categories: they are features which separate hallucination and imagination from perception. What I will be looking for are the phenomenological features of imaginative experience that set it aside from both hallucination and perception. This will deliver a better idea of what is really distinctive about imagination, while also being sufficient to do away with the perceptual model.

The idea that imagination and hallucination cannot be as easily distinguished as imagination and perception may seem strange. After all, the words usually describe quite distinct experiences. But philosophers discussing hallucination usually offer only a characterization of the experience, and these characterizations do not clearly distinguish it from imagining. Here is a representative example from Tim Crane: “[A]n experience which seems just like a perception of a real mind-independent object but where there is no real mind-independent object being perceived.”¹⁸

I take it that ‘object’ here should be read as including sensory properties, since hallucinations can be of indeterminate shapes and colors that do not seem to be part of any particular object. This being so, the characterization does not obviously distin-

¹⁸Tim Crane. “Is There a Perceptual Relation?” In: *Perceptual Experience*. Ed. by Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 126–146, p. 133.

guish hallucination from imagination. Imagination, quite plausibly, is an experience in which one has an experience like a perception of a real mind-independent object, in the absence of such of thing, and notwithstanding the actual or possible existence anywhere of the thing. The question I am addressing, then, is the force of Crane's 'just': what is it that makes hallucination *just* like perception, and imagination only *somewhat* like perception?

To find a sharper definition of hallucination which separates it from imagining, it might be fruitful to look to psychology. After all, psychologists, and in particular psychiatrists, have a professional interest in being able to tell when a subject is hallucinating, rather than imagining. So you might expect that they have a good grasp on what distinguishes the two. But psychologists' definitions of hallucination are generally unhelpful in this regard. Here is an example: "A hallucination is defined as a perception without an object, or as a mental construct without a corresponding material event in the real world."¹⁹

This does not distinguish hallucination from imagination. I take it that the idea of the phrase "perception without an object" is that a hallucination has perceptual phenomenology – the apparent presentation of sensory matter – without any physical object corresponding to the appearance being present. Again, the same is true of imagination. And an imaginative experience can surely be thought of as a mental construct not corresponding to a material event, though these are not terms in which most philosophers tend to talk (at the very least, putting things this way at this stage might be tendentious).

¹⁹John Cutting. *Principles of Psychopathology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 268.

Now, typically, psychiatrists regard hallucinations as pathological, and identify them as such using some sort of behavioral criterion; hallucinations are pathological if they interfere with the patient's normal life. But this does not distinguish all hallucinations from imagination, because hallucinations need not be pathological. There are hallucinations that do not adversely impair your normal functioning. People who suffer from schizophrenia are able to accommodate their hallucinations into normal patterns of behavior once they become aware that their hallucinations are indeed hallucinations. Nor can the distinction be that hallucination affects behavior, pathologically or not, while imagination doesn't, since it's quite possible for imagining to affect one's behavior. You can, for example, imagine dangers precisely in order to make sure that you don't fall into them, or (perhaps more common) make children imagine dangers to put them off doing dangerous things.

Some psychologists have used an epistemological condition in order to define hallucination more precisely, the idea being that it is of hallucination's nature that you do not know you are doing it when you do it. An example: "Hallucinations are... appraised incorrectly as if from external sources."²⁰

But, again, this need not be true of all hallucinations. One may be perfectly aware that one is hallucinating, and thus 'appraise' the experience correctly.²¹ So hallucination is not necessarily delusional, and cannot be distinguished from imagination on such grounds. The most we can say is that one is always aware that an

²⁰Mardi J. Horowitz. "A Cognitive Model of Hallucinations". In: *American Journal of Psychiatry* 132.8 (1974), pp. 789–795, p. 789.

²¹David Smith draws a distinction between 'naïve' hallucinations, where the subject believes they are really seeing, and 'hip' hallucinations, where they know that they are not. See David Woodruff Smith. "Is This a Dagger I See before Me?" In: *Synthese* 54.1 (1983), pp. 95–114.

imagined object is not really there, while one is only sometimes aware of this when hallucinating. But this does not provide a sharp distinction between the two. We might also say that hallucination provides a different sort of justification for (false) beliefs than imagination; but, if true, this seems to be a product of phenomenal or structural differences, rather than something that can distinguish the experiences.

Thus far, I've considered what psychologists say about hallucination, and argued that their definitions do not distinguish it from imagination. Neither a behavioral nor an epistemological criterion can do the required work. So it is not of the essence of imagination, as opposed to other sensory experiences, that it affects behavior in certain ways, or that its objects are known to be absent by the subject.

I will now look for a criterion of distinction in the philosophical literature on imagination and perception. As I mentioned above, there are many such differences. It is often said that imagination, as opposed to perception, does not provide knowledge of its objects; can be indeterminate about their properties; demands constant attention to them if they are to persist; and has freedom of choice regarding their identity.²²

Now, I do agree that all four of these are things that are true of imagination, and not true of perception. But it also seems fairly clear that they are all true of hallucination. So they are things that hallucination shares with imagination, but not with perception; and so they are not grounds on which we can distinguish imagination from those other two experiences. Hallucinations do not provide knowledge of their putative objects, since there are no objects there to learn about. Hallucinated objects

²²These four points are mentioned in, *inter alia*, Jean-Paul Sartre. *The Imaginary*. Trans. by Jon Webber. Abingdon: Routledge, 1940/2004, part 1; Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Zettel*. 2nd ed. University of California Press, 2007, §621; Colin McGinn. *Mindsight*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, ch. 1.

can be imprecise, just as imagined ones can; one can, for example, hallucinate an alligator with some teeth, but no particular number of teeth. Both hallucinated and imagined objects depend on attention if they are to persist over time. And finally, whether you are hallucinating or imagining, the object of your experience is not constrained by what objects are present and available for perception; you can imagine things that are absent, non-existent, perhaps even impossible. And you can hallucinate them too. Further, there is a sense in which one is authoritative on the question of what one is imagining, whereas this is not the case with perceiving. The same is true of hallucinating. If I tell you that I am hallucinating my mother, it makes no sense to ask if I'm sure it's not her twin sister. So though these are all features of imagination, they are not distinctive features which mark it separate from all other sensory experiences.²³

Now, it is often said that the objects of imagination, unlike those of perception, may be summoned and dismissed by the subject, and are under her control²⁴. Hallucinations, typically, do not have these characteristics. So this volitional characteristic of imagination – as Wittgenstein puts it, its subjection to the will – may serve as a ground for sorting imagination from the other two experiences.

²³Johnston has raised this point about hallucination; see Mark Johnston. “The Obscure Object of Hallucination”. In: *Philosophical Studies* 120.1 (2004), pp. 113–183, pp. 131-134. The point in the text about the impossibility of misidentifying the objects of hallucination and imagination should not be overstated. It is possible to, for example, summon up an image of Red Rum and suppose that you are imagining Desert Orchid. The point is that if an image is ambiguous between two or more possible objects – if, say, you are imagining a black horse with a certain degree of vagueness – then you are authoritative concerning whether the black horse you are imagining is Black Bess or Black Beauty, and there is no sense in which you can be gainsaid on the matter. For discussion of misidentification and error in imagination, see Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, op. cit., pp. 164-169.

²⁴Sartre, *The Imaginary*, op. cit., p. 14; McGinn, *Mindsight*, op. cit., pp. 12-17.

It may not be immediately clear that an absolute distinction can be maintained on these grounds. Though images are often summoned and controlled, there is also the common experience of an image forcing itself upon one's consciousness. Switching sensory modalities briefly, an earworm – a melody persistently lodged in one's head – is one such example. Conversely, it's not clear that hallucinations are always beyond one's control. For example, some reports of aural hallucinations suggest that subjects involved in conversation with a set of voices are sometimes able to 'tell' those voices to be quiet and have them obey. More persuasively, perhaps, reports from anthropologists suggest strongly that the hallucinations undergone by certain tribes are at least to some extent under the control of their subjects. For example, Reichel-Dolmatoff describes the hallucinations undergone by Tukonoan Indians during ceremonial occasions involving the ingestion of the potent hallucinogenic *Banisteriopsis caapi*. According to him, the interpretation of these hallucinations is not a private matter. Rather, at a certain stage during a ceremony, shamans will ask individuals about their experiences, and suggest interpretations of what they are seeing. These interpretations, once accepted, guide the content of hallucinations during the latter stages of the ceremony.²⁵ So it is not true that hallucinations are always uncontrollable, and nor is it true that images always behave themselves according to one's will.

²⁵See Geraldo Reichel-Dolmatoff. *The Forest Within: The World-View of the Tukano Amazonian Indians*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Themis, 1996, Ch. VII, especially pp.162-166. I think it is worth wondering whether philosophers' concentration on hallucinations in a very restricted, technical sense, on states indistinguishable and often undistinguished from perception, has obscured much of interest in the phenomenology of hallucinations like those Reichel-Dolmatoff describes. But that is a topic for another occasion.

However, what does seem to be true is that, by and large, an element of volition or subjection to the will is mostly present in imagining, and mostly absent in hallucinating. The point is perhaps better expressed by considering how the two experiences develop over the course of an episode, rather than their origins. Though it might be the case that, say, an earworm forces itself on you at times, the course of the melody can still be altered at will, once it is playing through your head. And given that hallucinatory states are frequently delusional, it is not at all certain that a feeling of voluntary control in them is sufficient evidence that one actually is in control of what is going on. So I would argue that, even if it cannot provide an absolute distinction between the two, the matter of volition is a significant difference between hallucination and imagination.

This point about volition might be enough to get an inquiry into imagination off the ground. However, I actually think that it is, in a sense, unremarkable that imaginative experiences are subject to the will, and nor is subjection to the will something that manifests centrally in the phenomenology of sensory imagination. Let me explain both these points.

First, the unremarkability of subjection to the will. Though it is, of course, true that imaginative episodes are by and large under our control – what they are of, how they progress, how long they last – this is also true of thinking. So though it is true that imagination is unlike perception in this regard, it is hardly a distinctive mark of the imaginary. If anything, the remarkable fact here is that perception and hallucination are *not* subject to the will, as it seems most other mental states are.

Second, the manifestation of volition. Though it seems right to say that imagination is in the sense described volitional, it is at best an exaggeration to say that most, or even many episodes of imagination are accompanied by a sort of palpable willing of the experience into being. No doubt such a feeling can be part of imaginative experiences, or their genesis; but I submit that this is rare. Rather, the fact that imagination is volitional is usually only manifest in the experience indirectly, as a sort of awareness of the subjective, dependent nature of the experience's objects. But as I shall shortly explain, there are better and more direct ways to describe this awareness of dependence.

Now, I do not propose as a result of all this to ignore the volitional element of imagination. But because of the considerations just raised, I am not going to take this as a thing about imagination that needs explaining, because it is not an especially rare feature of mental states, and it is not a central phenomenological element in the experience. Rather, I intend to treat the fact that imagination is subject to the will as a basic fact about imagination, something to which I can appeal in explanation, but not something that demands explanation. I will have more to say (in the fourth chapter) about precisely how imagination is volitional, but this will be an elaboration of the notion, not an explanation of it.

So even though this volitional feature of imagination separates it from perception, and thus goes some way towards refuting the perceptual model, I will continue examining what might separate imagination and hallucination in order to derive my explananda. I am now going to discuss the features of imaginative appearances that distinguish them from perceptual and hallucinatory appearances.

Jaspers and McGinn both give ways to distinguish imagination from hallucination, rather than from perception, on the grounds of the appearances manifest in the experiences. Both posit a causal difference between hallucination and imagination, claim phenomenological differences also exist, and suggest an according taxonomy of visual experiences that sharply separates the experiences. According to Jaspers, hallucination is a malfunction of the visual system, belonging with “sense-phenomena”, while images and pseudo-hallucinations are among “the phenomena of imagery.”²⁶ Pseudo-hallucinations are especially rich products of the imagination. There is a gradation of intensity from rich pseudo-hallucination to impoverished “normal imagery”, but two phenomenal differences mark a sharp distinction between such imaginative phenomena and hallucination.²⁷ First, the two have different ‘spaces’. Hallucinations appear to present objects in “external objective space”, while pseudo-hallucinations appear in “inner subjective” space.²⁸ Second, the two have different characters. Hallucinations are “of concrete reality [and] have the character of objectivity”, while pseudo-hallucinations are “figurative [and] have a character of subjectivity.”²⁹

McGinn takes a similar line to Jaspers, insisting on a causal difference, endorsing the spatial distinction, and adding the consideration that, while hallucinations are

²⁶Karl Jaspers. *General Psychopathology*. Trans. by J. Hoenig and M.W. Hamilton. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1946/1963, p. 70.

²⁷Ibid., p. 70.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 69-70.

²⁹Ibid., p. 69.

occlusive of normal seeing, images are not.³⁰ This last point both distinguishes the experiences, and lends weight to the idea that they emerge from different systems.³¹

I want to set aside the causal difference, since it may well be true, but phenomenologically, it need not make any difference whether an experience is caused by one system or another. Most people accept that hallucination and perception have different causal etiologies, but this still leaves open the question of whether they have the same structure, and the possibility that they can have identical phenomenology. So identifying a causal difference is not sufficient to identify a phenomenological difference.

But McGinn suggests that the causal difference does result in a noticeable difference; hallucinations are occlusive of normal perception, while images are not. The idea is that, since hallucinations and perception arise from the same system, they can interfere with each other, while imagination, being a different system, cannot interfere in this way. Now, it does seem possible to hallucinate something translucent. It could even be possible to hallucinate something transparent; Sims reports a hallucinating subject who “claimed he could clearly see a sheet of glass half a meter in front of him.”³² But the point about occlusion is, I think, not quite this. It is more a sense of logical occlusion than of sensory occlusion. Suppose, for example, you are imagining somebody sitting in a chair across the room from you. This is not inconsistent with, at the same time, seeing someone else sitting in that chair. But if

³⁰McGinn, *Mindsight*, op. cit., pp. 15; 117; 116.

³¹The two differ in that McGinn thinks only pseudo-hallucinations can delude, while Jaspers thinks both hallucinations and pseudo-hallucinations can; see 113-120 Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, op. cit., p. 103; McGinn, *Mindsight*, op. cit.

³²Andrew Sims. *Symptoms in the Mind*. Third edition, London: Elsevier Science, 2003, p. 103.

you are hallucinating someone in the chair, you cannot at the same time see someone sitting there.

This seems quite right to me. But again, I am not going to adopt it as an explanandum, because it is not a difference in the appearances manifest in the experiences. That is, the fact that imaginative appearances can co-exist with perceptual or hallucinatory ones, or be superimposed on them, does not suggest that there is a difference in the nature of the appearances. It is not a phenomenological difference in the sense I am pursuing.

Jaspers' 'character' distinction is a more promising candidate, but needs some gloss and elaboration. Jaspers' idea is that, while hallucination always appears to present us with a mind-independent object, imagination's objects always appear mind-dependent. This seems the best gloss on the idea that hallucination is "objective" in character, while imagination is "subjective". It is this idea of the subjective appearance of imaginative objects that best captures the distinction between imaginative appearances on one hand, and hallucinatory and perceptual appearances on the other. There are two ways in which this subjectivity is manifest in imaginative experiences, and these two features are thus the things that make imaginative appearances quasi-perceptual. The first feature is the subjective spatiality of imaginative appearances; the second is what Sartre calls quasi-observation.

The distinction that both McGinn and Jaspers make concerning the space of imagined objects is that they are always presented in inner mental space, and hallucinations in outer objective space. This idea, I think, provides a very good way of distinguishing between the two sorts of experience, though care must be taken in

elaborating it. The basic idea is that imagined objects seem to occupy their own sort of space, an inner space that is not itself objective, independent of the subject. On the other hand, hallucinations always appear to be in the usual objective three-dimensional space in which we perceive things.

This seems right to me, but there are some difficulties to overcome, because it seems that at least some imagined objects can appear in external space. Take, for example, the experience of seeing faces in clouds. Most naturally, one would describe this as an imaginative experience, not hallucinatory.³³ But the imagined object is being imagined as externally located, out in the sky. Or consider the example I mentioned above, of imagining someone sitting in a chair that you can see. Again, it seems that what is being imagined is being imagined as located in quotidian, objective, three-dimensional space, not some sort of special inner subjective space.

These examples do not in fact present problems for the space distinction. To start with the experience of seeing a face in the clouds: it seems correct to say that one is, in such a case, imagining. But what one is imagining is not an object in the sense with which we're concerned. There is no sense in which one is externalizing an image of a face; rather, one is interpreting available sensible material as being an image of a face. The case is more naturally understood as an example of seeing-as, and though seeing-as may involve imagining somehow, it is not a case of sensorily imagining an absent object. So the case is not germane to the subject here.

The second case is one in which a sensorily imagined, absent object is imagined as occupying the usual three-dimensional space of objects; that is, it is not presented

³³Sartre, *The Imaginary*, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

in special subjective space. This is a more direct challenge to the space distinction. However, the case only presents a problem if you take literally the idea that the space of imagining is ‘inner’; that is, that it is only really possible to imagine things, as it were, with your eyes shut, with the objects floating in front of you. The thing to say is that the space in which imagined objects appear is subjective, in the sense that it is dependent on the subject, but that the subjective space which accommodates the imagined object can be imagined as coincident with normal space. The point is that the imagined object is not imagined as, or felt to be, literally occupying the same space as normal objects. Consider again the imaginary person in the real chair. It is possible to imagine the person gradually sinking into, through, and into the bottom of the chair. If it were really the case that the imagined object was appearing in real space, this would not be possible, since then it would be sharing the space with other objects through which it could not pass. So the space of images and objective space can be coincident, without being the same.

So one difference between imaginary and hallucinatory appearances is that imagined objects appear to be in their own, special space, which is subjective. I will elaborate on this idea in chapter four, but the characterization I have just given is enough to establish the difference I need. The second way in which imagined appearances seem subjective, where hallucinatory ones do not, is that they are quasi-observational.

‘Quasi-observation’ is Sartre’s term for the fact that imagined objects do not admit of uncertainty concerning aspects or features that are not directly phenomenologically salient. The notion is best explained by starting with perception. In perceptual experience, there is both doubt about the nature and features of occluded parts of

objects, and the potential for removing it. We can doubt (however faintly) that the occluded portions of an object are really there; we can doubt that an object is what it appears to be. Conversely, we can learn more about objects by investigating them perceptually, moving our viewpoint, and so on. The same goes for hallucinated objects, or more accurately, the same expectation of the possibility of learning inheres in the experience.

Now, as I said above, imagining shares with perceiving and hallucinating the quality of being perspectival. That is, imagined objects (or at least, visualized ones) are presented from a certain perspective, and seem to admit of perspectival variation: they can be turned around in the mind, their occluded portions can be brought into view and examined. But what imagination lacks is the possibility of genuine observation. This is because there is no doubt about what those occluded portions will be like: as Sartre puts it, there is “no risk, no waiting: a certainty.”³⁴ Conversely, there is no possibility of learning about objects, of discovering new things about them through perspectival variation; there is no more information to be gained about the object through this process of variation.

This feature of imagination has been discussed by several commentators, in not quite equivalent terms. McGinn partly puts the point in terms of whether imaginative appearances share with perceptual ones the property of being informative.³⁵ Casey discusses it in terms of whether imagined objects admit of anticipations in the same way as perceived ones.³⁶ And more generally, one could put the point in terms of any

³⁴Ibid., p. 10.

³⁵McGinn, *Mindsight*, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

³⁶Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, op. cit., pp. 164-168.

feature of perceptual experience which relates to expected or possible experience of occluded parts. The point is that imaginative experience does not have whatever you take this feature to be.

I think that all the commentators mentioned are basically in agreement on this point, and that the point is clear enough. The only thing to settle is how best to name and gloss it in the rest of the thesis. I am going to adopt Sartre's term 'quasi-observation' to name the feature, but I think the most apt gloss is one similar to Casey's idea of anticipation, and related to Husserlian ideas about the relation in which you stand to occluded portions of perceived objects. The way to capture the notion is to refer to the relation as expectation. You have, usually, certain reasonable expectations of how the occluded parts of perceived objects might appear; in Husserlian terms, you have certain empty intuitions about the occluded parts which may admit of fulfillment as those occluded parts come into view. Expectations admit of the possibility of disappointments. Your expectations of intuitive fulfillment may not, in fact, be right. In imagination, there are no expectations, and hence no possible disappointments: as Sartre puts it, there is just certainty. Quasi-observation is this phenomenon of imagination: it admits of perspectival variation, but does not admit of expectations and disappointments attendant on variation as perception does.³⁷

³⁷This is a very condensed summary of the interpretation of Husserl on perception and fulfillment given in Kristjan Laasik. "Fulfillment in Perception: A Critique of Alva Noë's Enactive View". Ph.D. thesis. University of Miami, 2011. URL: http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/oa_dissertations/689, ch.2. Laasik argues that the Husserlian theory he expounds constitutes an elaboration of and improvement on the enactive view of perception, most prominently advocated by Alva Noë, according to which one's relation to occluded parts of objects is bound up with (very roughly) 'sensorimotor knowhow' and the appreciation of various counterfactuals regarding what might happen if one were to move. This would be another way in which one could spell out the differences between perceptual and imaginative appearances – knowhow and counterfactuals would not be relevant or present in the same way – but I am convinced by Laasik's argument that, if you wish to adopt something along

Quasi-observation, I think, captures part of the subjective character of imaginative appearances. The fact that such appearances lack expectations is manifest in the experience as a felt dependency of the imagined object on the subject. It is quasi-observed, because the subject knows that it is imagined, and hence the nature of its occluded parts is dependent on their whim. So we now have two ways in which imagined appearances manifest as subjective. They do so because they appear in subjective space, and they do so insofar as they allow only quasi-observation of objects. These two notions together capture the sense in which the character of imagined objects' appearances is subjective, while that of perceived and hallucinated objects is objective.

Before summarizing where this leaves me with regard to the perceptual model, there is one final consideration against this character distinction in Jaspers' own work that I would like to address briefly. Jaspers acknowledges that we can find "actual 'transitions' in which pseudo-hallucination can *change over* into hallucination."³⁸ Assuming that these transitions are seamless from the subject's point of view, it's hard to maintain the idea that the experiences are phenomenally distinguished by their spaces or their characters. How can the transition be effected, if it is necessary for whatever appears to change radically its character and space? I think the best thing to say here is simply that Jaspers is wrong about the possibility of transitions from one to the other. He has identified a sharp distinction, whether or not he then goes on to undermine his own work.

these lines, you should be a wholesale Husserlian. See Alva Noë. *Action in Perception*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

³⁸Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, op. cit., 70; italics in original.

It should now be apparent why the simple perceptual model is not going to work. The idea that imagining is an etiolated form of perception founders because there are manifest differences between the appearances of objects in the two experiences. Imagination's objects are presented, and this makes it like perception; but they are presented in a fundamentally different way from those of perception. Not only that, they are presented in a fundamentally different way from the objects apparent in hallucination. So any model on which imagination is simply derivative of perception is not going to be adequate.

In first motivating and then undermining the perceptual model, I have arrived at the set of explananda that I will take as my target for the rest of the thesis. Put briefly, the thing to be explained is the quasi-perceptual nature of imaginative appearances. Imagining is like perceiving and hallucinating, in that it is object-directed, sensory, and presentational; but it is unlike perceiving and hallucinating, in that the objects it presents have a subjective character, manifested by quasi-observation, and the peculiar spatial qualities of imagined objects. There is also the fact that imagining is volitional, where the other two experiences are not, but I take this as a basic fact about the experience, rather than an explanandum.

This is enough to motivate the rest of the thesis. But before tying up this opening chapter, I want to consider and discount one more theory of imagining. Though the perceptual model is obviously unattractive, perhaps it is possible that imagination can be modeled on a different sort of visual experience: perceiving a picture. The reasons why not are instructive, in the following way: sophisticated versions of the pictorial model will recur throughout the thesis, and fail for the same reasons as the

simple version. So it will help to have a clear statement of what the model is, and why it does not work.

1.4 The pictorial model

The simple perceptual model has been discredited, but perhaps there is another visual experience that bears the same relations of similarity and difference to perceiving as imagining does. The experience of looking at a picture seems to be such a visual experience. Hence, the pictorial model of visualizing: to visualize something is to summon and examine a mental picture of it. The picture is a representation of the imagined object, and shares at least some of its qualities, for example its sensory ones.

The pictorial model might represent something of an improvement on the perceptual model, in that it explains at least some of the phenomenological features of imagination that perception does not share. For one thing, experience of pictured objects is experience of absent objects in which the experience has something like the sensory phenomenology associated with the real object. For another, pictures can be indeterminate: they can depict an object without depicting all or even many of its qualities. And the space which depicted objects occupy is certainly not the normal space of physical objects. Further, the pictorial model has some support from ordinary language. People talk about ‘picturing’ an object (though of course, you can also talk about ‘seeing with the mind’s eye’).

Nevertheless, like the perceptual model, the pictorial model has been rejected by most philosophers. There are several reasons why the pictorial model has very few adherents, at least in its crudest form.³⁹

First, seeing pictures has phenomenological features that are not apparent in imaginative appearances. The most damning is that it is distinctive of seeing pictures that you can attend to the medium of representation as well as to the represented object. You can have an awareness of the brush-strokes and of the depicted horse at the same time. This is not possible in imagination: one cannot attend to both the represented object and the vehicle of representation at the same time. This strongly suggests that, even if imagining involves representations, they are not pictorial representations in the usual sense of pictorial.

Second, pictures often require interpretation; one needs to make some judgment about what it is a picture of. It would seem that a pictorial view of imagination will have to have something like this incorporated into it: in examining the mental picture, one makes a judgment about what it is a picture of. This is because the same mental picture can represent two distinct objects, and since there is no artist painting these pictures whose intentions can establish their true object, it must be that this is down to interpretation. But if this is the case, the intentional states requiring explanation have multiplied. There is first an image, which is about some ambiguous object; and then there is a cognitive act directed towards that image, which is about a determinate object. So there would need to be an explanation of how a mental

³⁹Some or all of the criticisms of the pictorial model that I summarize below are more or less given in all of the following: Sartre, *The Imaginary*, op. cit., Part 1 ch.1; Tye, *The Imagery Debate*, op. cit., ch.1; Robert Hopkins. *Picture, Image and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, ch.7.1-3; McGinn, *Mindsight*, op. cit., ch.5.

image can be about an object, and how a separate act of judgment can also be an act of imagination. Not only is this profligate, it threatens to obliterate the sense in which to imagine is to have a unitary, intentional experience directed towards an object. It does not seem that there are two separate experiences manifest when you imagine.

Finally, the pictorial view faces a cluster of ontological worries. The view posits some extra entities in order to explain visualizing, mental pictures. Now, this is ontologically profligate, but that alone is no reason to discount a theory. The problem is that the entities posited are highly dubious in nature. To put it briefly, the idea that there can be mental items which really share properties with objects that they represent is at best suspicious. And this is to say nothing of the peculiarity that a crude pictorial view seems committed to also positing some mechanism of apprehension by which these internal pictures can be apprehended.

Now, none of these are decisive reasons to reject the pictorial view, because each of the objections might be avoided via careful elaboration. I will argue – mostly in chapter three – that a lot of relational views of imagination effectively constitute such elaborations. But it should be clear that the pictorial view, in its crudest form, will not be adequate as a theory of imagination.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Apart from the question of whether some philosophical models of imagination might be versions of the pictorial view, there are views in psychology that are explicitly pictorial. For example, see Stephen Kosslyn. *Image and the Brain*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996. I take McGinn's criticisms of Kosslyn to be decisive against his view; see McGinn, *Mindsight*, op. cit., ch.6.

1.5 Summary

I have done two things in this chapter. The most important is that I have identified what it is about imagination that I want to explain in the rest of the thesis. The central concern is the quasi-perceptual nature of imaginative experiences: the ways in which they are like and unlike perceptual experiences. Most of these ways have to do with phenomenological features of the appearances of objects manifest in the experiences. Imagination, like perception, presents objects in a sensory manner, with some sense of perspective, and it can present particular objects. However, the objects of imagination are and are felt to be dependent on the subject. This dependency manifests in the strange space of imagined objects, and the phenomenon of quasi-observation. It is also worth noting that imagination is subject to the will in ways that perception is not.

The second achievement of the chapter has been to discount three simple views of imagination: denialism, the simple perceptual model, and the crude pictorial model. Versions of the last two will recur throughout the thesis, but their most basic versions are clearly inadequate.

I am going to start my investigation of imagination in the next chapter by considering the most basic thing it shares with perception: its sensory, qualitative nature. It will turn out that thorough examination of just this feature can rule out some models of imagination. Subsequent chapters will consider the other features of imaginative experiences.

Chapter 2

The Sensory

The first thing to explain about sensory imagination is how it comes to be sensory at all; that is, how the experience can have sensory phenomenology, involving colors, sounds, and so on, in the absence of objects of perception instantiating such sensible properties. That imagining involves sensory phenomenology is, obviously, a fact about its phenomenology, and so one way to proceed might be to concentrate on the phenomenology – on what the experience is like – and examine what it could reveal about the nature of the experience.

However, the literature on perception and hallucination makes this route less than appealing. Though it is generally agreed that hallucination has this sensory phenomenal character, there is no general agreement about what exactly it means to have sensory phenomenology, nor about what can be concluded about the nature of hallucination from this feature. There is no reason to suppose that things would be any easier when it comes to imagination. It would be better, it seems, to take a different course. Fortunately, such a course is available.

Hume contends that a person can imagine a shade of blue he has never previously seen, and moreover, that “few but will be of opinion that he can.”⁴¹ I am not one of the few; I think that this is indeed possible. But I also think the contention has consequences that are surprising, and informative, concerning sensory imagination. In particular, it can be employed to argue that imagination involves a genuine relation to sensible properties, a structural feature which it shares with hallucination and perception.

Hume’s claim that we can imagine missing shades, I will argue, amounts to the claim that we can anchor *de re* reference to sensible properties by imagining them. This is a capacity of imagination, based on its sensory nature; so I am going to be arguing for a certain explanation of imagination’s qualitative phenomenology on the basis of uncontroversial capacities, not tendentious details of phenomenology. I will call this claim about imagination’s capacities the *de re* thesis, and will then argue that if it is so, M.G.F. Martin’s conception of imagination must be mistaken. According to Martin’s dependency thesis, imaginative experiences depend on perceptual experiences; but I will argue that this position renders the cases that support the *de re* thesis inexplicable.

Having derived this negative conclusion from the *de re* thesis, I turn to considering what positive work it can be put to. I note that the same ability to anchor *de re* reference to sensible properties has also been attributed to hallucinatory experiences,

⁴¹The missing shade of blue is discussed in Book 1, Part 1, Section 1 of the *Treatise*, and in an almost identical passage in Section 2 of the *Enquiry*. See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, op. cit., pp. 9-10; David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. by Tom L. Beauchamp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 98-99. I will give page references to the Norton and Norton edition of the *Treatise*. The quotation above is from idem, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, op. cit., p. 10.

and I argue that we should expect this shared capacity to have a common explanation. In other words, I argue that whatever explains the capacity of hallucination to ground *de re* reference will also explain the same capacity in imagination.

I then examine the question of what might explain this shared capacity. I adopt an argument of Mark Johnston's to the conclusion that the experiences under consideration involve genuine relations to sensible properties. I defend this argument for a relational conception of imagination and hallucination against counter-proposals in favor of a view on which imagining consists in a relation to quasi-propositional content. I thus conclude that imagination and hallucination share a relational structure that explains their capacity to ground *de re* reference to sensible properties.

This conclusion explains how it is that the two non-veridical experiences can have sensory phenomenology. What it does not do is tell us how imagining's phenomenology is different from that of hallucination. I will address this in the next two chapters, when I consider how the sensible properties of which we are aware in imagining come to be structured into appearances of objects.

2.1 Is imagination a source of *de re* reference?

Suppose you're married, but have never met your mother-in-law. In this situation, you are capable of thinking about your mother-in-law, but your thoughts about her refer to her indirectly. For example, they might refer to her because she satisfies some description ('the mother of my spouse').⁴² These thoughts are *de dicto*. Then

⁴²I needn't take a position here on how *de dicto* thoughts refer to their objects, so I will talk about descriptions for ease of exposition.

one day, you meet your mother-in-law. From that day on, you are able to entertain thoughts that refer to her directly; you can refer to the actual person, rather than to her via the description that she satisfies. These thoughts are *de re*. One can have *de dicto* thoughts about an object without knowing what object is picked out by a description, or indeed whether there is such an object; but one cannot have *de re* thoughts about something without having first being suitably acquainted with that very thing.⁴³

Those who accept that sensible properties exist at all should also accept that it is possible to have *de re* thoughts about them. Just as you can have thoughts that refer directly to a person or a particular, you can have thoughts that refer directly to specific sensible properties. Both you and I can have thoughts concerning the certain shade of black that is the color of my true love's hair; but if I have seen that shade and you never have, your thoughts can only be *de dicto*, while mine will be *de re*. This has consequences for our cognitive capacities. For example, I will be able to recognize other instances of black as being the same as that shade of black, or like it, or unlike it; you will not.

I take it for granted that perception can ground such *de re* reference to sensible properties. The question at hand in this section is whether sensory imagination can

⁴³This brief outline of the distinction elides a lot of discussion and dispute. Classic texts on the matter include Tyler Burge. "Belief *De Re*". In: *Journal Of Philosophy* 74 (1977), pp. 338–362; Gareth Evans. *The Varieties of Reference*. Ed. by John McDowell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982; Kent Bach. *Thought and Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; John McDowell. "De Re Senses". In: *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 214–227. For very recent discussion, see Tim Crane. "The Singularity of Singular Thought". In: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 85 (2011), pp. 21–43; Jody Azzouni. "Singular Thoughts (Objects-Directed Thoughts)". In: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 85 (2011), pp. 45–61.

also do so. I will call the claim that imagination can do this the *de re* thesis. The case for the thesis is based on intuitions concerning the capacities of imagination, much the same intuitions as those on which Hume relies when he discusses the missing shade of blue.

Hume considers this missing shade while searching for a counter-example to his position concerning the origin of ideas. His view is that all simple ideas – those that are not themselves composed of other ideas – are derived or copied from impressions, which are in turn caused by perceptual contact with the world.⁴⁴ But, having laid out this account, he then asks whether it might be possible for someone who has not seen a certain shade of blue to generate imaginatively a simple idea of that shade, given a gradated display of other shades which draws attention to its absence. He answers that it would be possible; that is, that one can obtain the simple idea of a sensible property by imagining that property, without needing to perceive it.⁴⁵

Hume's answer is based on nothing more than the strong intuition that it would be possible to imagine the missing shade of blue, an intuition that most commentators share. Subsequent discussions of Hume's work have mostly accepted the case as significant, remarked on his insouciance concerning this devastating counter-example to his theory, and suggested ways in which he might be extricated from the difficulty. Here, for example, is H.A. Prichard: "It is really effrontery on [Hume's] part and not mere naïveness to ignore an instance so dead against a fundamental doctrine of his

⁴⁴Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, op. cit., pp. 7-10.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 9-10.

own”.⁴⁶ Like most commentators, Prichard here simply accepts that the case under discussion is possible, and hence problematic.

The rather unsatisfactory reason Hume gives for ignoring the counter-example is that since it is such a “particular and singular” case, it can safely be set aside.⁴⁷ But John Morreall points out that, quite contrary to Hume’s assertion, there is a large array of such examples ready to hand. Consider, for example, a stack of color samples representing all the colors perceptible by humans. Now consider the same stack with every second sample removed, and ask whether each gap could be filled by the application of one’s imagination. If each can be, we now have a large number of examples just like Hume’s.⁴⁸

Morreall offers a few similar examples, but confines himself to the realm of qualities and properties that can be arranged in series of degrees, and simple ideas of them. But the range of examples can be expanded much further by considering what might be called complex sensible properties. Suppose you are quite familiar with the tastes of cardamom and cumin individually, but have never tried them together. In explaining to you a recipe, I describe a spice mix that combines the two. Plausibly, you would be able to imagine the taste of that spice mix, and thereby acquire the capacity to make *de re* reference to that particular taste.⁴⁹ So in addition to examples concerning

⁴⁶H.A. Prichard. *Knowledge and Perception*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950, p. 177.

⁴⁷Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴⁸John Morreall. “Hume’s Missing Shade of Blue”. In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 42.3 (1982), pp. 407–415, pp. 408-409. Morreall gives the number of perceptible colors as 10 000 000, and thus the number of derived examples as 5 000 000. I am not sure that the 1963 guide to basic color facts he cites is quite the last word on the subject, but whatever the precise figures, we are no doubt dealing with very large numbers.

⁴⁹Note that to do so, you would have to imagine the sensory experience of the taste, not just formulate thoughts about “that taste composed of these other two”; in that case, your thoughts would be *de dicto*.

simple sensible properties, there are also plenty of cases concerning sensible properties that can be decomposed into components.

Now, this sort of example moves the thesis beyond the original Humean point. Hume was only concerned with the imaginative generation of simple ideas; I have started talking also about complex ideas. Note, though, that the question with which I am concerned and the one that Hume poses differ in their breadth. What I am asking is whether imagining can expand the range of items available for *de re* thought. I can remain indifferent concerning the cognitive mechanisms involved in such thought. Hume, however, asks his question in the context of his own theories of perception and of thought. So where I ask whether a certain capacity can be acquired without perceptual experience, Hume asks whether a certain simple idea can be acquired without a corresponding impression. My question is more general. The possession of the idea of a color is one explanation of how you could have a capacity to entertain *de re* thoughts about that color; the having of an impression is one gloss on what it is to have a perceptual experience. I can answer our more general question affirmatively without subscribing to Hume's more particular views.

Nevertheless, the intuition that the cases discussed are plausible equally supports the *de re* thesis. Without employing the vocabulary of simple ideas, impressions, and the like, you can ask: do the examples raised demonstrate that one can expand the range of sensible properties about which one can have *de re* thoughts by using one's imagination? It is hard to see how you could accept that imagining the missing shade is possible, yet deny the *de re* thesis. If one can, imaginatively, conjure up the shade of blue that fills the gap, one can thereby acquire the capacity to have *de re* thoughts

about that very shade of blue, to recognize it in the future, to compare it to other shades, and so forth. If one can, imaginatively, mix cardamom and cumin, one can thereby acquire the capacity to have *de re* thoughts about that very taste.

So there is a weight of examples that support the *de re* thesis. But the examples I've given are all of a certain sort, and this suggests a limitation on the thesis. In none of the examples is the novel sensible property conjured up *ex nihilo*; in all cases, the property in question is essentially related to one already experienced. Either you imagine a property that stands in a sequence between two you have already experienced, or you combine some properties you have already experienced to derive a new one. This suggests a limitation to the *de re* thesis. If these cases are the only ones that can be used to support the thesis, imagination's capacity for original *de re* reference is limited by the range of prior perceptual experience.

However, the no-*ex-nihilo* restriction does not speak against the thesis under discussion. I am considering whether imagining can ground *de re* reference to sensible properties. To suppose that it can is not to suppose that it can do so *ex nihilo*. It is significant enough that you can expand your range of reference by imagining, even if you cannot create the range from scratch.⁵⁰

⁵⁰It is not even clear that this restriction is especially stringent. Regarding interpolation in a series of previously experienced shades, if the original blue case is possible, it should be also possible to derive imaginatively quite a large range of sensible properties from a meager set of initial examples. Suppose you have only ever perceived two shades of blue, one very dark, one very light. You could surely imagine a shade standing halfway between the two. Now, could you imagine a shade halfway between the imagined intermediate shade and one of the original two? It would seem so; and by a process of reiteration, a sufficiently sensitive and sedulous person could thereby acquire the ability to refer to a wide range of colors from a very narrow basis.

Similar considerations bear on cases of combination. Given a small set of initial flavor experiences, for example, one could plausibly construct ideas of a wide range of tastes from them, by imaginatively mixing them in different combinations and proportions. So again, though there is a limit on our imaginative capacities to conjure up ideas of sensible properties, this need not be a stringent limit; one can derive a wide range of *de re* reference from a narrow starting point.

So I have a refined version of the *de re* thesis to hand, supported by a range of examples. We are able to use our imaginations to acquire the capacity to make *de re* reference to a sensible property, where that sensible property is related in certain ways to one that we have previously experienced. We do so by combining those properties we have previously experienced, or by filling in a gap in a series of properties we have previously experienced.

I have examined and endorsed the intuitive support that the *de re* thesis enjoys, and thus I endorse the thesis: sensory imagining can expand the range of sensible properties to which we can make *de re* reference. Later, I will use this thesis to argue that sensory experiences share a common structure. First, though, I am going to use it to undermine the disjunctivist view that imagination does not have the same structure as other sensory experiences.

2.2 The *de re* thesis and the dependency thesis

I have proposed and motivated a thesis about imagination's capacities. We are now going to employ that thesis against M.G.F. Martin's position on the relation between perception and imagination. Martin holds that imaginative experiences are essentially derivative of perceptual experiences. This view of imagination is captured by what he calls the dependency thesis: "to imagine sensorily a φ is to imagine experiencing a φ ."⁵¹ Applied to the present context, this would mean that to imagine (e.g.) a color is to imagine experiencing a color. 'Experiencing' here should be taken to mean 'seeing'.

⁵¹M.G.F. Martin. "The Transparency of Experience". In: *Mind and Language* 4.4 (2002), pp. 376–425, p. 404.

Imagining is also an experience, of course, but the thesis would be nonsensical if we could read ‘experiencing’ as ‘imagining’. So to imagine, say, a new shade of blue is to imagine seeing that shade of blue. The contention of the present section is that this model of imagination can only accommodate the intuitions behind the *de re* thesis given an implausible account of the capacities gained by imagining missing shades and so on; and I conclude from this that the dependency thesis is deficient.

As Martin says, according to the dependency thesis, “imagining takes as its object another type of conscious state of mind, a sensory experience.”⁵² The idea is that when you imagine some thing, you do not stand in a relation to the thing you are imagining; rather, you stand in a relation to an experience that concerns the thing being imagined. So when you imagine a shade of blue, you stand in a relation to a visual experience of that shade; you does not stand in a relation to the shade itself.

This strongly suggests that the dependency thesis cannot be compatible with the *de re* thesis. Given that it’s a sensory experience to which you are related when you imagine, it would seem that if *de re* reference to anything is secured by imagining a color, it is *de re* reference to a visual experience of a color, rather than to the color itself.⁵³ For example, you would gain the ability to compare the imagined visual experience with subsequent actual visual experiences, rather than the ability to compare the imagined shade of blue with a subsequently seen shade. Imagination links us to experiences of sensible properties, not to sensible properties themselves; so we cannot secure *de re* reference to sensible properties by imagining them.

⁵²Ibid., p. 404.

⁵³I assume for the purposes of this discussion that one can make *de re* reference to experiences.

But the *de re* thesis is founded on firm intuitions; it seems that you really can imagine novel colors and so on. So the defender of the dependency thesis needs to either deny that intuition, or explain how it can be accommodated by the thesis. Given the intuition's strength, the latter option is preferable, and at first glance, not especially difficult. Cases like the missing shade of blue can be explained in terms of experience. When you imagine the missing shade, what you manage to do is to imagine a sensory experience of it, by extrapolating from perceptual experiences of similar shades. What you do not manage to do is imagine that shade. The object of the imaginative experience is the sensory experience; the sensible property in question is, as it were, a nested object of experience, not something with which you are directly acquainted in the imaginative experience. So the strength of the intuition is acknowledged, but the conclusion I have drawn is denied: you can seem to imagine novel shades, without thereby acquainting yourself with them.

But this explanation of the cases has unfortunate consequences for the views to which Martin cleaves. Suppose it is indeed the case that you can imagine a perceptual experience of a shade of blue without having previously perceived that shade, and suppose you have done so. Suppose that subsequently, you see something that is colored that very shade. Could you recognize the color of the object as being the same as the color that you imagined? One would surely like to say that you can. The question is, in virtue of what do you recognize it as the same color, according to the dependency thesis?

What you imagined, remember, was a perceptual experience of the color, not the color itself. What you gained in the imaginative experience was the capacity to

recognize and compare perceptual experiences of colors. So even if the subsequent perceptual experience involves the color itself (as Martin thinks it does), you do not recognize the colors as being the same based on a resemblance between the colors themselves.⁵⁴ Rather, when you subsequently recognize the color, you do so because there is a resemblance between features of the experiences. You recognize the object's color as the same as the imagined color by way of noticing a resemblance between two perceptual experiences, one imagined, one real.

But now an uncomfortable choice presents itself. If you are to notice a resemblance between two perceptual experiences, you must be able to notice that they share some properties; and in the case at hand, they need to be properties that can allow you to register a resemblance of color. What sort of properties might these be? One possible answer is that they are sensible properties. One might say, for example, that you are able to notice that the bluish element of the real perceptual experience is the same as the bluish element of the imagined one. But to say that experiences have sensible properties looks like a straightforward category mistake. So it cannot be that you can notice a resemblance by noting that the two experiences have the same sensible properties.

On the other hand, one might say that you can attend to properties of a perceptual experience that are not sensible properties, but are related somehow to such properties in a way that makes manifest qualitative resemblances among experiences. This line of explanation has two elements. First, it mandates something like a qualia view of

⁵⁴According to Martin, when we are perceiving things, “the properties which they [objects] can manifest to one when perceived, partly constitute one’s conscious experience, and hence determine the phenomenal character of one’s experience”. M.G.F. Martin. “The Reality of Appearances”. In: *Thought and Ontology*. Ed. by M. Sainsbury. Milan: Franco Angeli, 1997, pp. 81–105, p. 83

sensory experience. On such a view, experiences have intrinsic qualitative properties which are somehow related to sensible properties. Second, it amounts to maintaining that such qualia can be the objects of awareness: that you can dwell upon and refer to sensational properties of experiences. So if you take this line, you are denying that experiences are transparent. To say that experiences are transparent is to say that it is impossible to attend to or dwell upon subjective qualities of sensory experiences themselves; when you try, you see straight through the experiences to their objects. So if you think that you can attend to sensational qualities of an experience itself, you do not think that experiences are transparent.

Whether or not experiences are really transparent is not something to be discussed here.⁵⁵ What matters is that Martin certainly thinks it is. He uses the claim as a basis for rejecting sense-datum views, and for arguing that a disjunctivist conception of perceptual experience can account for it better than an ‘intentional’ view.⁵⁶ So Martin is committed to the idea that you cannot dwell on sensational properties of experiences.

So if the defender of dependency argues that the capacity to recognize resemblances among experiences is based on noticing resemblances among sensational properties of experiences, the thesis again runs aground. If it is the case that we can rec-

⁵⁵The original formulation of the transparency observation is generally credited to G.E. Moore; see G.E. Moore. “The Refutation of Idealism”. In: *Philosophical Studies*. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1922, pp. 23–44. Besides the paper by Martin under consideration here, useful discussion of the claim can be found in Tyler Burge. “Qualia and Intentional Content: Reply to Block”. In: *Reflections and Replies: Essays on the Philosophy of Tyler Burge*. Ed. by M. Hahn and B. Ramberg. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003; Charles Travis. “The Silence of the Senses”. In: *Mind* 113 (2004), pp. 57–94; Adam Pautz. “Intentionalism and Perceptual Presence”. In: *Philosophical Perspectives* 21.1 (2007), pp. 495–541.

⁵⁶See Martin, “The Transparency of Experience”, op. cit., especially pp. 376–392.

ognize an imagined perceptual experience as being concerned with the same color as a real one, perceptual experiences cannot be transparent. We must be able to attend to features of the imagined perceptual experience, and of the real one, in order to note a resemblance between them. But Martin thinks perceptual experiences are transparent; so he cannot hold that we can attend to features of an imagined perceptual experience; so we cannot recognize an imagined perceptual experience as resembling an actual one. But this leaves us without an explanation of how imagining seeing a color can allow us to later recognize that a perceptual experience involves the same color.⁵⁷

Now, as I mentioned earlier, it is open to the defender of the dependency thesis to deny the intuition that you really can imagine (experiences of) novel colors. Doing so would block the route to the argument I have just given; there would be no need to explain how imagining seeing a color can lead to later recognition of it. But given the strength of that intuition, it seems better to search for an alternative way of accommodating it.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Note that it would not be sufficient for the disjunctivist to say that we recognize the resemblance because we are capable of having higher-order thoughts about the relevant experiences, which thoughts do not involve features of the experiences, e.g. ‘this perceptual experience strikes me as being very much like that imaginative one’. It is taken as granted in the present argument that one can have such thoughts; The question is what one can notice about the two experiences that allows one to have the thought.

⁵⁸William Fish presents something like the necessary argument. He argue that hallucinations have no phenomenal character; they merely seem to. William Fish. *Perception, Hallucination, and Illusion*. Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 81-84, 93-95 I endorse Logue’s view that this is “counter-intuitive”, “eyebrow-raising”, and “unorthodox.” Logue argues that, among other problems with it, Fish’s position commits him to the view that introspection is utterly, systematically mistaken when it comes to the very simple question of whether or not hallucinatory experiences have phenomenal character, and that this theory of introspective error seems quite implausible. This point is similar to the one I am making about the difficulty of denying the intuitions behind the *de re* thesis. See Heather Logue. “Getting Acquainted with Nāive Realism: Critical Notice of Perception, Hallucination, and Illusion”. In: *Philosophical Books* 51.1 (2010), pp. 22–38, pp. 29, 31, 35-36.

The root of the problem with the dependency thesis is the suggestion that imagining is a matter of imagining a perceptual experience of a color, rather than a matter of imagining a color. If we drop the dependency thesis, and instead simply say that imagining a color is to stand in some relation to that very color, we can explain how we can recognize the real color as being the same as the imagined one. The two colors can be recognized as being the same, because the color is involved in the same way in both imagining and perceiving.⁵⁹

So what I am suggesting is that, rather than being derivative of or dependent on perception, sensory imagination shares a certain sort of structure with perception, a structure that explains how imagining has capacities concerning *de re* reference. To put it in the terms of the contemporary perception literature, I am proposing a conjunctive explanation of imagination's sensory phenomenology. Disjunctivists, like Martin, hold that perception and hallucination do not share a common structure. Conjunctivists hold that they do. What I am suggesting is that all three sensory experiences share at least a common structural element, if not a complete common structure, and that this structural element explains their common sensory nature and their shared *de re* capacities.⁶⁰

To make good on this suggestion, I need to first defend the claim that all three sorts of experience share that capacity, and then come up with and defend a solid

⁵⁹Via a rather different route, I have arrived at much the same complaint and counter-proposal as Paul Noordhof. He argues that the dependency thesis is inadequate as an explanation of imagination's phenomenology, rather than its capacities. See Paul Noordhof. "Imagining Objects and Imagining Experiences". In: *Mind and Language* 17.4 (2002), pp. 426–455.

⁶⁰If the structures of all three were completely common, there would be no good explanation of why imagination is qualitatively different from the other two. This is why I am arguing here for a specific common structural element to explain a specific feature common to the three, not a completely common structure.

proposal concerning the common structural element that explains it. To do this, I am going to concentrate on the capacities of the non-veridical experiences, imagination and hallucination. I have already argued for the *de re* thesis concerning imagination; I will shortly argue that the same thesis applies to hallucination, and then discuss an argument of Mark Johnston's which gives an explanation of how this is so. However, it is unfortunately necessary now to digress into the question of how the various conjunctive views of hallucination should be categorized, to ensure that subsequent discussion in this chapter and those that follow is as clear as possible. The next section comprises this digression; the section after returns to the main line of argument.

2.3 A taxonomy of conjunctive views

Conjunctivists about perception and hallucination think that the two experiences share at least some common structural elements, and often think that the two share just the same structure. The question of how to taxonomize conjunctive views is far from straightforward; certainly, there is no agreed way of doing so, and not even much agreement concerning what sort of view certain terms should pick out. As an example of this state of affairs, consider these four quotations, which illustrate the heterogeneous employment of the word 'intentional' in the literature:

Put this way, Stoljar's thesis sounds the same as Campbell's relational view of experience... [b]ut it turns out that Stoljar means something different, since the view he calls 'intentionalism' (which is in fact Tye's representationalism) holds this relational thesis too.⁶¹

This is the third context in which this term ['intentionalism'] has been employed in these pages. In Chapter 1 we considered certain absurdly

⁶¹Crane, "Is There a Perceptual Relation?", *op. cit.*, p. 16.

reductive intentionalist accounts of perception. And in Chapter 4, as well as in the last section of Chapter 2, we considered non-reductive accounts of perception that falsely suppose all sensation to be essentially intentional in character.⁶²

Next, the intentional view: All visual experience properties are at least partly identical with properties of the form *standing in relation R to content c involving external properties P, Q, R,...* Here by ‘external properties’ I mean properties that are not instantiated by visual experiences themselves. When I refer to “intentional contents” I mean both propositions that can be true or false and property complexes that can be instantiated or uninstantiated. Therefore, the so-called *property-complex* view of visual experience counts as a version of intentionalism in my sense (see...Johnston 2004...).⁶³

[B]oth sides in the Intentionalism versus Qualia debate are mistaken... Intentionalism has it that enjoying a visual experience is a *sui generis* propositional attitude – visually entertaining a content – a relation between subjects and propositional contents concerning various possible scenes. In this way, experience “says” things about one’s environment.⁶⁴

This is all, to say the least, confusing. Crane points out that Stoljar’s ‘intentionalism’ is the same as Tye’s representationalism, and further implies that neither is what he (Crane) would choose to term intentionalism. Smith, who labels his own view as intentionalism, cheerfully admits that he has already applied the same name to two different theories that he has previously discussed and rejected in the same book. Pautz defines ‘intentionalism’ in such a way that the view defended by Johnston in his 2004 paper falls under that definition; but in his 2004 paper, Johnston claims that the view he is advocating stands opposed to intentionalism, and that intentionalism is mistaken. It should be apparent that this is far from felicitous if the aim is to establish a clear view of the positions.

⁶²A.D. Smith. *The Problem of Perception*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002, 313 fn.8.

⁶³Adam Pautz. “Why Explain Visual Experience in Terms of Content?” In: *Perceiving the World*. Ed. by Bence Nanay. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 254–209, pp. 257–258.

⁶⁴Johnston, “The Obscure Object of Hallucination”, op. cit., 176–177, fn.s 2 and 4.

Now, I do think there is a fact of the matter about the sort of view ‘intentionalism’ should pick out, and I think there is a good historical argument that establishes this fact. However, giving that argument would mean writing at least a chapter, rather than a section, and I am keen to return to the main line of the present chapter before the reader loses interest.⁶⁵ So I am going to simply stipulate what I think the nomenclature should be, and stick to it for the rest of the thesis. I take it that the mess of quotations above sufficiently proves both the legitimacy and necessity of such a stipulative move.

I am going to define three categories of conjunctive view. They are relational views, intentional views, and content views. This categorization is heterodox, in that what I am going to call content views are often called both relational and intentional by their proponents. It will shortly be clear why. According to each of these types of views, perception, hallucination, and perhaps imagination share a certain structural feature. I will explain them all in terms of hallucination.

Relational views are views on which to hallucinate is to stand in a relation of awareness to some extraordinary item which instantiates or otherwise enjoys the sensible properties apparent in the experience. The relation in question is a genuine relation; that is, it requires the existence of its two relata. That the relation is called awareness is meant to mark the point that hallucinatory experiences have qualitative

⁶⁵For those who are interested, the argument turns on the meanings of ‘intentional’ and ‘content’, understood as terms of art introduced into analytic philosophy from the phenomenological tradition via G.E.M. Anscombe. My contention would be that a good grasp of those meanings mandates the uses I stipulate in the main text. The argument I have in mind is similar to Crane’s in Tim Crane. “Is Perception a Propositional Attitude?” In: *The Philosophical Quarterly* 59.236 (2009), pp. 452–469. The Anscombe paper in question is G.E.M. Anscombe. “The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature”. In: *Analytical Philosophy*. Ed. by R.J. Butler. Oxford: Blackwell, 1965, pp. 158–180

phenomenology because you are aware of properties of extraordinary objects. The items in question are extraordinary, in that they are not among the ordinary items that one normally thinks of as instantiating sensible properties. The relational theorist's central contention is that some such extraordinary item of awareness plays an irreducible role in perceptual and hallucinatory experience. On this understanding, sense-data theorists, sensible profile theorists, and certain sorts of Meinongian are relational theorists.⁶⁶

Intentional views are views on which to hallucinate is to be in a mental state with intrinsic intentional content which delivers a perception-like experience of an object. Since the intentional content is intrinsic to the experience, one cannot stand in a relation to it, since it is not something that exists separately from the experience. Nevertheless, it might be possible to dwell on elements of the intrinsic content; for example, as I explained above, you might think that there are intrinsic sensory qualities of experience which can be introspected upon. The intentional object of the experience is what the intentional content is directed towards. That there is an object of the experience does not imply that that object exists; it merely implies that the content has some direction. Perception similarly is said to involve intrinsic intentional content. On this understanding, the best examples of intentionalists are phenomenologists like Husserl, and his successors and interpreters. I discuss A.D. Smith's intentional view extensively in chapter four.

Content views occupy a space between the relational and intentional views, and as I said, have been called both. The core of the content view is that to hallucinate is to

⁶⁶For examples of relational views, see the next chapter.

hold a belief-like attitude towards something like a propositional content. This content is not something you are aware of, but represents an object of experience. The crucial differences between content views and intentional views are that the content theorist holds (a) that one stands in a relation to contents, (b) that contents are abstract objects separate from experiences, and (c) that contents are like propositions, in that they represent the world by encapsulating truth conditions or accuracy conditions on experiences. The crucial difference between content views and relational views is that the content theorist denies that the thing you are related to is an item of awareness, or that the relation you stand in to it is a relation of awareness. The content is something you see through to the object of experience. So the content theorist cleaves to a version of the transparency thesis. In the quotations above, Johnston is using ‘intentionalism’ to refer to content views. Pautz is using ‘intentionalism’ to refer to some content views and some relational views (like Johnston’s).⁶⁷

Each sort of conjunctive analysis admits of many variations on the basic theme. Content theorists may differ over, for example, what should be said about the natures of the attitude and of the content: whether, for example, the content is more like a structured Russellian proposition, or a Fregean sense. We will shortly discuss two such theories. Relational theorists may differ over should be said about the nature of

⁶⁷Some well-known modern content theorists are Pautz, Siegel, and Schellenberg. See Susanna Schellenberg. “Ontological Minimalism About Phenomenology”. In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 70.1 (2010), pp. 1–40; Pautz, “Why Explain Visual Experience in Terms of Content?”, op. cit.; Susannah Siegel. *The Contents of Visual Experience*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2011. Certain sorts of representationalists are content theorists by my lights; representationalism as held by Tye, for example, is just a version of content theory under a different name. See Michael Tye. *Consciousness, Color and Content*. Cambridge, M.A.: MIT Press, 2000. Other representationalists might be relational theorists. The crucial categorizing question is whether the putative representation is taken to be an item of awareness (in which case the theory is relational) or whether it is a thing you stand in a relation to but are not aware of (in which case it is a content view).

the objects you are aware of in hallucinatory experience – whether, for example, they are wholly or partially the same as the objects of perception. ⁶⁸

There is one further stipulation to make before I return to the main argument. This concerns the term ‘awareness’. The problem with this term is that, according to relational theorists, it names a certain sort of direct relationship in which you can stand to things, a genuine relation in which both the relata exist. But as intentional theorists use the term, one can be aware of intentional objects, which are not things you stand in a relation to, nor things whose properties you are directly in contact with. Since the intentionalists’ meaning can just as well be captured by saying that experiences are ‘of’ or ‘about’ their objects, rather than saying that you are aware of objects, I am going to award the term ‘aware’ to the relationalist: from here on, I will use it exclusively to name the special, direct relationship that (they think) we can stand in to objects in perceptual experience. I will even up the score at the start of the next chapter, where I will award the intentionalist use of the word ‘object’ and make the relationalist manage with ‘item’.

This concludes my stipulative taxonomical digression. In the next section, I am going to put these categories to work.

⁶⁸The sense-datum theory is an example of a relational theory on which the objects of perception and hallucination are the same; Howard Robinson is a modern defender. Mark Johnston’s version of direct realism is one on which the objects differ partially. See Howard Robinson. *Perception*. London: Routledge, 1994; Johnston, “The Obscure Object of Hallucination”, op. cit.

2.4 Against content views

The aim of this section is to discuss an argument of Mark Johnston's which moves from an observation about hallucination's capacities to a conclusion that hallucination must be relational. According to Johnston, hallucination can anchor *de re* reference to sensible properties, and it can do so because it involves an awareness relation to sensible properties. I agree with Johnston that hallucination has this capacity, just as I have argued imagination does. And so I think that an exact parallel of the argument can be given for imagination. However, I do not think the argument tells decisively in favor of relational views of imagination or perception. Nevertheless, it does tell decisively against content theory views of both. So by the end of this section, I will have narrowed the available options for a theory of imagination's structure. It is either relational, or intentional; the content view is not viable.

Johnston starts by making the uncontroversial point that hallucinations cannot be the original source of *de re* thoughts concerning particulars such as one's mother-in-law. This is because hallucinations cannot acquaint us with the objects in question, since there are no particulars of which one is actually aware when hallucinating.. He then contrasts that observation with this one: hallucinations can furnish the capacity to have *de re* thoughts concerning sensible properties. As he puts it, "I can secure my *first* singular reference to the quality of cherry red... by way of hallucinating a scene... [o]ne comes to know what certain qualities are like, and so one is able to place them in a quality-space with other qualities".⁶⁹ In support of this idea, Johnston

⁶⁹Idem, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination", *op. cit.*, pp. 130-131.

later adduces the example of super-saturated colors, which can only be experienced as after-images.⁷⁰ It seems, therefore, that one can only learn what they are like via experience which is at least non-veridical, if not positively hallucinatory. This observation forms the first premise of Johnston's argument. Note that it is very similar indeed to the *de re* thesis articulated above.

The argument's second premise is presented in two rhetorical questions. How, Johnston asks, can I learn what cherry red is like unless my experience involves awareness of that very shade? Doesn't the acquisition of the capacity to make *de re* reference necessarily involve awareness of the *res* in question?⁷¹ As we shall shortly see, some would say that it need not; but Johnston says it does, and so his conclusion follows. Hallucination involves awareness of sensible properties. It will be helpful to have a clear statement of this argument to hand:

H1. Hallucination can be the source of *de re* reference to sensible properties.

H2. To be the source of *de re* reference to sensible properties, hallucination must involve awareness of sensible properties.

HC. Hallucination involves awareness of sensible properties.

Johnston himself does not defend the argument at much length, presenting it briefly and relying on the intuitive plausibility of its premises. For him, it is a step towards a more complex direct realist account of hallucination, on which it involves awareness of sensory profiles of which sensible properties are parts. I will discuss

⁷⁰See *ibid.*, pp. 141-142. The source of Johnston's example is Leo M. Hurvich. *Color Vision*. MA: Sinauer Associates Inc., 1982, pp. 187-188.

⁷¹Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination", *op. cit.*, p. 131.

this position at length in the next chapter. However, one can be persuaded by the present argument without endorsing Johnston's entire account. And certainly, the two premises have strong intuitive force. The first premise is sustained by Johnston's examples. The second premise can be read as a specific application of a highly plausible general principle: in order for an experience to deliver the capacity to make *de re* reference to a sensible property, the experience must involve awareness of that property. So the argument is, at least *prima facie*, powerful.

The position to which this argument presents a direct challenge is content theory, on which it is denied that hallucination involves a direct and genuine relation of awareness between the subject and sensible properties; and it is further denied that hallucination (or any other experience) involves qualia of which you can be aware. Instead, advocates of this view argue that hallucination involves an attitude towards content, and that that attitude is not a relation of awareness; one is not aware of the content, or of anything else. Rather, the attitude is somewhat like belief, and the content is an entity somewhat like a proposition. So the content theorist cannot agree with the argument's conclusion. The challenge for the content theorist, then, is to find reasons to question one of the premises.⁷²

⁷²Some content theorists contend that content is object-involving, in some sense. For example, the Russellian versions of the content view discussed in Pautz, "Why Explain Visual Experience in Terms of Content?", *op. cit.*, pp. 255-260 and Siegel, *The Contents of Visual Experience*, *op. cit.*, p. 51 suggest that perceptual content is something like an object-involving structured proposition. If such content theorists were to argue that hallucinatory content involves sensible properties even if it does not involve particular objects, they would be unchallenged by the position we are going to advocate. But the usual point of the content theory is to explain how hallucinations can seem to involve objects and sensible properties without actually doing so. The two versions of content theory discussed in the text are attempts to do this.

Two content theorists have touched on this issue, and both attempt to meet the challenge by disputing the second premise. Adam Pautz addresses Johnston's argument directly, and argues that the capacity described in the first premise can be accounted for without any need for awareness of properties. Susanna Schellenberg does not directly address Johnston's argument, but she both accepts a version of the first premise, and provides a way to deny the second. I will examine these two in turn.

Pautz starts his explanation of how hallucinations can facilitate *de re* reference by endorsing this principle: "if *S* sensorily entertains the proposition that *x* is *F*, then *S* has *prima facie* justification for believing that *x* is *F*."⁷³ Here, *S* is a subject, *x* is a putative object of sensory experience, and *F* is some sensible property that *x* enjoys. He then argues that we can sensorily entertain two types of propositions: "first-order propositions that attribute properties to ordinary particulars and second-order propositions that attribute properties to those properties."⁷⁴ In cases of hallucination, someone could be sensorily entertaining false first-order propositions, like "there are two blue objects before me", but also sensorily entertaining true second order propositions concerning (for example) the hue values of those blues. From this, and his principle, Pautz argues that such a subject is justified in believing – or "is able to work out" – that one blue is lighter than the other, even though the experience has not acquainted them with either blue directly. He thus concludes that relationships to propositional contents can explain hallucination's capacity to furnish *de re*

⁷³Pautz, "Intentionalism and Perceptual Presence", *op. cit.*, p. 508.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 508.

knowledge of sensible properties. There is no need to follow Johnston in adducing a role for sensible properties themselves.

But Pautz's explanation is an explanation of the wrong thing. What he is explaining is hallucination's putative capacity to furnish us with *de re* knowledge about sensible properties that is 'original' in the sense that it is new information. This is not the concern of Johnston's argument. Rather, the concern is with knowledge that is original in the sense that it is the origin of the capacity to have *de re* thoughts about a particular sensible property. What Pautz offers is a way in which one might gain some knowledge about, say, a color. But what is needed is a way in which one may gain the capacity to make *de re* reference to the color, and so entertain *de re* thoughts about it. And this capacity is presupposed by what Pautz explains, namely the ability to add to one's stock of *de re* knowledge about the color. In fact, Pautz at first gets the concern right: as he puts it, it is "the capacity of hallucinatory experience to ground our ability to have *de re* knowledge about properties."⁷⁵ What is at issue is whether hallucination can provide the anchoring, or grounding, which ensures that subsequent thoughts involving a certain property are *de re* thoughts about that property. Gaining knowledge about a property does not ground this capacity; only knowledge of it can do this. Pautz's proposal does not explain how we can gain knowledge of a property, and so does not meet the challenge of Johnston's argument.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 505.

⁷⁶It is also worth mentioning that Pautz's argument is concerned with justification. But the true concern here is with knowledge. The issue is not about whether hallucination can justify beliefs about sensible properties, but rather whether it can provide knowledge of them – whether, for example, the subject in question can know that one blue is lighter than the other.

Schellenberg does not directly address Johnston's argument, but nevertheless is concerned with a similar question. Since she differs from Pautz over what exactly content is, it is instructive to examine what she might say about the argument under discussion. According to Pautz, content is something akin to a structured proposition. But on Schellenberg's view, the content of a hallucinatory experience consists in *de re* modes of presentation that are the tokens of concepts employed in the hallucination.⁷⁷ These modes of presentation are *de re* in virtue of the fact that the concepts from which they derive are types of *de re* modes of presentation which refer to items in the environment of the subject. Thus, when one hallucinates sensible properties, one's hallucination is about those properties because it involves modes of presentation derived from concepts that refer to actual instances of those properties; but the hallucination does not involve awareness of them.⁷⁸

Schellenberg suggests that, on her view, a person like the famous Mary, raised in a room without red, could have hallucinations of colors they had not previously experienced.⁷⁹ The explanation for how Mary could have such experiences rests on a thesis Schellenberg calls 'ungrounded minimalism', which is that "hallucinations of properties... are possible even if one has not had past perceptions of instances of the same property."⁸⁰ On the 'radical' version of this thesis, she says, hallucinating is

⁷⁷Note how the two positions are analogous to Russellian (Pautz) and Fregean (Schellenberg) positions regarding the propositional content of thoughts. Content theorists often explain their position via analogy or assimilation to proposition-involving thought. Both the authors under discussion here do so. For an extended discussion of the differences between and relative virtues of the two positions so far as perception goes, see David J. Chalmers. "Perception and the Fall from Eden". In: *Perceptual Experience*. Ed. by Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 49–125, pp.50-61.

⁷⁸Schellenberg, "Ontological Minimalism About Phenomenology", *op. cit.*, pp. 26-29.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 22, fn29.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 19.

sufficient to acquire the ability to refer to properties. On the ‘modest’ version, “the concepts employed are acquired through testimony or imagination.”⁸¹ Either version is enough to explain how Mary can hallucinate red, despite having never seen it. On the radical version, she acquires the *de re* concept of red exactly by hallucinating it; on the modest version, she does so by hearing (or reading) about it, or by imagining it. So Schellenberg accepts that people can acquire the ability to make *de re* reference to sensible properties without perceiving them.⁸²

Schellenberg holds that it is not a pressing concern for her to decide between the radical and modest versions of ungrounded minimalism. What she argues is that one or the other version of ungrounded minimalism holds locally. That is, for any given individual, it is the case that they can hallucinate or imagine properties they have not perceived. But this is only so because grounded minimalism holds globally. Grounded minimalism is the thesis that “perceptions of property-instances are necessary to acquire the concept” of that property.⁸³ This holds globally, in that “there cannot exist perceptual concepts of objects or property-instances that have

⁸¹Ibid., p. 20.

⁸²Two brief incidental comments on this position. First, what distinguishes the radical and modest views is whether or not hallucination on its own is sufficient to allow *de re* reference to, say, red. On the modest view, one needs to acquire the concept through testimony or imagination first. So Schellenberg seems to suppose that we can imagine colors even if we cannot hallucinate them. Presumably, then, she does not have sensory imagination in mind here, otherwise the position is quite strange.

Second, it is not obvious to me that the distinction between the two views can be sustained. The modest version says that one can acquire the *de re* concept of a color through testimony or imagination. I do not understand how testimony can be sufficient for this. To acquire such a capacity, one needs the sort of acquaintance with properties delivered by qualitative sensory experience. Now, imagining is such a sensory experience, so perhaps the distinction can be saved. However, it is not clear why allowing imagination can do this while arguing that hallucination can not is a ‘modest’ view. If anything, the two routes to *de re* reference are equally radical. So I am not convinced that there is a meaningful distinction between the two versions of ungrounded minimalism.

⁸³Schellenberg, “Ontological Minimalism About Phenomenology”, op. cit., p. 19.

not been perceived by someone, somewhere.”⁸⁴ So hallucination can, in an individual, provide *de re* reference to a sensible property, provided that someone somewhere has previously perceived that property, thus ensuring there is a perceptual concept that the hallucinator can acquire by hallucinating the sensible property.

Now, it should be said again that Schellenberg is not at all concerned with taking on Johnston’s argument, and so it is not fair to charge her with failing to meet it directly. Nevertheless, as a content theorist, she cannot agree with the conclusion of his argument; and since she is a different sort of content theorist to Pautz, it is worth seeing whether her version of the view has the resources to meet the challenge. As she accepts a version of the first premise of the hallucination argument (H1), it is the second premise that is once more at issue. What is needed is a way in which one can acquire the capacity for *de re* reference to a sensible property by hallucinating it, without the hallucination involving awareness of the property. Schellenberg’s position has the resources to explain this, because it implies that one does not need oneself to be aware of a property in order to first encounter it in hallucination; all that is required is that someone, somewhere, has seen it. If someone has seen it, there is a concept of it, and when we hallucinate it, we acquire the relevant perceptual concept; we do not actually experience the property.

But this is problematic, because what is implied is that one can only hallucinate sensible properties that someone else has previously experienced in veridical perceptual experience. First, it is not clear why the mere fact that someone (anyone) has experienced a property is sufficient to allow someone else to hallucinate it. One can

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 21.

hallucinate sensible properties without being aware that someone else has previously experienced them, so why should it make a difference to your possible experience whether they have or have not? Second, it's unclear why it's necessary for someone to have perceived veridically a sensible property in order for a perceptual concept of that property to exist, if a perceptual concept is something like a concept of what, qualitatively, the property is like to experience. Consider again the example of super-saturated colors. Such colors cannot be perceived veridically; that is, they are only ever experienced as after-images, not as properties of external objects. So either there is no such thing as a perceptual concept of such colors, or one can have a perceptual concept of something that has never been veridically perceived. But we can have perceptual concepts of super-saturated colors; we can have knowledge of them, know what they are like to experience, and recognize them on different occasions. So it must be the case that one can have perceptual concepts of sensible properties that nobody has ever veridically perceived.

And, most importantly, Schellenberg's explanation does not really account for how hallucination delivers *de re* knowledge without involving awareness. It can, perhaps, be granted that one can acquire a *de re* concept of some things without perceiving them. This may be because the things in question are such that perception of them is impossible, but acquaintance with and direct *de re* reference to them is possible. Numbers, for example, might be such items. However, sensible properties are not like numbers. What is essential to sensible properties – what one needs to grasp in order to understand what they are – is precisely what it is like to experience them. And one cannot fully understand what it is like to experience a sensible property via

testimony. The most one can glean from testimony is, at it were, a set of instructions for producing the relevant experience, perhaps by analogy to previous experiences. But one cannot become acquainted with a property via testimony. Only experience of the property itself allows acquaintance.⁸⁵

To round off this discussion, I would like to note that any content theorist who accepts the first premise of the hallucination argument puts themselves in an awkward dialectical position. The content theorist accepts that the phenomenology shared by perception and hallucination suggests they share a structure, and advances a theory of that structure. But as I have shown, the content theorist who accepts that perception and hallucination share the capacity to furnish *de re* thought tends then to argue that hallucination, at least, does so without awareness of properties figuring. This is troublesome, because the following choice arises. Either the shared capacity is to be explained by a shared structure, in which case the content theorist has to argue that perception also does not involve awareness of properties at all; or the capacity in question is not dependent on a feature of a shared structure, in which case the content theorist needs to explain why a shared structure is necessary to explain shared phenomenology, but not necessary to explain shared capacities. No doubt there is much that could be said in favor of either option, but the situation is at best delicate.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Note that this argument works even if there is a distinction between knowledge of what a property is like, and the capacity to make *de re* reference to it, so long as the two are necessarily connected; that is, so long as gaining the capacity is dependent upon gaining the knowledge.

⁸⁶it may be said that the first option is obviously the one for the content theorist to take, because their position is precisely that perception does not consist in awareness of properties. But this is not quite right. Though the content theorist indeed holds that perception doesn't consist in awareness of sensible properties, they generally concede that it at least involves sensible properties in some role. For instance, Siegel argues that the most basic commitment of any content theorist is to the thesis that visual perceptual experiences have contents that can be assessed for accuracy, and that

I have explained Johnston's argument from the fact that hallucination can be a source of *de re* reference to properties to the conclusion that hallucination must involve awareness of properties. I have also shown that this relational explanation of hallucination's capacity cannot be bettered by content-theoretic explanations. So I conclude that hallucination has the capacity to allow *de re* reference to sensible properties, and involves awareness of sensible properties.

Given this conclusion, and my earlier arguments in favor of the *de re* thesis concerning imagination, an interesting result follows. The first premise of the hallucination argument stated that hallucination can be a source of *de re* reference to sensible properties. The second premise, as I commented earlier, is a specific application of a plausible general principle: to be a source of *de re* reference to sensible properties, an experience must involve awareness of those properties. Above, I argued for an exact equivalent of the first premise with respect to imagination; and there is no good reason to restrict the application of the principle behind the second premise to hallucination and perception. This being so, the same conclusion follows about imagination as about hallucination: imagination involves an awareness relation to sensible properties.

This conclusion explains how imagination enjoys the capacity encapsulated by the *de re* thesis. But it also does more than that. The argument has it that that hallucination and imagination share a capacity, and that only a relational structure shared by both can explain that capacity. If we add to this the thought that perception also

they have such contents in virtue of the fact that perception presents sensible properties to subjects. So the first option is not so appealing as it might appear; the content theorist would, it seems, have to argue that perception does not involve sensible properties at all, and this is not a promising line of thought. See Siegel, *The Contents of Visual Experience*, op. cit., ch.2.

has the same capacity to ground *de re* reference, we have at hand a putative conjunctivist account of the sensory nature of all three experiences. Perception, imagination, and hallucination share the capacity in question, because they involve a relation to sensible properties.

What is especially striking here is that, although the argument has been premised on an examination of the shared capacities of the experiences, the explanation also promises to account for the fact that all three experiences have similar, sensory phenomenology. After all, it would be bizarre to suppose that the capacity depends on a relation to sensible properties, but the sensory phenomenology depends on an attitude taken towards content. Since I have been concentrating on the shared capacities of the experience, I have given an argument for a position that explains the shared phenomenology without relying on an account of what that phenomenology is.

This is useful, because as I mentioned at the start of this chapter, conjunctivists of all kinds tend to take as their starting point the argument from hallucination. That is, they observe that hallucinating and perceiving can be subjectively indistinguishable, and then conclude from this that the two share some structure. They then try to discern what that structure might be, based on observations of what the shared phenomenology amounts to. The trouble is that what the shared phenomenology amounts to is far from clear, and so arguments based on the phenomenology of the experiences tend to be inconclusive.⁸⁷

⁸⁷It's apparent that the argument from hallucination doesn't conclusively solve the question of what the shared structure is from the wealth of literature discussing the argument. As good a place to start as any is the debate between Ayer and (post-mortem) Austin on the subject; see Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge*, op. cit.; Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, op. cit.; A.J. Ayer. *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*. London: Macmillan, 1963; A.J. Ayer. "Has Austin Refuted the Sense-Datum Theory?" In: *Synthese* 17 (1967), pp. 117–140. A.D. Smith gives an excellent account of the

But the question of what capacities they share is rather less controversial than the question of what their shared phenomenology amounts to. As I have shown, content theorists and relational theorists alike accept that hallucination can be a source of *de re* reference, and the intuitions that suggest imagination has a similar capacity are strong. So the present argument, based on capacities, has a more stable starting point than arguments that depend on particular, possibly tendentious, descriptions of phenomenology. Nevertheless, my explanation promises to account for the similarities of phenomenology. If the shared capacity to expand the range of *de re* reference strongly suggests a relational model of sensory experience, we have good reason to suppose that a relational model is also what will explain the shared phenomenology of the experiences.

However, a note of caution is necessary at this point. Johnston thinks that his argument vindicates a relational account of how sensible properties are involved in hallucination. But in fact, it is not clear that the argument rules out qualia views of sensory experience, unless it is supplemented by the transparency thesis. On a qualia view, remember, sensory experiences have intrinsic sensory qualities which explain their qualitative phenomenology. One way to accommodate Johnston's argument within a qualia view would be to say that hallucination involves awareness of those intrinsic sensory qualities. But, as became apparent above, this route is only open to those willing to deny the transparency thesis. Again, according to this thesis, it is impossible to dwell on intrinsic qualities of experiences. If the transparency thesis

argument, its cousin the argument from illusion, and various attempts to challenge or accommodate them both in Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit. An argument to the effect that arguments from hallucination and illusion can never decisively prove *anything* is given in Jonathan Dancy. "Arguments from Illusion". In: *Philosophical Quarterly* 45.181 (1995), pp. 421–438.

is adopted as an auxiliary, Johnston's argument challenges the qualia explanation of the *de re* thesis. But if the thesis is not adopted, the qualia view stands just as much a chance of accommodating the argument as Johnston's preferred relational account. If this is so, intentional views, which typically incorporate an endorsement of qualia, are not ruled out by the argument. I will consider in the next section if there is anything in the sensory nature of the experiences which would force a choice between these two positions.

For present purposes, I can summarize the section's argument as follows. If it is the case that hallucination and imagination and perception can all alike be a source of *de re* reference to sensible properties, it seems that they will be involved with sensible properties in the same way. Content theory cannot accommodate this observation about the capacities of hallucination, and so content theories are ruled out as an explanation of hallucination and imagination. Johnston argues that all three experiences involve awareness of sensible properties, and that this explains their shared capacities. Certainly, this is a viable explanation; but the considerations thus far do not rule out an alternative explanation founded on qualia. I will now consider whether there are good grounds for choosing between an awareness view and a qualia view.

2.5 Sensory and sensible

The issue now is this. It seems clear that imagination (and hallucination) must involve some sort of awareness of some sort of qualitative property (I will phrase things in

terms of imagination from this point onwards). Johnston's preferred explanation is that imagination involves a relation to sensible properties. This would seem to lead to an overall relational view of the experiences. An alternative explanation is that it involves intrinsic sensory or sensational qualities, qualia, of which you can be aware. This would seem to suggest an intentional view of the experiences. This alternative explanation is only available if you deny the transparency thesis, at least so far as hallucination and imagination go, but this is not implausible.

I am going to make the case for a relational view of the structure of experience of sensible properties. To do so, I am going to draw on two resources. The first is the battery of arguments in the literature to the effect that qualia cannot be direct objects of awareness. This militates against their use in an explanation of the *de re* thesis. The second is a sketch of a theory of sensible properties that makes sense of the idea that we can be aware of such things even when they are not instantiated.

The point about qualia is this. If they are to figure in an explanation of the *de re* thesis, it must be the case that they can be objects of awareness. We must be able to stand in an appropriate relation to them. But according to some qualia theorists *and* to some qualia denialists, we can not. If either of these groups is right, qualia cannot explain the *de re* thesis.

Let me take the qualia denialists first. One argument given by several is, essentially, an application of transparency intuitions to visual experience. The argument is just that, if you try to introspect on intrinsic sensory elements of visual experiences, you will necessarily fail. It is simply not possible to do so. When you do so, you see 'through' the experiences to something else: to an appearance, or an actual object,

or a representation. The details here are not important. The crucial point is that several philosophers take it that you cannot be directly aware of qualia, and that this proves that they do not exist.⁸⁸

The converse point is that several philosophers who think that qualia exist deny that they can be direct objects of awareness (which means, of course, that their arguments for qualia cannot rely on introspective evidence of their existence). The point is put quite clearly by Smith. In his opinion, “sensory qualities, or qualia, are inherent features of sense-experiences themselves.”⁸⁹ We should think of them as “intrinsically characterizing psychological states, or the flow of experience as such.”⁹⁰ Sensations, “though ‘in’ consciousness, are not objects for consciousness.”⁹¹ They are not themselves items of awareness; we are not aware of sensible qualities in the way we are aware of objects; they do not present themselves to us in sense experience. “Neither [the] quale, nor the sensory experience of which it is a characteristic, is... the object of awareness.”⁹² So Smith thinks that there are qualia, or sensations, and that they are what makes sensory experience sensory, but we cannot be aware of them as objects of experience.⁹³

Not every believer in qualia thinks that they are subject to transparency; some think that you can in fact be directly aware of them. So such people think that the

⁸⁸This argument, or something like it, is given by, among others, Gilbert Harman. “The Intrinsic Quality of Experience”. In: *Philosophical Perspectives* 4 (1990), pp. 31–52; Fred Dretske. *Naturalizing the Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995; Tye, *The Imagery Debate*, op. cit., p. 160; idem, *Consciousness, Color and Content*, op. cit., pp. 50-52.

⁸⁹Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 61.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 65.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 187.

⁹²Ibid., p. 237.

⁹³Similar views are expressed in Sidney Shoemaker. “Qualities and Qualia : What’s in the Mind”. In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 50.Supplement (1990), pp. 109–131.

anti-qualia argument is wrong, and the conception of qualia just given is wrong as well.⁹⁴ I do not want to get into the debate on the nature of qualia. The point I want to draw from this brief discussion is that it is not at all apparent that qualia can be introspected on, and that even strong advocates of qualia often think they cannot be. This being so, I think that it would be at best rash to take the sensory nature of imagination to be due to qualia, given that that sensory nature dictates that whatever causes it must be apt to be an item of awareness.

I have just made the negative point that qualia should not be used to explain the *de re* thesis. This seems to leave me with a relational account of sensible properties. But there is a final difficulty to be overcome, because without some additional theoretical support, it is not clear that a relational account can do the job either. This is because it is normally supposed that sensible properties are instantiated by physical items (or, at least, partially instantiated by them; see below). And given this, a relational account of non-veridical sensory experience will have to incorporate at least one of two counter-intuitive claims. Either sensible properties can be instantiated by extraordinary objects of awareness, or sensible properties are things we can be aware of even when they are not instantiated. The sense-data view of sensory experience, which I will consider in the next chapter, is plausibly interpreted as cleaving to the former option: sense-data instantiate sensible properties. Johnston cleaves to the latter option: he thinks we can be aware of sensible properties which are not instantiated. This is the position that I will endorse. Since it is somewhat unintuitive, I will

⁹⁴See, for example, Christopher Peacocke. *Sense and Content*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

explain how it could be accommodated within a credible theory of sensible properties, concentrating on a single sort of sensible property: colors.

The most common question about color properties is whether they are primary or secondary qualities. Some of the difficulty of this question is because the distinction between the two is itself debatable, but a rough characterization is enough for my purposes. Primary qualities are those that are objective features of the world. They are properties of objects like mass, shape, and size. Secondary qualities are those that are in some sense dependent on minds, or on a relation between objects and minds, or consist in powers of objects to cause sensations or such like in perceivers.

This question about the nature of colors arises because there is an apparent tension between how colors appear, and how various empirical and intuitive results suggest colors really are. In their appearance, color properties share with perceptual experience the quality of seeming to give the subject direct, unmediated access to some objective feature of the world; things look colored. Further, color experience purports to reveal what colors are like: they look like monadic properties of surfaces. The simplest explanation of these features of color experience would be that we do have unmediated access to colors, that they are objective monadic properties of objects, and that experience accurately reflects this. That is to say, color experience presents us with properties that look primary, and the simplest explanation would be that they are indeed primary.⁹⁵

⁹⁵For reasons that will shortly become clear, there are very few philosophers who advocate a primary quality account of color. The best-known is Frank Jackson; see Frank Jackson and Robert Pargetter. "An Objectivist's Guide to Subjectivism About Colour". In: *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 41 (1987), pp. 127–141; Frank Jackson. "The Primary Quality View of Color". In: *Metaphysics, Philosophical Perspectives 10*. Ed. by James Tomberlin. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996, pp. 199–219; Frank Jackson. "Colour For Representationalists". In: *Erkenntnis* 66 (2007), pp. 169–185. In

However, there is a battery of philosophical arguments and empirical results that strongly suggests this view is wrong. Without going into detail, the nub of the philosophical thought is that, because colors can appear differently under different circumstances (of lighting, observers' physiology, and so on), they cannot be objective features of objects; their appearance is (in some sense) subjective. The outline of the empirical insight is that, while we can identify properties of objects that are their shape, mass and so on, the most we can identify in objects so far as colors go are dispositional properties to reflect certain wavelengths of light, which will then be seen as colors by suitably equipped observers. The upshot of all this is a secondary quality account of colors; they are identified as properties instantiated by a relation between an object's disposition to appear colored, and a suitable observer's seeing that object.⁹⁶

the last of these, Jackson argues for a stronger 'objectivist' account than in the previous two, on the grounds that anyone committed to representationalism about perception is also committed to a strong primary quality account of color, and representationalism is true. MacPherson also argues that representationalists are committed to a primary quality account, but that primary quality accounts are mistaken, and thus that representationalism is false. See Fiona MacPherson. "Novel Colours and the Content of Experience". In: *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 84.1 (2003), pp. 43–66. Setting aside the differing conclusions they draw, if Jackson and MacPherson are right that representationalists are committed to a primary quality account of color, it is a peculiar situation: the dominant positions in the philosophy of color and the philosophy of perception are inconsistent. But that is a topic for another occasion.

⁹⁶Secondary quality accounts of color have been around since ancient times. Locke is generally credited with bringing the issue of primary and secondary qualities to the attention of philosophers. In its specific application to color, the secondary quality or dispositional account has many modern supporters (and versions). The revival of interest in such accounts can be attributed to Colin McGinn. *The Subjective View: Secondary Qualities and Indexical Thoughts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983. Also prominent are Paul A. Boghossian and J. David Velleman. "Color as a Secondary Quality". In: *Mind* 98.389 (1989), pp. 81–103; Mark Johnston. "How to Speak of the Colors". In: *Philosophical Studies* 68.3 (1992), pp. 221–263. Jonathan Cohen's book contains a comprehensive argument for the superiority of secondary quality accounts in general, and a further argument for his particular version of a secondary quality account, 'role functionalism'. Rather confusingly in the present context, he refers to secondary quality accounts as 'relational' accounts, because according to them, colors are constituted by relations. See Jonathan Cohen. *The Red and the Real*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

There are two problems with secondary quality accounts of color. The first is that, under them, color experience appears to be systematically erroneous with regard to the nature of color. We experience color as an objective property of objects, not as a disposition or power. But if the secondary quality account is correct, our experience is just mistaken on this point.⁹⁷ Second, it turns out that objects are not really colored, since colors are only instantiated when perceived. Objects enjoy dispositions to appear colored, but not colors. But there remains a strong intuitive pull to the idea that objects are colored even if nobody is currently looking at them.

Ascribing wholesale error to color perception seems an unhappy conclusion, so a way to resolve the tension between the apparently relational nature of color properties and their monadic appearance is desirable. To this end, McGinn argues that “colors are simple monadic primitive properties whose instantiation supervenes on complex relational dispositions to appear to perceivers in such-and-such ways.”⁹⁸ So while the instantiation of color properties depends on dispositions of particulars, the properties themselves are not relational. A given surface has as many monadic color properties as it has dispositions to appear a certain color relative to different visual systems. But relative to our (normal, unmodified, uninverted) human visual systems, a surface has just one monadic color property. This is all the relativity that is required to explain spectrum inversions, Martian perception of red-to-us as green, and suchlike.

⁹⁷One can of course argue that color experience *does* represent colors as dispositions, but this is a fraught course to take. Boghossian and Velleman argue that it’s impossible to describe color experience accurately with reference only to appearances of dispositions; see Boghossian and Velleman, “Color as a Secondary Quality”, *op. cit.*

⁹⁸Colin McGinn. “The Appearance Of Colour”. In: *Knowledge and Reality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, pp. 314–325, p. 314. McGinn articulates this view first in an earlier paper, but the one from which I am quoting perhaps provides a pithier summary of it. See Colin McGinn. “Another Look at Color”. In: *The Journal of Philosophy* 93.11 (1996), pp. 537–553.

This coheres well with Johnston's view of color. In *How to Speak of the Colors*, he argues that color experience purports to be revelatory of the nature of colors. Taken as the claim that such experience is revelatory of the deep physical structures that result in color experience, this air of revelation is erroneous, since colors are instantiated by dispositional properties of particulars but are presented in experience as monadic properties. However, taken as the claim that color experience is revelatory of the monadic nature of color properties relative to us, the claim is correct; colors are monadic properties of particulars, and this is what color experience presents them as.⁹⁹

McGinn goes on to explain that on this theory, visual experiences consist in “a relation between a conscious subject and a cluster of properties, which may or may not be instantiated.”¹⁰⁰ Non-veridical visual experience of colors is just experience of uninstantiated sensible properties: “The properties themselves are ‘before the mind’, and they are objective non-mental entities, but no object has them.”¹⁰¹ So on McGinn's view of color, it is possible to be aware of colors even if they are not instantiated.

Now, I have not argued for this position on color, and I do not intend to do so.¹⁰²

The sole point of explaining it has been to make clear that there is a credible view

⁹⁹Johnston, “How to Speak of the Colors”, op. cit.

¹⁰⁰McGinn, “The Appearance Of Colour”, op. cit., p. 319. McGinn also sketches the same theory in Colin McGinn. *Mental Content*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, pp. 114-117, and Dretske proposes something similar in Dretske, *Naturalizing the Mind*, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

¹⁰¹McGinn, “The Appearance Of Colour”, op. cit., p. 320.

¹⁰²In part, because the plethora of views on color present a thicket of vocabulary and taxonomical confusion, just as the many views on perception do. Cohen identifies five separate positions under the ‘standard’ taxonomy, but argues that in fact a better taxonomy includes nine distinct views, categorized differently than under the standard version. See Cohen, *The Red and the Real*, op. cit., ch.1.

of sensible properties on which it is possible to stand in a relation of awareness to uninstantiated sensible properties. The view retains its somewhat counterintuitive feel, but it is nevertheless viable. This means that Johnston's position, according to which hallucinating and imagining involve awareness of uninstantiated sensible properties, is viable.

What this does is put the relational view of sensory experience ahead of the qualia view, so far as explaining the *de re* thesis goes. The relational view can explain the thesis, given a certain view of sensible properties. On a relational view, imagination can deliver *de re* reference because it involves awareness of uninstantiated sensible properties. But a qualia view cannot explain the thesis, at least as qualia are commonly conceived; for on that conception, they cannot figure as items of direct awareness.

Given this, it might seem that I should immediately be opting for a relational view of imagination, since qualia are commonly associated with intentional views. This, however, would be hasty. It is not clear that an intentional account of imagination – or at least, an account relying heavily on intentional elements – need be committed to qualia. It could be the case that imagining involves a relation to sensible properties, which are structured by intentional elements of experience. This, in fact, is the position I will endorse. To show why, I will turn in the next chapter to relational explanations of imaginative appearances.

In any case, I have exhausted the use that can be made of the *de re* thesis in examining the nature of imagination. I will briefly sum up the argument of the chapter and indicate the next step.

2.6 Summary

The first aim of this chapter was to argue for the *de re* thesis: that imagination can be a source of original *de re* reference to sensible properties. Having done so, I showed that a disjunctive explanation of imagination's structure could not adequately explain the cases that support the thesis. I thus concluded that the *de re* thesis should be explained by a structure common to imagination and hallucination. Following a digression in which I identified and distinguished three sorts of common-structure view, I examined Mark Johnston's argument concerning hallucination, which presses the case for a relational model of hallucination and imagination via the *de re* thesis. I gave a partial endorsement of this argument. I argued that it successfully shows that content theory views of imagination and hallucination are inadequate. But I did not endorse the conclusion that the capacity to furnish original *de re* reference to sensible properties is best explained by a relational explanation of the sensory nature of experiences that have that capacity. For all Johnston's argument shows, a qualia view might explain the capacity. However, there is such disagreement about whether one can be aware of qualia that it would be better to avoid relying on them, if possible. To make the case that an alternative is viable, I sketched out a view of colors on which awareness of uninstantiated sensible properties is possible. This means that there is a viable view of imagination's sensory nature, on which this is a matter of a relation to uninstantiated sensible properties. So the *de re* thesis has ruled out disjunctivism and content theory. Relational and intentional views remain in play, but only with uninstantiated sensible properties involved; either as properties

somehow enjoyed by an item of awareness, or as properties structured by intentional content. In the next two chapters, I attempt to choose between them on the grounds of which has the best explanation of imaginative appearances.

Chapter 3

Relational Theories

The previous chapter was about the sensory nature of imagining. I argued that imagining has the capacity to acquaint us with sensible properties, and that this fact rules out both disjunctive and content theories of imagination's structure. The chapter concluded on an equivocal note. Both relational and intentional views seem able to explain this capacity of imagining, and to explain the sensory nature of the experience. So thus far, there is nothing to choose between relational and intentional views. They both explain how imagination can be sensory in the same way as perception and hallucination.

However, explaining the sensory nature of imagining does not fully explain how it can be like perceiving, because both imagining and perceiving are more than merely sensory. If imagining amounted to no more than a relation to qualitative properties, it would be no more than an inner light show, or the ability to conjure up noises. Imagining is more than this. When you imagine, you often imagine objects, things, items. To imagine an object is to have some object appear to you in something like a

perceptual manner: in the terms I used earlier, it is to have a quasi-perceptual experience of the object. Quasi-perception describes the ways in which imagining is like perception; not just that it is sensory, but also that imagined objects are presented from a certain perspective, with some degree of depth (if they are three-dimensional things), and so on. Quasi-perception also describes the ways in which imaginative experience is never actually perceptual, and never actually like perception. The concern of this chapter and the next one is to account for quasi-perceptual experience.¹⁰³

Though I showed in the first chapter that imagination cannot be explained simply by assimilating it to hallucination, the range of options available for explaining quasi-perceptual experience is clearly articulated in the literature on hallucination, in which three sorts of explanation are found (speaking broadly). To recapitulate the distinction I made in the last chapter: first, there are relational theories, on which to hallucinate is to stand in a relation to some extraordinary item which instantiates, enjoys, or otherwise involves somehow, the sensible properties apparent in the experience. Second, there are intentional theories, on which to hallucinate is to be

¹⁰³From this point on, talk of objects, things and so on is going to need tightening up, because there is an awkward terminological difficulty here that can only be overcome by stipulation. The trouble is that both relational and intentional theories have appropriated the term ‘object’, and use it in quite different ways. For the relational theorist, an object is some thing (like a sense-datum) to which one can stand in a direct relation of awareness; hence, relational theories are sometimes called ‘act-object’ theories. For the intentional theorist, an (intentional) object is what your experience seems to be of, owing to its intentional content. It is not something to which you can stand in a relation, at least not on the usual understanding of the nature of intentional objects, because it is intrinsic to the experience of which it is a part. Since this chapter and the next concern these two sorts of theory, I need to do something to avoid confusion among types of objects. From now on, I will refer to an *item* when I mean some thing you can stand in a direct relation to, and to an *object* when I mean what an experience seems to be (or is) of or about. So you might be aware of a sense-datum (item), and thus have an experience of a horse (object). On some theories, the two coincide. For example, according to the direct realist view of perception, you have an experience of a horse (object) by being aware of a horse (item). This does some violence to how several theories are usually expressed, but there’s really no better way to keep matters clear. The alternative is to draw a distinction between direct and indirect objects of experience, and that vocabulary is both more awkward and more liable to confuse than the terminology I’m adopting.

in a mental state with a certain sort of intrinsic intentional content which delivers a perception-like experience of an object. Third, there are content theories, on which to imagine is to stand in an attitude-like relation to a proposition-like content.

In the previous chapter, I ruled out content theory. That leaves us with relational and intentional views. But I argued that a relational view of the role of sensible properties is viable; so a fully relational account of imagining might also be viable. And in fact, considerations like those of the previous chapter have often led philosophers to propose relational accounts of hallucination and perception. But my contention in the present chapter is that fully relational accounts of imagining inadequately explain both the phenomenology and the capacities of imaginative experiences. The following chapter explores the alternative option, an intentional view.

I am going to consider three sorts of relational view in this chapter. The first is the sense-data view, on which to imagine is to be aware of a sense-datum which instantiates the qualitative properties apparent in the experience. The second is the Meinongian view, on which to imagine is to be aware of a non-existent object which has qualitative properties associated with it. Finally, I discuss the prospects of adapting Mark Johnston's sensible profile view, on which to imagine is to be aware of an extraordinary abstract item which structures uninstantiated sensible properties. I conclude that all three of these relational views fail. Though this is not demonstrative of the guaranteed failure of any relational view, the range of options covered certainly suggests that an alternative might fruitfully be pursued. I take up that pursuit in the following chapter.

So the next two sections will outline sense-data and Meinongian approaches to imagination. Two preliminary notes apply to both. First, since both these approaches encompass a range of views, there will be a certain degree of lassitude in the descriptions; but I will give arguments that attack the basic principles of each approach. Second, it should be noted that I am in most cases extrapolating a view of imagination from views of hallucination. That is to say, the views I am discussing can't be attributed directly to anyone in particular, with specific regard to imagination. Nevertheless, I take it that the approaches under discussion represent viable and relevant accounts of how imagining can be quasi-perceptual, and are thus worth considering.

3.1 Sense-data

Extending to imagination the sense-data view of perception and hallucination is one way of explaining the nature of imagining by proposing an item of which the subject is directly aware. On the sense-data view, perception and perception-like experiences consist in awareness of items that actually instantiate the sensible properties which we typically attribute to the ordinary (indirect) objects of the experiences. When one perceives an alligator, one is directly aware of a sense-datum that instantiates the sensible properties which an alligator seems to have, and one is thus indirectly aware of the alligator; when one imagines an alligator, one is likewise directly aware of a sense-datum enjoying the sensible properties that a real alligator would. So the sense-data explanation of imagining is that you are directly aware of an item which has the sensible properties that you seem to be experiencing, and you take

that item to represent the appearance of some other item (sense-data views, or views very much like them, are sometimes called indirect realist views, and sometimes called representative realist views).

The sketch I have just given is of the sense-data view as commonly conceived, but actually pinning down the content of the view is quite tricky. In particular, there is a difficult question concerning the sort of items sense-data are. Though it's usually taken that they are mental items, many advocates of sense-data have not held this view. In fact, over their history as putative entities, sense-data have undertaken a curious migration across ontological categories. In the view's early contemporary incarnations, due to Price, Moore, and especially Russell, sense-data are defined as parts of physical objects, namely the parts sensed; the act of sensing is named 'sensation'.¹⁰⁴ Unperceived parts of objects cannot strictly speaking be called 'data', and so they are accorded a special term to denote their status as potential data: 'sensibilia'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴This is not, of course, where sense-data views start; they have a lineage stretching back at least to the phenomenalism of Berkeley and Hume. Nevertheless, the people cited in the text are commonly credited with codifying the sense-data view in the early 20th century, and reviving it as a topic of discussion.

¹⁰⁵See, for example, Bertrand Russell. "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics". In: *Mysticism and Logic*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1914, pp. 145–179, pp. 147-9, and also Bertrand Russell. "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter". In: *Mysticism and Logic*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1915, pp. 125–144, p. 128; "I believe that the actual data in sensation, the immediate objects of sight or touch or hearing, are extra-mental, purely physical, and among the ultimate constituents of matter." There is perhaps some ambiguity here; by the "immediate objects" of perception, Russell could in fact mean external physical objects, rather than sense data. And it is plausible to read the early Russell, in some places, as an adherent of the view that sense-data are mental; see Bertrand Russell. *The Problems of Philosophy*. London: Home University Library, 1912. Note also that in my terms, Russell is here talking about items rather than objects. But in any case, at least some early sense-data theorists thought that sense-data were physical; or more accurately, in Moore's case, they entertained the possibility without ever definitively rejecting or accepting it. See for example G.E. Moore. *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*. London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1953; H. Price. *Perception*. London: Methuen, 1932.

The later Russell, from *The Analysis of Mind* (1921) onward, repudiates any distinction between the stuffs of the mental and the physical. He instead adopts a ‘neutral monism’, on which both mental and material things are logical constructions from sensations, which “are what is common to the mental and physical worlds; they may be defined as the intersection of mind and matter.”¹⁰⁶ Here, ‘sensation’ is used differently than in the earlier theory. The earlier distinction between sensation and sense-datum has been done away with, along with the notion that act, content, and object should be distinguished; there is now only the content, the sensation, from which both objects and acts are derived.¹⁰⁷ Now, although Russell here has rejected the term ‘sense-datum’, he is actually describing something closer to the contemporary notion of the term; namely a directly apprehended item that, whatever it is, is not physical.

Ayer, a later proponent of the sense-datum view, takes up the Russellian line, and argues that sense-data (or ‘sense-contents’, as he prefers) are neither mental nor physical. Further, he denies them existence, instead according them “occurrence.”¹⁰⁸ Under his definition, sense-data are the immediate data of outer and introspective sensation, and (as with the later Russell) they are constitutive of both mental and physical things, these being no more than logical constructions of sense-data.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Bertrand Russell. *The Analysis of Mind*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1921, p. 100.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., Lecture I.

¹⁰⁸A.J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1936/1971, pp. 161-3.

¹⁰⁹ibid., p. 162. I do not mean to suggest that Ayer and Russell were the only proponents of this view. Broad, for example, holds much the same view of the nature of sense-data; see C.D. Broad. *The Mind and its Place in Nature*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1925, ch. IV. I am not aiming for a comprehensive historical survey here, just an outline of the versions of the view.

More recently, those who have endorsed the sense-data view have completed this transition by claiming that sense-data are mental items, or at least mind-dependent, or at any rate “non-physical.”¹¹⁰ Sense-data have thus migrated over the course of a century from the realm of the physical, across the plain of the neutral, and into the domain of the mental.¹¹¹

All this is not merely a matter of curiosity in the history of a putative entity; what use the sense-data view is at explaining imagining cannot properly be assessed unless we know quite what the view is. Nevertheless, without getting too bogged down in exposition, it is apparent that none of the three versions available will do. The early view is evidently unsuitable, since it defines sense-data as parts of physical objects. This means that sense-data themselves cannot possibly be involved in imagination. We do still have sensations available as an explanatory tool, but these are meant to be acts of sensing, and such acts need things to be sensed; they need objects. Sense-data as here construed cannot be those objects, since they are physical, and so we are driven towards positing some sensed entity that is not a sense-datum in order to explain imagining and preserve the relational nature of the theory. So sense-data themselves are irrelevant to the question at hand on this version of the theory; they do no explanatory work.

¹¹⁰Robinson, *Perception*, op. cit., p. 2. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article on sense-data asserts that they are usually thought to be dependent on the mind, though there are few references therein to people who actually think this; see Michael Huemer. “Sense-Data”. In: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. by Edward N. Zalta. Spring 2011. 2011. URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/sense-data/>, §1.1.

¹¹¹As noted above, one can plausibly attribute to the earliest Russell the view that sense-data are mental entities. So Russell may well, at various times, have held all three of the versions of the view mentioned here. Supposing that this is so, the very early Russell would be subject to the objections I raise against the contemporary sense-data view.

The Russell/Ayer view that sense-data belong to neither the mental nor the physical realm comes along with a highly dubious conception of mental images. Since on this view everything is constructed from sense-data, the stuff of imagination – what Russell terms ‘images’ – must also be constructed from sense-data.¹¹² But if this is so, we are dealing with a version of Hume’s theory, on which images are things copied from perceptions and distinguished from them only by their vivacity; and we have already seen that such a theory fails to account for the phenomenological differences between perceiving and imagining. In fact, Russell’s view is different from Hume’s, since he holds that images are distinguished from sensations only by their causal aetiology, rather than by their vivacity: “Images, as opposed to sensations, can only be defined by their different causation: they are caused by association with a sensation, not by a stimulus external to the nervous system [as sensations are]... in themselves they do not differ profoundly.”¹¹³ Ayer does not mention images explicitly in *Language, Truth and Logic*, but his comments on memory suggest concordance with this view.¹¹⁴ But as we have seen previously, there are in fact profound differences between the experiences of imagining and perceiving; images are not simply copies of percepts, sense-data, or other such entities. Further, the conclusion of the previous chapter was that imagination can, in its own right, allow us *de re* knowledge of sensible properties, without the necessity of prior perceptual acquaintance with

¹¹²See, for example, Russell, *The Analysis of Mind*, op. cit., p. 80: “It is generally believed that all images, in their simpler parts, are copies of sensations.”

¹¹³Ibid., pp. 109-10.

¹¹⁴“[T]o say that a self A is able to remember some of its earlier states is to say merely that some of the sense-experiences which constitute A contain memory images which correspond to sense-contents which have previously occurred in the sense-history of A.” Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, op. cit., p. 166.

that sensible property. But under this version of the sense-data view, this could not be so, because the imagined property would have to be a copy of a sense-datum. So this version of the view embodies a dubious conception of images, and cannot accommodate the conclusion about *de re* knowledge. These are sufficient reasons to discount it as a model of imagination.

The modern conception on which sense-data are mental items faces a variety of well-known problems of ontology, concerning (*inter alia*) how a mental thing can really enjoy a sensible property, and where these mental things are, and what they consist in.¹¹⁵ Now, ontological qualms alone are not decisive reasons to reject a theory of perception or perceptual experience, because most such theories are in some way ontologically peculiar. I agree here with Pautz, who suggests that almost any plausible view of perception and hallucination will have at least some ontologically unintuitive elements.¹¹⁶ I suppose the same claim about the inevitable violation of intuitive plausibility applies to views of imagining, and so bare ontological oddity is not a good reason to reject the sense-data view. But I think there is a specific ontological problem with sense-data that goes beyond mere peculiarity.

Here is the problem. Either sense-data have depth – a third spatial dimension – or they do not; that is, they are either three-dimensional or two-dimensional.¹¹⁷ The

¹¹⁵See John Foster. *The Nature of Perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 164-170 for a perspicuous discussion of the ontological difficulties bedeviling the modern sense-data view.

¹¹⁶Pautz says that, when it comes to strange ontological claims, “the intentional and multiple relation views are on a par”, given that “it is counterintuitive that having [a hallucinatory experience] might consist in standing in a relation to an intentional content in Plato’s heaven”, but also that “it is equally counterintuitive that having [a hallucinatory experience] should consist in... a three-place relation between an object, some possibly uninstantiated universals, and oneself.” Note that Pautz’s ‘intentional’ and ‘multiple relation’ theories are both versions of what I’ve been calling relational theories, since on both one stands in a relation to some extra-ordinary item. Pautz, “Why Explain Visual Experience in Terms of Content?”, *op. cit.*, p. 282

¹¹⁷For a discussion of this point, see Robinson, *Perception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-207.

proposal that sense-data are three-dimensional mental items pushes my ontological tolerance beyond its limits. I can accept the possibility of two-dimensional mental images which really instantiate width and length, if only because such a view has something of a pedigree. But adding a third dimension – an *actually instantiated* third dimension – strains my credulity. Strained credulity is not an argument, of course, but it is indicative of the distortion that the concept of a mental item undergoes on this proposal. It seems that by giving a mental item a third dimension, one comes very close to abandoning the supposition that sense-data are mental items at all, at least as they are usually conceived. On the classic Cartesian understanding, one of the fundamental things that separates the mental from the physical is that the former is unextended in space. So the three-dimensional sense-data theorist at least owes us a substantial explanation of what it is to be a mental item, if they are deviating so far from the orthodoxy. If a sense-data theorist really wants to cleave to the idea of three-dimensional items in imaginative experience, I would submit that some sort of abstractum, like a Meinongian item, would be rather less problematic.¹¹⁸

The proposal that sense-data are two-dimensional items seems rather more in keeping with the general tenor of the sense-data view. But if sense-data are two-dimensional, we have ended up with a view that has exactly the structure of the pictorial view of imagination, on which to imagine is to look at an internal mental picture.¹¹⁹ This, as we have seen previously, is just no good as a model of imagination,

¹¹⁸Perhaps sense-data are mind-dependent items, which supervene on mental states but aren't mental items themselves. Well, perhaps. But if this is the proposal, I really can't see much that would distinguish the view from those discussed below.

¹¹⁹Robinson, who thinks that sense-data are two-dimensional, often writes as if this is precisely how things are. For example: “[t]he relation between the sense-datum and the full experience is like that between a realistic picture – which is, in itself, just a two-dimensional pattern of colors

because there are manifest differences between looking at a picture and imagining something. For example, when we look at pictures, we can attend simultaneously to the object being represented and the vehicle of representation, the item; when it comes to imagining, we can at best do one or the other. So the modern sense-data view can be set aside as an explanation of imagination.

The most important thing to note here is that the sense-data view, on whichever conception, and regardless of its ontological problems, is ultimately inadequate as a theory of imagination because the entity proposed as the direct item of imaginative awareness is either something like a copy of a percept, or something very much like a picture, or something that is rather more like an abstractum than a mental item. In other words, the sense-data view recapitulates the basic positions given in chapter one, and suffers from the same problems. Given that those basic positions are attributable to Hume, and the sense-data view has a Humean lineage, this should not be a surprise; but it should be noted that those simple flaws are prone to be replicated at higher levels of sophistication. This will be of interest when I come to discuss sensible profiles. For now, it's enough to note that the sense-data view does not adequately explain imagining, and move on to discussing the Meinongian approach.

– and the experience one has when one sees it as a representation of whatever it is a picture of.” Robinson, *Perception*, op. cit., pp. 188-9. However, he in the end tentatively concludes that such “representative” sense-data theories suffer in comparison to “phenomenalist” ones, on which sense-data are parts of physical objects, yet still mind-dependent. See *ibid.*, ch. IX.

3.2 Meinongian items

There is a multitude of views which deserve, or have taken, the name ‘Meinongian’, and this is not the place for an exhaustive taxonomy. I am going to discuss two sorts of Meinongian view in this section. I will first discuss briefly Meinong’s own view of imagination; after all, if anyone’s view deserves the name ‘Meinongian’, his does. I will then discuss, in more depth, what you might call generalized Meinongian views: views about imagined objects which are particular applications of a general Meinongian approach to non-existent objects. I will argue that neither of these approaches are viable. The general Meinongian position, and the criticisms I make of it, will be relevant both to the discussion of sensible profiles to follow in this chapter, and to the discussion of intentionalism in the next chapter.

3.2.1 Meinong himself

So first, let’s speak of “the unspeakable Meinong.”¹²⁰ But I will only talk about his comments briefly, because they are brief themselves, and not especially enlightening. The most notable thing about them is that they are not very ‘Meinongian’ at all. The very last section of the second edition of *On Assumptions* is dedicated to imagination, as part of Meinong’s exploration of how a “psychology of assumptions” might look.

¹²⁰This delightful epithet is due to William James. A fuller quotation, from a letter written in 1908 to a friend pressing a Meinongian line on the relation of suppositions or supposals to truth, reads: “I wish you’d search your heart seriously about this mongrel cur of a supposal, begotten upon you by the unspeakable Meinong and his English pals.” As the rest of the letter makes clear, the chief among the English pals is an even earlier Russell than the ones described above, a Russell who is tempted by Meinong’s account of non-existents and thanked in the preface to the second edition of *On Assumptions*. See William James. *The Correspondence of William James, Volume 11*. Ed. by Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 514-515.

Meinong starts by claiming that the “contrast of perceptual representations and reproductive representations” is “familiar to everyone,” and that it had seemed to him “so manifest that the members of the dichotomy stand in clear analogy to the judgment and the assumption” that he hadn’t thought it necessary to address imagination specifically in his first edition.¹²¹ In these first paragraphs, Meinong invokes Hume’s distinction between impressions and ideas, and this is a good indication of where he is going, as is this comment: “perceptual and reproductive representations... are not distinct from each other as to their object or as to their content... the difference lies in the act... and again the perceptual representation presents itself as the somewhat richer.”¹²²

Many cavils could be made concerning the discussion that follows, but since my main concern is not Meinong scholarship, I will skip over them and get to the nub of his view. Meinong’s view is that there are four classes of mental events: thoughts, feelings, desires, and representations. Each class has a “lower stage” and an “upper stage”, the lower stage being lower “in the sense of perfection, but also as a preliminary stage of development.”¹²³ The lower stage of thoughts is assumptions. Earlier in the book, Meinong identifies the lower stages of feelings and desires with the prefix “pseudo-”, but also calls them “imaginative”.¹²⁴ Here, he returns to this designation and reaffirms it; there are “feelinglike” and “desirelike” experiences which present as weaker versions of the real things, and are products of imagination.¹²⁵ He is much

¹²¹Alexius Meinong. *On Assumptions*. Trans. by James Heanue. Second edition. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1910/1983, p. 268.

¹²²Ibid., p. 269.

¹²³Ibid., p. 269.

¹²⁴Ibid., ch.9, §§54-56.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 270.

less sure about the putative category of “pseudo-representations” as a lower stage of perceptual representations, principally because he does not want to accept his own implication that reproductive representations would then be “preliminary stages” of perceptual ones.¹²⁶ After some dithering, he appears implicitly to accept the idea he started with, that reproductive representations are generally much the same as perceptual ones, but less lively; the problem of preliminary stages is not so much solved as ignored.¹²⁷ In conclusion, Meinong suggests that “the whole lower stage” of the four classes of mental events is “the domain in which imagination manifests itself”, and that we can therefore “dispense with the makeshift expression ‘lower stage’”, because “all that we assigned to [it] is taken together as manifestations of the imagination.”¹²⁸ So we are to take it that imagination is the faculty by which weaker versions of mental events are manifested.

The sole improvement Meinong makes on Hume’s perceptual theory is to include explicitly things like desires and feelings among the things which we can imagine, though since Hume thought we could have impressions of these things, no doubt he would have held we can also have imaginative ideas of them. On the other hand, one of Hume’s chief virtues eludes Meinong. Where Hume is at least clear on the relation of priority between the impression and the idea, Meinong seems thoroughly confused; the imaginative counterparts of mental events are somehow both preliminary stages of those events, and copies of them. There is very little to recommend Meinong’s

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 271.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 272.

¹²⁸Ibid., pp. 272-3.

adumbrated view of imagination. In fact, views most unlike his which nevertheless have inherited his name are far more interesting.

3.2.2 The general Meinongian

According to Amie Thomasson, most theories which we call ‘Meinongian’ these days share three basic commitments. Under them, every combination of properties has at least one object correlated with it; some such objects do not exist; and, nevertheless, these non-existent objects can enjoy their correlated properties.¹²⁹ Meinongian views differ over various points of detail; for example, over what kinds of properties may be correlated with objects, and in what sense such objects enjoy those properties.¹³⁰ However, without going into those details, we can see how a simple Meinongian position on imagination would work. Imagining would consist in awareness of a non-existent object enjoying sensible properties. That object would serve both as the object of the experience – what it is an experience of or about – and as the item of the experience – the thing you are directly aware of in the experience.

The Meinongian view enjoys some advantages over the sense-data view. The problems of the sense-data view come from two sources. One, which I’ve not pushed hard, is the peculiarity of existent mental items which instantiate sensible properties.

The second, which I’ve focused on, is the phenomenal inadequacy of the picture-

¹²⁹Amie L. Thomasson. *Fiction and Metaphysics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 14.

¹³⁰See *ibid.*, pp. 14-15 for a summary of such differences. Though I have glossed over them here, the differences among Meinongian theories may in fact make a difference to how credible they are in the current context. For example, Parsons only allows his non-existent objects to enjoy simple properties. So if it were to turn out that sensible properties were not simple, non-existent objects as Parsons conceives of them could not be the objects of imaginative awareness. See Terence Parsons. *Nonexistent Objects*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

or percept- awareness models which the sense-data view essentially replicates. A Meinongian view could avoid both these problems. Regarding the first problem, on a Meinongian view, the objects of imaginative awareness do not exist. As for the second problem, the Meinongian can claim that imagining is a relation directly to objects, not to pictures of them. Note that it is part of both views that we stand in a direct relation to some item, and that the item in question instantiates, enjoys, or otherwise has correlated with it sensible properties. What is different is the nature of the item, and whether the item is also the object of the experience. For all I've said, the direct awareness relation could be just the same.

Apart from its advantages over the sense data view, the Meinongian position might be independently attractive for two reasons. First, it makes more clear how we can have an experience in which we are related to sensible properties when there is no worldly object present to us. Just as perceiving does, imagining involves an object that enjoys sensible properties and to which we can bear a sensing relation, albeit an object whose presence is of a different sort than that of perception's objects. Imagining consists in direct awareness of those objects, which enjoy the properties of which we are aware; the object thus serves as the item. Second, a Meinongian theory holds out the promise of an easy explanation of another feature of imagining that I have yet to consider. Though I have been concentrating on objects in quite a general sense, it is often the case that imagining is directed towards particular objects (Red Rum, Rocinante), rather than towards 'general' objects (a horse, but no particular horse). This raises questions about what makes it the case that a certain object is the object of the experience; why, for example, is the object *that* horse rather than any

other horse? Meinongian theories can promise quick answers: the experience has a certain intentional object, because we are aware of an object, and this is both the item of awareness and the intentional object of the experience. Compare, again, perception. If we see a tree, that tree is (normally) both the item of perceptual awareness, and the intentional object of the perceptual experience. Just so, the Meinongian might say, in imagining: we are aware of an item, which enjoys some properties of which we are aware, and that object is also the intentional object of the experience.

Now, as both Smith and Thomasson note, Meinongian views are usually intended to apply to the whole gamut of potentially non-existent objects, from Atlantis to Zebedee.¹³¹ But one can be a ‘restricted Meinongian’; that is, one can adopt a sort of Meinongian position regarding certain objects, those necessary to explain a certain phenomenon, while not doing so about some other or indeed all other putative non-existents. So it would not be especially fruitful to discuss objections to Meinongian views in their full generality. However, Meinongian views suffer from a major problem that is specific to my issue and additional to the usual ones raised against them.

The problem is actually related to the second advantage I just mentioned. Meinongian theories were initially developed to account for thoughts about things that do not apparently exist. The approach is meant to explain how we can have non-existent things as intentional objects of thought. There, the non-existent object does all the fixing of the object of thought. By contrast, Meinongian objects do no work in perception, since there the intentional object of the experience is just the item being

¹³¹Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 232; Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, op. cit., p. 14.

perceived. Non-existent objects neither fix the intentional object of the experience, nor act as the item of qualitative awareness.¹³²

What role would Meinongian objects play in imagination? It could be that they would just fix the intentional object of the experience, as they do in thinking. For all we have said so far, this could be so. But it would leave the question of this chapter unanswered, since we would have no account of what item of awareness is responsible for imagining's qualitative phenomenology. So for this approach to really address the question, the (or a) Meinongian object has to play much the same role as an actual object does in perception: it must be both the intentional object of the experience, and the item of awareness.

The trouble with this is that the Meinongian proposal ends up explaining too much. What it implies is that the objects of imagination are, as it were, out there pre-constituted, awaiting our grasp. But this leaves no work at all for the subject to do when it comes to dreaming up the object, deciding on its properties, and so on; and if anything is central to imagining, it is the sense that we are the creators of what we imagine.¹³³ On the account under consideration, we become passive spectators to our own imaginings, in the same way that (or insofar as) we are essentially passive

¹³²I am playing somewhat loose with the term 'Meinongian' here. There is a plausible interpretation on which Meinong himself did think that the objects which bear his name somehow intercede in perception. But most people who hold a 'Meinongian' position on perception these days invoke Meinongian objects solely to explain hallucinatory experience; the Meinongian object plays the role in hallucination that a worldly object does in perception. See, for example, J.L. Mackie. "Problems of Intentionality". In: *Phenomenology and Philosophical Understanding*. Ed. by Edo Pivcevic. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 37–52; Harman, "The Intrinsic Quality of Experience", op. cit.; J. Levine. "Secondary Qualities: Where Consciousness and Intentionality Meet". In: *Monist* 91 (2008), pp. 15–36

¹³³Thomasson raises a similar objection to Meinongian theories of fictional objects, arguing that such theories do not account sufficiently for the sense in which authors create characters, places, and so on. Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, op. cit., p. 16.

when perceiving. I've established already that a view of imagining that brings it so close to perceiving will not do.

We can throw this problem into sharp relief by considering what happens when we imagine real objects. Suppose I am imagining my mother. According to the Meinongian view, I would be aware of an object (and item) that enjoys all the properties that my mother does, save for the property of existing. Generalized, this means that that there must be a non-existent counterpart of every existent particular, such that that particular can seem to be imagined via awareness of the non-existent counterpart. Now, according to Zalta's version of Meinongianism, this is precisely the case. There is one abstract object 'encoding' each possible combination of properties, and additionally, there are ordinary objects which 'exemplify' some combinations of properties.¹³⁴ So according to his theory, there is both my abstract-mother and my real mother, and the only thing differentiating them is that one exists and the other doesn't. When I imagine, I am really imagining my abstract-mother.

It might seem bad enough that the Meinongian explanation threatens to obscure any sense in which we can really imagine real things, offering instead a theory on which we seem to imagine real things, but actually imagine non-existent counterparts. But the situation becomes even more bleak when I (try to) imagine my real mother with different properties – say, a different hair color, or somewhat older or younger than she is at present. According to the Meinongian, each variation would involve awareness of a different abstract object, sharing varying proportions of the properties my real mother enjoys. But this conflicts with the strong intuition that the process

¹³⁴Edward Zalta. *Abstract Objects*. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983, p. 12.

just described really is one in which you imagine your real mother counterfactually. The Meinongian explanation is at odds with what we generally suppose we are doing when we imagine.¹³⁵

The conclusion to draw from this brief discussion is not that the Meinongian explanation fails on its own terms. Considered as an explanation only of what the intentional objects of imagining might be, Meinongian accounts may have some plausibility. But the attempt to extend the theory, so that we have non-existent objects of which we are qualitatively aware as items, puts the Meinongian in a problematic position. They are forced to suppose that various things that we think are possible with imagining are not, in fact, possible – we cannot really imagine real things, nor counterfactual versions of them; nor can we, in a strong sense, create things by imagining them.

None of this constitutes a demonstration of the Meinongian position's falsity. It offers up a selection of bullets, and a Meinongian could well bite them all. But the array of considerations raised suggests that it would be best to look elsewhere for an explanation of how the sensible properties involved in imagining are structured.

But I mentioned above that one can be a restricted Meinongian; and I have also been clear that the view under discussion has been an application of a general Meinongian position. So it may be that the discussion thus far has been tendentious: why not focus on people who have specifically tried to articulate a Meinongian position on imagining? So far as I know, nobody has done this, but some philosophers hold a

¹³⁵One might wonder if the Meinongian could simply say that their proposed item delivers only the sensory phenomenology of the experience, and leaves other properties at the behest of the subject. But this line sounds just like the sensible profile view discussed below, as Johnston himself seems to acknowledge.

Meinongian view of the objects of hallucination, without extending that view to all putative non-existent objects. But such views are best seen as varieties of intentional views, on which intentional contents determine the phenomenology of hallucination, and intentional objects are functions of that content. I will be examining intentional views in the next chapter, and in particular, A.D. Smith's view about intentional objects. But I should first conclude my survey of relational accounts. The last position to consider is Mark Johnston's sensible profile account of hallucination.

3.3 Sensible profiles

I will now consider a third theory of hallucination, and its prospects as a theory of imagination. The view under consideration is Mark Johnston's sensible profile account. The arguments of the previous chapter borrowed from Johnston's work on hallucination, and the conclusions I drew are consonant with Johnston's. Given this, it is certainly worth wondering whether we could go the whole hog and adopt sensible profiles as a model of imagining. The view will take some explaining, but can be summarized quite quickly: to hallucinate is to be aware of an uninstantiated sensible profile, which the subject could construe as the appearance of an object. The view is given as part of an attempt to defend direct realism about perception. The crucial idea is that the two acts, perception and hallucination, are differentiated by the sort of thing one is aware of in each. According to Johnston, "types of acts of awareness are... individuated by the types of object [item] they present to the subject."¹³⁶ So the

¹³⁶Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination", *op. cit.*, p. 116.

idea is that perception presents its subject with one type of item, and hallucination presents its subject with another. What I want to consider is whether the type of item of which Johnston thinks you are aware in hallucination can work as an item of imaginative awareness. Once the view has been explained, I will first consider what sets it apart from the views already discussed, and then consider whether these differences are enough to avoid the problems those views have.

3.3.1 What they are

According to Johnston, sensible profiles are items of which we are directly aware in both hallucination and perception. They are complex universals made up of qualitative and relational properties. To explain this idea, I'll explain each element: the qualitative, the relational, the complex, and the universal. I'll then be in a position to say clearly what sensible profiles are, and how we can be directly aware of them.¹³⁷

The qualitative element of sensible profiles is made up of sensible properties. The idea is that profiles have as constituent parts things like colors, sounds, and so on. This is of a piece with the conclusions of the previous chapter. The comments there about how this might be accounted for by a theory of sensible properties should stand as sufficient commentary on this aspect of sensible profiles.

However, sensible profiles involve more than just sensible properties; they involve also relations among sensible properties. The relational elements of sensible profiles are relations like the position of sensible properties relative to each other. A visual

¹³⁷McGinn suggests the sensible profile view, more or less, in McGinn, "Another Look at Color", *op. cit.* Johnston's paper constitutes a large expansion of this initial notion.

scene, whether seen, hallucinated, or imagined, typically contains several qualitative elements that are presented as being at such-and-such a location relative to the viewer and to each other. Johnston's move is to say that these relations are parts of a sensible profile, and so are things of which we're aware, just as we are aware of the sensible properties involved. In hallucination, though, the relations are uninstantiated, since the sensible properties which they relate are also uninstantiated.

Johnston's argument to show that it is possible to be aware of uninstantiated relational properties starts from the observation that we often are aware of sensible profiles that are not wholly instantiated, because relations that are parts of them are not instantiated. For example, he says, faced with a set of Muller-Lyer lines, one is aware of a sensible profile which is not wholly instantiated; some of the relational properties that make up the appearance of the scene are not instantiated by the particulars that make up the scene. So in such a case, you are aware of uninstantiated relational properties, instantiated qualitative properties, and structured universals made up of them that are therefore partially uninstantiated. Why not, then, structured universals that are wholly uninstantiated? Johnston takes it that his examples make the case sufficiently; to accept the partially-instantiated case, yet balk at the case of a wholly uninstantiated sensible profile made up of those sorts of property, seems an unmotivated and arbitrary move.¹³⁸ So we can be aware of sensible profiles even when they are uninstantiated; that is, when all the sensible properties and relations among them of which we are aware are uninstantiated.

¹³⁸Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination", *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

Johnston holds that all these properties added together constitute complex universals. However, Dunn points out that there is something of an ambiguity here, turning on the word ‘complex’. Does this word here mean just ‘complicated’, or does it have more significance? That is, does Johnston mean that sensory profiles are complex (structural) universals, composed of an array of discrete universals, or are they just big, complex (complicated) universals, with no principle of composition underlying them?¹³⁹

The more reasonable answer seems to be that ‘complex’ is meant to imply ‘structural’, for two reasons. Firstly, the account of what makes up sensible profiles just given lends itself naturally to a view on which the profiles are constituted by an array of universals structured thus-and-so. Secondly, the adoption of the structured account provides the resources to handle mixed cases of hallucination and perception, as when MacBeth hallucinates a dagger before him while perceiving accurately around it the court of his castle. But, as Dunn goes on to claim, Johnston then faces a question about what the principle of composition is: what is it that ties all the uninstantiated parts of a sensible profile together?¹⁴⁰ Dunn makes this point with reference to problems concerning the composition of structural universals raised by David Lewis.¹⁴¹

Now, Johnston anticipates the problems to which Dunn refers, pointing out that

¹³⁹Jeffrey Dunn. “The Obscure Act of Perception”. In: *Philosophical Studies* 139.3 (2008), pp. 367–393, 377, fn27.

¹⁴⁰ibid., 377, fn27. As my reference points out, Dunn only makes this point in a footnote. His main argument against Johnston’s view is that, when it comes to perception, Johnston seems committed to a somewhat peculiar view on which two separate acts of awareness are involved. I think this is an interesting criticism, but since it pertains to perception, it is not germane to the issues I am exploring.

¹⁴¹David Lewis. “Against Structural Universals”. In: *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 64.1 (1986), pp. 25–46.

Lewis' argument is only a difficulty for him if "the only mode of combination available for properties is mereological...[a]nd clearly there are non-mereological modes of combination".¹⁴² But Johnston does not specify what the mode of combination for sensible profiles is, and this might cause some difficulty.

Since Johnston denies that the combinatorial mode is mereological, it must be some principle of composition that does more than just aggregate the properties involved. There seem to be three options available here: actual spatial relations, a *sui generis* mode of combination, or something like predication. The first can be dismissed quite quickly. The idea is that actual spatial relations structure the elements of the sensible profiles – that is, the universal is just structured by the relational properties which are parts of the sensible profiles, and there is no additional principle of combination beyond relations among parts. Sometimes Johnston writes as if this is really the case, but surely this is just careless use of the word 'structure'. For how can it be that uninstantiated properties are structured by actual relations among them? Surely actual relations require actual relata? And how would this square with Johnston's insistence that the spatial relations, just like the sensible properties, are uninstantiated? Actual spatial relations are a poor candidate for structuring uninstantiated sensible profiles.

So if the combinatorial role is not played by the relations among the sensible properties, it must be played by some principle of combination over and above what the subject is aware of in a hallucinatory experience. One option is that the mode of combination is something like predication. It could be that what structures the

¹⁴²Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination", op. cit., 180, fn27.

sensible and relational properties is that they are predicated of objects over and above the properties, which the properties appear to constitute. In the veridical case, the objects do indeed exist, and we stand in a direct relation to them, because the sensible properties of which we are aware are constituent parts of those objects. In the non-veridical case, there are no objects for us to be directly aware of, but the elements of the sensible profile are structured as if there was; they are presented as qualities of objects, and it is this sort of presentation that provides a principle of composition for the sensible profiles.

The trouble with this suggestion is that it does not seem consonant with what Johnston wants to say about how objects –ordinary objects – figure in perception. Johnston says that “in veridical sensing, one is aware of instantiations of complexes of sensible qualities, relations, and sensible natural kinds.”¹⁴³ In other words, one is not aware of the sensible profiles themselves, but the objects that instantiate them. One plausible way of interpreting this is to say that, in perception, one is aware of objects of which qualities are predicated, and relations among those objects which are instantiated because at least one of the positions in the relation is saturated by a particular. Then, when one is hallucinating, the same predication function delivers apparent objects – qualities are predicated of objects – and organizes the various objects such that relations among them appear, but are not instantiated, since no particular saturates a position in them.

But consider the hallucination case a little more. Johnston’s aim is to, as it were, get objects out of hallucination; he wants it to be the case that we are merely aware of

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 146.

the appearances of objects, or rather the appearances that objects would instantiate if they were in fact present. And so to say that it is a necessary part of hallucinatory experiences that the properties making up sensible profiles are predicated of objects seems to elide the distinction Johnston wants to make. If, in hallucination, we are aware of sensible profiles because we are predicating various properties of non-existent objects, the only thing that distinguishes the two sorts of appearance are whether the object in question exists. But Johnston wants to distinguish hallucination and perception on the basis of the types of object involved, not on the existential status of the objects. He wants hallucination to involve mere sensible profiles, and perception to involve objects which instantiate them. Introducing objects of any sort into hallucination militates against the position that Johnston is arguing for. So predication is an unlikely candidate for the composition relation holding among the parts of sensible properties.

The only remaining option seems to be that the structuring relation involved is *sui generis*, unique to sensible profiles: it is just that relation which obtains among and structures the parts of a sensible profile. This is a legitimate, if uninformative, way to explain the structuring of sensible profiles. It does not leave us much the wiser about them, but since Johnston does not offer any explanation of what the compositional principle for sensible profiles is, and since I have just helpfully eliminated two plausible options, I do not think there is much more to be gained from searching further. Sensible profiles are structured, complex universals; what structures them is some special relation obtaining among their parts.

Now, it may seem unclear why Johnston insists that sensible profiles must be universals at all. Why not simply talk about awareness of properties, without introducing a structured whole of which the properties are parts? The reason is that Johnston's account is primarily an account of perception, as part of which he needs to account for hallucinations indistinguishable from perceiving. To do so, Johnston claims that sensible profiles can be the items of awareness in two different experiences, and then claims that instantiation makes the difference between the two cases; instantiation ensures that the items involved in hallucination are perception are different, since in one case the item is just a sensible profile, and in the other it is items instantiating a profile. The sensible profiles involved in hallucination are proper parts of those involved in perception. If he were to claim that perception is simply a matter of awareness of properties, the corresponding claim about hallucination would have to be that it is a matter of awareness of properties that can coincidentally be arranged in just such a way as to replicate exactly a perceptual experience. He would thus lose any sense of there being something in common between the two experiences, and this is Johnston's aim. Instead, we need something that can be an item of awareness in both cases, but only supervenient on external particulars in one case, perception.

Johnston holds that the way in which sensible profiles are supervenient on external particulars is instantiation. Only universals admit of instantiation, so sensory profiles must be universals. Further, universals are not mental items; they are abstracta. Johnston thus avoids positing the sort of mental items that (he says) make things difficult for other views. This may seem ontologically inflationary, but there's no reason to think that a direct realist like Johnston need be committed to ontological

parsimony; and it is no more inflationary, at least, than positing mediating mental items.¹⁴⁴

So sensible profiles are structured universals, composed of sensible properties and relations among them, structured by some special relation among the parts; and in hallucination, these sensible profiles are items of awareness, to which we stand in a direct relation. To further elucidate this view, I will now consider what distinguishes it from those discussed above.

3.3.2 What makes the view different?

Johnston's sensible profiles have been taken by some commentators to be more or less equivalent to two other putative items of hallucinatory awareness. Johnston himself points out that some Meinongians "have served up entities almost exactly like... [sensible] profiles".¹⁴⁵ And David Hilbert has suggested that Johnston is skirting close to representative realism, or in other words, the sense-data view.¹⁴⁶ It's worth examining what can be said to distinguish Johnston's view from those two proposals discussed earlier, to further elucidate what the view is.

Let's take sense-data first. There is a clear sense in which the sensible profile view is like the sense-data view. Both are relational analyses of perceptual experience, on which to perceive or to hallucinate is to stand in a relation of awareness to some item that has as parts the sensible properties which appear to be manifest to you.

¹⁴⁴*Pace* Dunn, who claims that direct realists advertise ontological parsimony as a virtue of their position. See Dunn, "The Obscure Act of Perception", op. cit., pp. 367-369.

¹⁴⁵Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination", op. cit., p. 158.

¹⁴⁶D. Hilbert. "Hallucination, Sense-Data and Direct Realism". In: *Philosophical Studies* 120.1 (2004), pp. 185–191.

So both posit some item of awareness that is separate from the act of awareness. However, there are several differences between the two views. The most important is that the sense-data view (like many views of perception) explains how perception and hallucination can be exactly alike by claiming that just the same sort of item is involved in both cases. This is not Johnston's view. His aim, explicitly, is to argue that perception and hallucination involve different sorts of items which share sufficient parts that the experiences can seem the same. The items of perception are real worldly objects, and sensible profiles in perceptual cases are essentially just appearances of items. The items of hallucination are sensible profiles themselves, appearances without things they are appearances of. So the sensible profile view is unlike the sense-data view in this respect.

Another difference follows from this point. Johnston holds that types of acts of awareness are individuated by the types of items one is aware of. That is to say, if the items involved in hallucination are different from those we are aware of in perception, hallucinating and perceiving are different acts of awareness, or perhaps more naturally put, different ways of being aware. This contrasts with the apparent implication of the sense-data view that there is just one sort of mental act – awareness – directed at one sort of mental item – sense-data. Unlike the sense-data view, Johnston's view has the resources to distinguish hallucination and perception as acts.

There are several other differences between the two views that do not merit much more than a brief mention. First, there is the fact that sense-data are meant to be mind-dependent particulars, while sensible profiles are abstract universals. Second, following from this, sense-data instantiate sensible properties and spatial relations

among them; sensible profiles, at least when hallucinated, instantiate neither. Third and finally, at least as I have explained it, the sensible profile view has it that what structures sensible profiles into appearances is some *sui generis* relationship among its parts. On the sense-data view, what makes it the case that we are aware of an appearance is that the sense-datum is actually arranged like an appearance – it is structured with actual spatial relations.

So there are plenty of reasons to think that the sense-data view and the sensible profile view are distinct. That said, it is important to bear in mind why one might think they are alike. Both deliver relational views of hallucination, and this means arguing that in such experience, one is somehow aware of some item that looks like, but is not, a real object. It was more or less this structure – rather than any detail about the nature of the objects involved – which led me to reject the sense-data view as a view of imagination. So, as I will explain shortly, one might wonder if Johnston's view inherits the same problems as a consequence of inheriting the same structure.

But before I get on to criticism of Johnston's view as an account of imagination, there is one further point of clarification to make. As Johnston says, some Meinongians have proposed entities quite like sensible profiles. These Meinongians are essentially my general Meinongians. However, Johnston thinks that his view is importantly different from that one. His argument is that non-existent objects of the Meinongian sort can be used either to explain the sensory part of hallucination by being a direct object of sensory awareness, or to explain the particular-directed intentionality of the experience by being an object of intentional awareness, or to

do both.¹⁴⁷ But Johnston argues that Meinongian objects are superfluous, given his account of sensible profiles. They are not needed to explain the sensory aspects of hallucination, since this is adequately achieved by sensible profiles; and they are not needed to explain the intentionality of sensible profiles, since this can be achieved without positing non-existent objects.

It should be clear from the discussion of sensible profiles why Meinongian objects are not necessary to explain the sensory nature of hallucination. Of more interest are Johnston's comments about how the intentionality of hallucinatory experience is achieved; most importantly, how the experience can be about particulars. Given that Johnston does not think hallucination actually involves particulars, but yet also acknowledges that it can be an experience of them, some sort of explanation is needed.

Johnston does this by invoking intentional objects and intentional content to explain how hallucination comes to be apparently about objects, rather than just a matter of appearances. He argues that this invocation of intentional objects is both necessary and ontologically innocuous. Johnston thinks that there are two objects involved in hallucination: the primary object (item), which is the sensible profile and which dictates the qualitative aspects of the experience; and the secondary object, which is what the experience seems to be of, what particular or object seems to appear to the subject. This secondary object is an intentional object, and Johnston argues that we have to refer to intentional objects here because they are the only way of "conveying facts about how things strike the subject of the hallucinations."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination", *op. cit.*, p. 158. Johnston's most explicit target is Harman, "The Intrinsic Quality of Experience", *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁸Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination", *op. cit.*, p. 164.

But they are no more than this; no more, really, than descriptions of what a subject takes their experience to be an experience of, the grammatical complements of demonstratives in sentences like “that thing I’m hallucinating.” So Johnston thinks we need intentional objects to characterize how things strike the subject, but that this invocation is ontologically innocuous. It does not amount to a commitment to the “substantial and controversial doctrine” of the Meinongian; rather, it is “a minimalist doctrine.”¹⁴⁹ In Johnston’s view, taking it that talking about intentional objects commits you to the view that such things exist in any substantial sense is simply a mistake.

In the course of all this, Johnston gives an account of how the intentional objects of hallucination are determined. According to him, this can happen in one of two ways. The first is that, sometimes, “the secondary object is determined by how the primary object [item] immediately strikes the subject... hallucination gets to be of or about particulars as a result of striking the subject as of or about those particulars.”¹⁵⁰ So the intentional object of a hallucination is sometimes fixed just by what a certain appearance strikes the subject as being an appearance of. The second way the object can be fixed is that “hallucinations can come with singular reference to certain particulars somehow built in... [by, for example] cathected thought about one’s mother.”¹⁵¹ The idea is that hallucinations can sometimes be, as it were, imbued from their genesis with particularity. Johnston does not go into any detail about how

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 161.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 133.

this can happen, and indeed says that he “only want[s] to allow it as a possibility”, but this second method of fixing intentional objects will be of interest in later chapters.¹⁵²

So Johnston’s view is neither a sense-data view, nor a Meinongian view. Sensible profiles are a different sort of item to those I’ve already considered; they are complex universals composed of qualities and relations, of which we can be directly aware in hallucination, and which can be part of total experiences which have intentional objects as a result either of what the sensible profile strikes the subject as looking like, or as a result of some process of cathected thought. I will now consider how this might be adopted as a theory of imagination.

3.3.3 Sensible profiles as a view of imagination

One might think that the sensible profile account could easily be transposed to give a theory of imagination. On a sensible profile account, imagining would consist in awareness of an uninstantiated sensible profile, made up of sensible properties and relations among them. The properties and relations involved would be structured somehow, and we would be aware of an intentional object in virtue of being aware of the sensible profile which gives the appearance of that object. However, there are reasons to think this will not work as a view of imagination.

The first problem is that, once again, the view under consideration seem to be coming dangerously close to a pictorial view of imagining, or one version of the sense-data view. This isn’t a crude pictorial view, since one is aware of uninstantiated properties and relations, rather than somehow-instantiated ones. Nevertheless, one

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 133.

might well wonder if the view suffers from similar problems. Does saying that the item involved is an uninstantiated abstract universal that we directly apprehend really improve much on saying that it is a mental representation, similarly apprehended? The ontological worry might be assuaged, if you are more sanguine about universals than you are about mental items, but the difficulties of phenomenology remain; imagining simply isn't like apprehending a picture. And sensible profiles – appearances, abstracted from real appearances – certainly sound a lot like pictures.

That the sensible profile view comes close to this pictorial view is implicit in Johnston's discussion of what determines the intentional object of a hallucination. The first determination method, and the one he puts by far the most weight on, is that the intentional object of your experience is determined by what the sensible profile strikes you as looking like. This really doesn't seem far removed at all from a sense-datum or pictorial view; we have an appearance which awaits interpretation, that interpretation fixing the intentional object. Now, one might defend Johnston on two grounds against this charge. The first is that he does, after all, allow an alternative method of object-fixing. The second is that the view is at least not strictly pictorial, in that (plausibly) pictures represent a certain object independently of whether they are interpreted by a viewer as representing that thing, while sensible profiles do not seem to represent anything independently of interpretation.

Neither of these defenses will do, however. Regarding the first, while it is true that Johnston allows an alternative method, it's under-explained and unemphasized. So though this is a promising line, we would need to hear more about how cathected thought can fix the object of an experience. I will in fact be developing this line,

but not in the way that Johnston sketchily suggests. The reason to avoid Johnston's suggested development is that, according to him, cathected thought makes it possible for the object of hallucinations to be determined thus, it is possible that "a subject may be wrong about the secondary object of his hallucination. His hallucination may immediately strike him as of his aunt, even though it is of his mother."¹⁵³ If one is trying to avoid a pictorial view of imagining, this is an absolutely fatal thing to say. It is implied that, just as I can stand before a picture of Red Rum and think that I am looking at a picture of Shergar, I can gaze at my imagined image of my mother and think that I am looking at an image of my aunt. So cathected thought, if it works at all to fix an object of the experience, fixes what the sensible profile 'really' represents, which is something about which the subject can then make a mistake. This is as close to pictorialism as you can get, short of positing a homuncular Holbein with a paintbrush and palette lurking in the skull of every imaginer.

I do not think the second defense can be sustained, either. Sensible profiles are uninstantiated appearances. But since they are universals, they admit of instantiation. This means that every possible sensible profile is an uninstantiated abstraction from a possible appearance. And this means that every sensible profile represents some appearance, whether or not it is taken to do so. So sensible profiles do, in fact, represent an appearance of some sort, independently of whether they are interpreted as being an appearance of some sort.

A second problem with sensible profiles as a view of imagination is that they do not seem apt for explaining the special spatiality of imagined objects which I described in

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 133.

the first chapter. The point, remember, was that the space in which imagined objects appear feels subjective; it is not the usual space of three dimensional-objects. Now, this space is in some sense a function of what appears in imaginative experience; the apparent spatial relations holding between you and an object generate the sense of spatiality. But since, on the sensible profile account, spatial relations are all meant to be a function of properties of the sensible profile, these subject-object spatial relations must in fact be properties of the sensible profile – the thing you are aware of. So the sensible profile account seems to commit you to the view that the feeling of subjectivity inherent in imaginative space is an illusion, or a mistake: you really are apprehending spatial properties, which nevertheless feel subjective. This is not a conclusive point, since the considerations that back it up are themselves a little hazy. Nevertheless, it seems that there is at least some extra explanation needed if the sensible profile account is going to deal adequately with the space of imagined objects.

A third and final problem concerns what room there really is in the sensible profile account for a view of imagination which adequately distinguishes the experience from hallucination. Johnston, remember, thinks that types of act are individuated by types of item. So if we simply adopt the sensible profile view wholesale, there is no room for imagination as a separate act, because the items of imaginative awareness are just the same as those of hallucinatory awareness. There are two ways round this. One could revise the account of appearances such that the items involved in imagination are substantially different, or one could drop Johnston's principle that acts of awareness are individuated purely by their items and instead argue that imagining is a different

sort of act because it is intrinsically different, not because it is directed at different items.

Given the materials there are to work with, it's hard to see how the account of items could be adapted such that a necessary difference between hallucination and imagination emerged. Johnston's account of items is, in a sense, quite minimal: sensible profiles include qualitative and spatial-relational properties. It is hard to argue that imagined appearances do not include those things. One might instead argue that the principle of composition is different in imagination. However, it would have to be different in such a way that there was a necessary difference in appearance; I am not just looking for an actual difference in the items of awareness, but a difference in the appearances they manifest. Again, it is hard to see what this different principle of composition could be, especially since I do not really know what it is in the first place.

Alternatively, one might argue that imaginative awareness involves the same items as hallucinatory awareness, but the two are distinguished by something inherent in the act, rather than the item. This is to drop Johnston's principle of differentiation of acts by item-type, which admittedly he does not give much argument for. But it is hard to see what sort of thing could be said about the inherent difference in types of awareness, or at least what sort of thing could be said with any great motivation beyond the desire to say something. In a sense, this is the old problem for act-object models of perception which was pressed against Moore by Ducasse: it is hard, if not impossible, to introspect on these 'acts', identify them as constituent parts of a mental state, and say something about their nature independently of the items

they are directed towards.¹⁵⁴ For my part, like Ducasse, I simply do not find enough material when introspecting on my imaginings to say anything assertive about how the act involved differs from that of hallucinating.

So it appears that the sensible profile view has multiple difficulties as a view of imagination. It skirts very close indeed to the pictorial view, because of how intentional objects are introduced. There is at least a lacuna concerning how certain spatial relations come to be included in the experience. And there is a serious question about how imagination might be distinguished from hallucination. What all of this suggests is that the sensible profile account has considerable difficulties as an account of imaginative appearances. For all its ingenuity, and without passing judgment on its adequacy as a theory of hallucination, I conclude that the sensible profile account will not serve my purposes.

3.4 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to examine several relational views of imagination, on which to imagine is to stand in a genuine relation to some item of awareness. I have examined three sorts of view: sense-data views, Meinongian views, and the sensible profile account. I have given reasons to think that none of these views will do. In the main, these reasons have consisted in recapitulations of criticisms made of the pictorial view. The lesson is that it is hard to give a relational view of imagination without ending up positing something like pictures of which one is aware. Thus, though I do

¹⁵⁴C.J. Ducasse. "Moore's "The Refutation of Idealism"". In: *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*. Ed. by P.A. Schilpp. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1942, pp. 225–251.

not think I have demonstrated that relational views must fail, I think I have shown that there is a general pattern to the failures of the ones I have discussed, suggesting that an alternative sort of explanation might be a better option. What is needed is an account of how how imagining differs from hallucination, such that the view which emerges is not a pictorial one, and not one on which imagined appearances are the same as hallucinated ones; and an auxiliary account of how the intentional objects of imagining are fixed, which similarly does not suggest pictorialism. What I am going to suggest in the next chapter is that all this can be achieved by taking seriously and pursuing the idea that imaginative appearances are functions of intentional content. Given the failure of the relational views I have discussed, such an intentional view is the most promising route left available to an account of imagination.

Chapter 4

Intentional Theories

In the previous chapter, I argued against relational accounts of imaginative appearances. In this chapter, I am going to make the case for the alternative: an intentional account. On an intentional account, to imagine is to be in a mental state with a certain sort of intrinsic intentional content which delivers a quasi-perceptual experience of an object.

I am not going to argue for a fully intentional view, though. Fully intentional views have it that the sensory phenomenology of imagination is due to qualia, intrinsic qualitative properties of experiences. I argued at the end of chapter two that, given the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the nature of qualia, it would be better to pursue my explanatory aims with reference to uninstantiated sensible properties (which may be equivalent to a certain sort of qualia). So the challenge is to accommodate a relational view of experience of sensible properties within an otherwise intentional framework that explains the quasi-perceptual appearance of imagined objects.

To argue for an intentional view requires a certain approach. The basic idea of the view I will propose is that intentional content intrinsic to the experience organizes sensible properties, of which you are aware, such that the experience is of the appearance of an object bearing those sensible properties. Since this is the case, the only way to examine how the intentional content structures the sensible properties, and what features the content must thus consist in, is to examine closely the phenomenology of the resultant experience. It is necessary to work out the nature of the content by examining the nature of the apparent object.

I have done some of this work already in the first chapter, when I discussed the quasi-perceptual nature of imagining. My strategy in the present chapter will be an elaboration of that discussion. As there, the aim is to explain how imaginative appearances can be like perceptual ones, without assimilating the two. My first step is to explain A.D. Smith's view of the intentional features of perceptual and hallucinatory experience. This view acts as a foil in the second section, in which I examine what needs to be changed in the account of hallucinatory appearances in order to arrive at an account of the features of imaginative appearances.¹⁵⁵

The result of this discussion is an account of how imaginative appearances appear: an account of the intentional content which organizes the sensible properties into appearances of objects. There are three challenges for this theory. The first is to

¹⁵⁵I am wary of making claims about who should be included with Smith in the intentionalist camp. As I made clear when taxonomizing views of hallucination in chapter, the fact that someone calls themselves an intentionalist is no reason to suppose they are in fact an intentionalist, as I understand the term. And though Smith cites various philosophers as fellow-travelers at certain points in his book, I am not sure that any of the people he mentions – among them Mackie, Levine, Harman, Routley, and others – are fully committed to the same view as Smith (nor do I think he thinks that they are). Perhaps the safest thing to say is that Smith sees his view primarily as a descendant of Husserl's account of perception, and of the phenomenological tradition more generally.

explain how imaginative appearances are not just subjective, but felt as – manifestly – subjective. It has to be the case that sensible properties are not just organized, but somehow deliberately organized. This I address in section three, by expanding on Sartre’s notion of positing as nothingness as an elaboration of the volitional nature of imagination. The second is to say something about the ontological status of the intentional objects generated by the experience. The third is to explain how imagination can be about particular objects, rather than just appearances of objects. I again turn to Smith in an attempt to address these latter two problems. I argue that he successfully addresses the first, in a way that I can adopt straightforwardly. But I also argue that his approach to the particularity question – like Johnston’s in the previous chapter – is not at all adequate, at least so far as imagination goes. So by the end of the chapter, I will have an account of imaginative appearances, and a serious challenge to surmount if that account is going to be developed into a complete account of imagination. The next chapter takes up the challenge.

4.1 Smith on perceptual appearances

The aim of my first two sections is to identify the features of intentional content that make imaginative experiences quasi-perceptual. Since the notion of quasi-perception is defined in relation to the notion of perception, it makes sense to first identify what the relevant features of perceptual content are, and then to consider (in the next section) what is different about quasi-perception. So in this section, I set out the features that make perceptual consciousness perceptual, the features which should

then be replicated in subjectively identical hallucinatory consciousness. That done, I can then examine what modifications of these conditions of hallucinatory and perceptual appearances can be made to encapsulate the different nature of imaginative appearances.

I am going to draw here on Smith's careful, lucid, and convincing account of the intentional features of perceptual appearances, which are also necessary for hallucinatory appearances. Smith's strategy for explaining what makes perceptual consciousness perceptual is to argue that sensations (qualia) are a necessary element of perceptual consciousness, and then consider what else besides sensations is necessary. He first identifies a broad necessary condition, and then specifies three ways in which this condition can be fulfilled. These three ways, then, are individually sufficient for perceptual consciousness when present in consciousness along with sensations.

The broad necessary condition is that "a notion of objectivity applies to perception in a way that it does not to sensation."¹⁵⁶ When we perceive, the objects of our experience appear to be and are independent of our perceptions, can endure, are public, and in principle can be sensed in more than one modality.¹⁵⁷ When we hallucinate, the objects of our experience merely appear to be, but are not, objective in these ways. So it is the appearance of objectivity that is basic to perceptual appearance. There are three ways in which objects of sensory experience can appear to be objective in this sense. In Smith's own summary, they are "phenomenal three-dimensionality... kinetic structure... and the *Anstoss*."¹⁵⁸ The presence of any one

¹⁵⁶Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 66-67.

¹⁵⁸A. D. Smith. "In Defence of Direct Realism". In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 73 (2 2006), pp. 411-424, p. 417.

of these characteristics in addition to sensation is sufficient for an object to appear as objective, and hence for the sensory consciousness to be perceptual. I will briefly explain each.

Phenomenal three-dimensionality is simply the idea that objects are presented at some distance from the subject's organ of sense (not that the object is presented as being itself three-dimensional). This at least entails that the distance between subject and object could change, and that something could interpose between the two.¹⁵⁹ Kinetic structure refers to the "movement of sense-organs in relation to perceived objects... those [movements] by which we come to enjoy different perspectives on perceptible objects".¹⁶⁰ Essentially, then, the idea is that if an experience is perspectival – if it admits of the possibility of different viewpoints on the same object – it counts as a perceptual experience. The *Anstoss*, whose name is borrowed from Fichte, is a phenomenon of "check or impediment to our active movement: an experienced obstacle to our animal striving, as when we push or pull against things."¹⁶¹ This condition relates specifically and only to the sense of touch; it is a necessary condition of haptic perceptual consciousness, but does not figure in other domains.¹⁶² So for a state to be perceptual – for an object to be apparently perceived – there must be a flux of sensations which provide the sensory material of the experience, and above that an appearance of three-dimensionality, or of perspective, or of a specific sort of resistance.

¹⁵⁹Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 137.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. 141.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 153.

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 158.

Each of these additional features is meant to be sufficient to imbue the apparent objects of hallucinatory experience with the quality of objectivity. Having given this account of what the features of perceptual consciousness are, Smith returns to the notion of objectivity. In place of the somewhat ragtag characterization of what objectivity means cited above, he gives a neater summation: the intentional features confer an appearance of objectivity because they amount to phenomenological perceptual constancy.¹⁶³ The presence of some sort of phenomenal constancy over and above sensation is sufficient for perceptual experiences, and it is also necessary, except in the case of tactile perception (since, according to Smith, touch is not necessarily ‘sensuously presentational’).¹⁶⁴ Examples of the perceptual constancies which Smith has in mind are constancies of position and of shape. Position constancy is the phenomenon whereby a change in a subject’s visual experience owing to a change in their position is not registered as a change in the position of the objects of experience. The objects appear to stay put. Shape constancy is the phenomenon whereby a change in position of an object, and thus a change in visual experience of it, is not registered as a change in the object’s shape: a round penny looks round whether it is viewed from the top or obliquely. In the latter case, it looks like a round shape tilted away from you. In general, Smith’s interest is in perceptual constancies where a change in visual experience is not experienced as a change in the object of experience.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 174.

¹⁶⁴ibid., p. 172. With a little regret, I am going to simplify matters from here on by ignoring the qualifications Smith makes regarding tactile perception, the *Anstoss*, and its different necessary conditions. Though I think his discussion is interesting, and the issue of imagined touch is too, the dialectic will get too convoluted if I pay it the regard it deserves, and it is better to just set it aside than to pay it a little attention.

¹⁶⁵Note that this means Smith is not concerned with color constancy, the phenomenon whereby changes in the stimulation of a retina are not experienced as changes of color – so, for example, a

So Smith's view is that if you have three-dimensionality or perspectival appearance, you have perceptual constancy; that perceptual constancies, where a change of experience is not experienced as an experience of change, are necessary and sufficient for an appearance of objectivity; and that an appearance of objectivity is necessary and sufficient for a perceptual appearance. Three-dimensionality and perspective are intrinsic features of perceptual consciousness, and according to Smith, "the non-sensory features of perceptual consciousness are not cognitive in their own right at all, but... have no other function than to structure the sensory field itself."¹⁶⁶ This means that the features just mentioned are, like sensations, intrinsic to perceptual consciousness; they are that in virtue of which such consciousness is intentionally perceptual, but they are not cognitive or conceptual impositions on the flux of sensation, and they do not have "the autonomous function of securing an object of awareness."¹⁶⁷ By structuring the sensory field, which means imposing some form of object-arrangement on a flux of sensations, one or the other of the non-sensory features partially constitutes an object for consciousness. So the idea, in sum, is that the flux of sensations is matched with some other non-sensory intrinsic feature of consciousness, which provides structure sufficient to ensure that an appearance of an independent object is manifest within consciousness. Such a consciousness is a perceptual consciousness.

Now, there is one immediately obvious problem with Smith's view, for my purposes: the role he accords to qualia or sensations. I argued in my second chapter

shade of yellow may look the same in lighter or darker conditions. This is outside Smith's interests, because there is no experience of change at all. *ibid.*, pp. 170-171

¹⁶⁶Smith, "In Defence of Direct Realism", *op. cit.*, p. 415.

¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 415.

chapter that, if you accept that you can secure *de re* reference to sensible qualities by imagining them, and you do not think that intrinsic qualities of experience can be objects of awareness, sensations cannot be what delivers the qualitative phenomenology of imagining. Smith holds this view of sensations, and so this at least needs changing. But this problem need not dissuade me from adopting Smith's view of the intentional, non-sensory aspects of perceptual appearances. Though Smith is committed to qualia, I see no reason why sets of sensible properties cannot serve equally well as the qualitative elements which are structured by intentional content. What is required is some sort of unstructured flux or flow of items that delivers sensory, qualitative experience, and both qualia and sensible properties are able to play that role. So either can figure as the qualitative things that are intentionally structured. Conversely, as I said in chapter two, I think it is possible to reconcile the *de re* thesis with a qualia explanation of sensory phenomenology, if the claim of transparency is abandoned. What is impossible is to reconcile the *de re* thesis with views that fail to address or take seriously the problem of how non-veridical experiences can have sensory phenomenology. Smith certainly cannot be accused of this (and nor, for that matter, can any of the view discussed in the previous chapter).¹⁶⁸ So though I think sensible properties play the qualitative role in imaginative appearances, this point of departure from Smith's view of hallucination need not stop me from adopting his

¹⁶⁸One sort of view that is subject to this accusation is the position which Smith terms 'reductive intentionalism', according to which the sensory nature of visual experience somehow ceases to be a key explanandum of a theory of perception. See Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., pp. 40-47. Smith's explicit target in this passage is Dennett; see Daniel Dennett. "On the Absence of Phenomenology". In: *Body, Mind and Method*. Ed. by D.F. Gustafson and B.L. Tapscott. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979, pp. 93-113; Daniel Dennett. "Quining Qualia". In: *Consciousness in Contemporary Science*. Ed. by A. Marcel and E. Bisiach. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 42-77.

view of intentional structuring. And his view of hallucinatory appearances is not straightforwardly implausible as a view of imaginary ones. After all, it provides an explanation of how we can have sensory experience of objects that are absent, which is the key explanandum for a theory of imagination.

Nevertheless, I cannot simply take the explanation of hallucinatory appearances and apply it to imaginative appearances, because of course, these are different sorts of appearance.¹⁶⁹ I am going to argue, as I did in the first chapter, that the key differences between hallucinatory and imaginative appearances cluster around the issue of dependence and subjectivity. Imaginative appearances feel dependent on the subject, in ways that hallucinatory appearances do not; and they are under the control of the subject in a way that hallucinatory appearances are not. In the next two sections, I will provide the necessary additional description and explanation of intentional features of imaginative experiences. I will start by explaining how Smith's description of the intentional elements of hallucination can be modified to preserve a distinction between imagination and hallucination; I will then expand upon how

¹⁶⁹Smith, incidentally, does not think his view applies to imagining either, and believes that imagining and hallucinating are different. This is of course correct, though not for the reasons he seems to hold. Smith says that “[h]allucinatory consciousness is sensory in nature. It is not like merely thinking or imagining an object. Rather, an object seems, as Husserl put it, to be bodily present. We do not speak of being “aware” of an object when we merely imagine one before us, however concretely we do it.” Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 206 There are three grounds suggested in this passage for distinguishing hallucination and imagination. The first is that imagining is not sensory, but hallucination is. This is false, if ‘sensory’ is taken to mean ‘with sensory phenomenology’. The second is that, when imagining, an object does not seem to be “bodily present”. This is perhaps true, if it is taken to be statement about objectivity; but false, if it is meant to be about three-dimensionality. The third is that we do not speak of being aware of an object when we imagine it. This seems to me false, but of course much turns on what “aware of” should be taken to mean in this context. In any case, there is nothing in what Smith says to rule out the application of some of his ideas to imagining; the most convincing way of reading the passage I have just examined is to suppose that Smith does not really have sensory imagining in mind, but rather something more like propositional imagining.

dependence and subjectivity can be accounted for, in terms of volitional intentional action.

4.2 Subjectivity

The key feature of perceptual appearances that is lacking in imaginative appearances is objectivity; or to put it the other way, the key feature of imaginative appearances which perceptual ones lack is subjectivity. The objects of imaginative experience do not appear to be independent of the subject in the same way that the objects of perceptual appearances do. So the easiest way to modify Smith's account of hallucination to arrive at an account of imaginative appearances would be to substitute subjectivity for objectivity as the necessary condition of appearing. Where he holds that perceptual consciousness requires an appearance of objectivity, I could hold that imaginative consciousness requires an appearance of subjectivity; when you imagine, you are somehow aware of the fact that the objects of your experience are dependent on you for their existence. The task would then be to work out how subjective appearances are manifest, just as Smith does with objective appearances.

However, this approach will not do. The problem is that the two features of perceptual consciousness which Smith thinks can suffice (along with sensations) for an appearance of objectivity are sometimes features of imaginative appearances too. Both three-dimensionality and perspectival awareness are at least sometimes, if not always, part of imaginative appearances. If you imagine seeing a horse, it is imagined from a particular perspective, side-on, face-on, from the perspective of a rider; and if

three-dimensionality is understood as presentation at a distance, then the facts that you are imagining a normal horse (not a dwarf or giant one), and that it appears as a certain size, entail that it is presented as being at some distance.

So the process of modification cannot simply be one of giving necessary and sufficient conditions for an appearance of subjectivity, which then take the place of the conditions which suffice for objectivity. Those conditions, three-dimensionality and perspective, have to be part of the account of imagination as well as of the account of perception. The way round the difficulty is to deny that three-dimensionality or perspectival presentation suffice for an appearance of objectivity. What I am going to argue is that, for objects to appear independent and objective as they do in perception, two additional features have to be present besides constancy. First, it needs to be the case that objects admit, not just of perspectival variation, but unfulfilled expectation. Second, it needs to be the case that they appear to be manifest in some sort of objective space independent of the subject. I am going to argue that these features are not present in imaginative appearances; instead, imaginative appearances incorporate a feeling of certainty, and a subjective sort of space. Thus, imaginative appearances appear as if they are dependent on the subject. These two features, which are present in imagination and absent in hallucination, are necessary features of imaginative appearances, in addition to apparent constancy; they are the counterparts of expectations and objective space. So what makes the difference between the two sorts of appearances, between objectivity and subjectivity, is the pair of notions introduced in the first chapter: the subjective space of imagination, and quasi-observation.

4.2.1 Dependent space

I argued in the first chapter that the distinction which McGinn and Jaspers separately draw between the spaces of imagination and perception is one way to distinguish imaginative appearances from other ones. It is now time to return to that distinction and explore its relevance to the present context. What I will argue is that it is necessary for an appearance of independence that objects appear to be occupying objective space; that this condition is met in perception and hallucination; and that it is not met in imagination. Instead, imagined objects appear in subjectively constituted space. I will explain how this is so.

The additional condition on perceptual consciousness I propose is that the objects which figure in it need to be presented in a three-dimensional space constituted independently of the subject. This is different from the idea that the objects are presented at some distance; it is the further idea that the distance at which they are presented is itself presented as a relation independent of the subject's volition. Objects can appear to be independent of us and constant in their shape and size and so on because they are apprehended as occupying objective space.

The details of how exactly the space that objects occupy figures in perceptual consciousness have been the subject of much work in the phenomenological tradition. For example, according to Casey, Husserl thinks that perception involves the apprehension of objects as located in an objective spatio-temporal realm, which allows them to be presented as standing out against a background, co-located with other objects,

located at determinate places, and transferable within that realm.¹⁷⁰ Merleau-Ponty also spends quite some time discussing how the spatial orientation of bodies and objects figures in perception.¹⁷¹ I do not want to discuss the details of the space of perception here, but the fact that it has been so seriously discussed indicates that it is far from implausible that presentation in objective space is a necessary condition of perceptual objectivity.

Now, in imagination, at least visual imagination, some sort of sense of space is also necessary. To imagine a horse is to imagine a horse as occupying a certain space. This is because horses are three-dimensional objects, and so to imagine one, it needs to appear to occupy a portion of three-dimensional space. Further, a horse imagined – at least, a horse visualized – is a horse visualized at some distance from the subject. But the sense of space is peculiar, because as Jaspers and McGinn say, the space of imagining is subjective; imagined objects do not appear in the usual objective three-dimensional space of ordinary objects, but rather in their own subjective space. So for an appearance of an object to be manifest in imaginative experience, the object needs to appear to be in three-dimensional space; yet that space seems subjective, and this is one thing that distinguishes imaginative appearances from perceptual ones. One way to get a grasp of the peculiarity of imagined space is to consider that, though a visualized horse is visualized at some distance, it need not be at a determinate distance. Your imagined horse may be far enough away that you can see it nose to

¹⁷⁰Casey provides a pithy discussion of this work in the phenomenological tradition, drawing mostly on Husserl. See Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, op. cit., pp. 153-159.

¹⁷¹See M. Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. by Colin Smith. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, Part 2 ch.2.

tail, and close enough that you can see the cleft in its hoof; but within this range, there may be no particular fact about how distant it is.

So the idea is that for objects to appear objective, they need to appear to be in independent space. Imagined objects do not appear to be in independent space. So imagined objects do not appear objective; so they do not appear as independent objects being perceived, but as subjective objects being imagined. Now, I think the sense in which perceived objects appear in objective space is clear, and so I will not say much more about that. However, the idea that imagined objects appear in subjective space needs some elaboration if it is to be convincing. I am going to do so by pointing out and choosing between two different ways of explaining and accounting for it.

Supposing that you are convinced that there is something peculiar about imaginative space, there are broadly two options available. The first is to propose that the spaces of imagining and perceiving are, in fact, fundamentally similar. The question then is, what makes them seem different? Why does imaginative space appear peculiar, if it is fundamentally of the same sort as perceptual space? The second is to propose that the space of imagination is fundamentally different from that of perception. The question then is, what constitutes the space of imagining? What intentional feature gives the appearance of spatial location to imagined objects?

The first option is given by Heidegger in his interpretation of Kant, and taken up by Dufrenne. The idea that Heidegger finds in Kant is that there is a distinction between the 'transcendental imagination' and the 'empirical imagination.' The transcendental imagination is a form of imagining that constitutes a space in which an appearance can be manifested. The empirical imagination is a form that then mani-

feats an appearance within that space.¹⁷² The crucial move is succinctly expressed by Dufrenne (who may, in fact, be going somewhat beyond what Heidegger intended): “as the threshold of representation, we must posit [transcendental] imagination as the root of space and time... imagination... lie[s] at the root of perception.”¹⁷³ So the idea is this. Imagination, or rather a certain sort of imagination, is responsible for the constitution of all perceived or apparently perceived space. This explains how the spaces of imagination and perception can seem similar: they can seem similar, because they are the same, founded as they are on transcendental imagination.

Now, I think this is a fascinating idea, but it faces a problem in the present context. If imagined and perceived objects in fact occupy the same space, constituted by imagination, what accounts for the fact that the spaces seem different? I do not find an explanation of this in Dufrenne or Heidegger, and can think of only one. It could be that, when you imagine, you are (somehow) reflexively aware of the fact that you are deliberately constituting the space in which objects appear. When you perceive, this reflexive awareness is absent, or diminished. Thus, the space of imagined objects feels subjective in a way that the space of perceived objects does not, though that space is in fact equally subjective.

This explanation of the differences and similarities between the spaces of imagination and perception is ingenious, but would seem to require much more detail, and

¹⁷²I am hedging my phrasing in this paragraph, because I do not feel qualified to decide whether or not Heidegger is right to find this idea in Kant. All I need, though, is the idea, not an evaluation of it as Kant interpretation. See Martin Heidegger. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Trans. by James S. Churchill. Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 1950/1962, Section three, parts A and B. Gibbons suggests that Heidegger’s interpretation is of the right form, but with the wrong details. See Gibbons, *Kant’s Theory of Imagination: Bridging Gaps in Judgement and Experience*, op. cit., pp. 29, 50.

¹⁷³Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, op. cit., pp. 352-353.

some fairly heavy theoretical commitments. On the grounds of simplicity, I am going to recommend the second possible explanation. This is to suggest that the spaces of imagination and perception seem different, because they are different. This line is adopted, as I have mentioned, by Jaspers and McGinn; it is also Casey's preferred explanation, and is at least suggested by Husserl.

The main challenge for this explanation is to say what constitutes the space of imagining: what intentional feature accounts for the fact that objects appear located at some point, but in a space that feels subjective? I think there is a quite simple answer to this question. The subjective space of imagining is constituted by the implied viewpoint of the subject and the relations to that viewpoint implied by the posited qualities of the imagined object. For example, suppose that you are once again imagining a horse: an averagely sized horse, seen from the side. What constitutes the space that the imagined object occupies is that part of the intentional content is a viewpoint, and part of the intentional content is a posited object of a certain size. From these elements, spatiality can arise. In a sense, this is all that is required in perception too; the difference is that, in imagination, the viewpoint is adopted and the object is posited, not actual.

I will have more to say about positing shortly, and what I say will clarify this explanation. But it should be apparent that it holds an advantage over Dufrenne's position. The explanation of the peculiarity of imagined space in terms of intentional elements that differ from the intentional elements of perception explains why imagined space feels different from perceptual space: it is because it is composed of different

elements. Further explanation of those elements will further elucidate the explanation, but its outline is clear enough.

To sum up this section, then. A necessary condition for the appearance of objectivity is that objects appear to be located in independent, objective space. This condition is not met in imagination; imagined objects appear in subjective space. This subjective space is constituted by the intentional relations between an assumed viewpoint and a posited object, and it feels subjective just because that object is posited. This is one way in which imaginative appearances lack objectivity, and hence differ from hallucinatory appearances. As I mentioned at the start of this section, there is a second necessary condition for objectivity that Smith does not notice and imaginative appearances do not meet. This is the admission of unfulfilled expectations: I will now explain this notion.

4.2.2 Unfulfilled expectations

The second condition, additional to Smith's, for objects to appear independent of the observer, is that it has to be the case that they admit of expectations and disappointments. This is an addition to the point about perspective. It is not merely that the objects admit of perspectival variation; it is that they admit of expectations and disappointments regarding what those variations will reveal. Imaginative appearances do not admit of such unfulfilled expectations. This is part of Sartre's notion of quasi-observation, which I referred to in the first chapter. As I explained there, there are several similar and not quite equivalent ways of putting this point. But the

basic idea behind them all is that imagined objects do not seem to be independent of the subject in the way that perceived objects do, because there is no sense in which the subject might be disappointed in their expectations of how the appearance of the object will change under variations of perspective.

Let me explain this point a little more. I have argued that imagined and perceived objects alike admit of perspectival variation; there is a feeling that, if your viewpoint moves, the objects' appearance will change in predictable ways. But in perception, the most precise way to express this is that you have an expectation that the object's appearance will change in the ways you predict. For example, you might well suppose that going round the other side of the horse will reveal to you that its other flank is the same color as the one you are presently perceiving. You thus have an expectation of how the horse's other flank will appear. But you can be disappointed in that expectation; a mischievous epistemologist may have painted one flank of the horse a different color.

In imagination, this is not the case. As Sartre expresses it, there is a sense of certainty. You can know – not expect – what color your imagined horse's other flank will be. There is no possibility of disappointment, and expectations are not the best way to express your attitudes towards occluded parts of objects, since expectations admit of disappointment. The point is really quite simple once expressed, and I will not labor it much. It seems clear that perceptual objectivity requires this element of expectation and disappointment, and it seems equally clear that it is not present in imagination. The deeper question here is what intentional feature of imagining makes it the case that this sense of certainty inheres in the experience.

The answer to this question is tied up with the notion of positing I adverted to in my discussion of spatiality. This notion of positing is how I will meet the challenge of explaining how it is that imaginative appearances are not just in fact subjective, but feel subjective. So it is high time I explained this idea. I will do so in the next section.

4.3 Making things appear

In the chapter thus far, I have articulated Smith's account of the intentional features of perceptual experience that make it perceptual. I have argued that, in order to meet his condition of objective, independent appearances, perceptual experiences have to have two features in addition to those he adduces. Those features are that perceived objects appear in independent space, and that they admit of expectations and disappointments. I have argued that these two features are lacking in imagination; instead, imagined objects appear in subjective space, and one can be certain about what will happen during perspectival variation.

Now, I have suggested that the reason the space of imagining seems subjective is because it is a function of the assumed size of the imagined object, which is a matter of what is posited; and I have similarly suggested that the reason one can be certain about the occluded parts of objects is because the object is posited. This notion of positing is the key to explaining how imaginative appearances are subjective. The purpose of this section is to explain the notion, and the ancillary idea of predication. Both of these are active, volitional elements of imaginative consciousness which are

not present in hallucinatory experience. So I will be explaining the subjective nature of imagination by expanding on the notion that it is, in a specific and special way, volitional.

4.3.1 Positing

The notion of positing I am employing is similar to Sartre's, but not (it seems) identical. Nevertheless, the similarities make it easiest to explain what I have in mind by first explaining Sartre's ideas. Sartre starts from the relatively uncontroversial idea that all non-reflexive conscious mental states are intentional; that is, they are about some object other than themselves.¹⁷⁴ He then claims that for a mental state to be about an object is for that state to posit the object, and that each different sort of mental state posits its object in a distinctive manner.¹⁷⁵ Positing here is to be understood as an "act of belief or a positional act."¹⁷⁶ So the idea is that a given sort of conscious state can be distinguished from other sorts according to the position taken towards the object of the state inherent in the intentional act.

Sartre goes on to claim that, where perceptual states posit their objects as existing, imaginative experiences posit their objects in one of four ways, collectively known as 'positing as nothingness.' According to Sartre, imagination can "posit the object as non-existent, or as absent, or as existing elsewhere; it can also 'neutralize' itself, which is to say not posit its object as existent."¹⁷⁷ His idea is that there are slightly

¹⁷⁴Sartre, *The Imaginary*, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁷⁵ibid., p. 12. Note here the difference from Johnston's idea, discussed in the previous chapter, that types of mental act are individuated by types of objects; the idea here, that different mental states posit the same objects differently, is almost the exact converse of Johnston's view.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., p. 12.

different positions you can take up regarding the existential status and location of imagined objects, all of which involve an assertion of the object's non-presence. I will briefly gloss these four positions.

The first two positions Sartre names are both negative. To posit an object as non-existent is to suppose that it does not exist (and perhaps that it never has). You might posit Rocinante as non-existent. To posit an object as absent is to suppose that it does not exist in your immediate location, without supposing that it does not exist somewhere or at some time. If you are unsure whether Desert Orchid is still alive, you might posit him as absent; he is certainly not there in front of you, but he may be somewhere. The third position Sartre names is, in a sense, positive. To posit an object as existing elsewhere is to suppose that it is not there in front of you, but that it is existent somewhere. You might posit Desert Orchid in this way if you think that he is definitely still alive and out to pasture somewhere. Finally, to not posit an object as existent is to imagine an object while taking no view on whether it exists or not, simply supposing that it is not present. This species of negation best captures what you do when you imagine a horse, but no particular horse; you are having an experience about a horse, and there is certainly not a horse present, but there is no fact of the matter to take a view on as to whether that horse exists or does not, since there is no particular horse picked out by 'that'.

The idea that imagining is intimately connected with negation is not unique to Sartre; McGinn suggests that the employment of negation in reasoning and in thoughts about the non-actual is "an achievement of the imagination."¹⁷⁸ But his

¹⁷⁸McGinn, *Mindsight*, op. cit., p. 141.

target is rather broader than Sartre's, since he is concerned with imagination in its full generality, sensory and verbal. Sartre is concerned just with sensory imagination, and indeed thinks that the sort of positioning he is describing "can occur only when quasi-observation is concerned."¹⁷⁹ I do not think it matters for my purposes whether he is right about this, or whether one or the other of his positional modes is equivalent to the broader employment of negation which McGinn has in mind. The point for the present is that Sartre thinks sensory imagining involves a positioning act towards an object which is not there before you.

Now, I broadly agree with Sartre here. I especially agree with his assertion that "these positional acts... are not superimposed on the image... the positional act is constitutive of the image."¹⁸⁰ But I want to be careful and clear about exactly what positing an object means. It is not that you take yourself to be aware of some actual item in imaginative experience, or that you pretend that you are. Rather, the idea is that your imaginative experience is about some object, which you know is not present, and which you actively adopt as the object of your experience. The point of the quotation I just cited is that to position yourself towards an object in imagination is not to take up an attitude with regard to some image or appearance. Rather, it is a necessary condition of an appearance becoming manifest to you that you adopt some object as the thing the experience is about. But this does not commit you to thinking that the objects of imaginative intentionality must, in some substantial sense, exist.

¹⁷⁹Sartre, *The Imaginary*, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 12-13.

Sartre's conception of the structure of intentional mental states is idiosyncratic within the phenomenological tradition, though this is less clear in *The Imaginary* than it is in *Being and Nothingness*. In brief outline, Sartre rejects the Husserlian idea that intentional mental states involve intrinsic intentional content which characterizes an object for consciousness. Instead, Sartre holds that consciousness is 'empty', has no content, but instead consists in a 'reaching' for an object which is transcendent of, separate from, consciousness.¹⁸¹

I wish to diverge from Sartre at this point. The model of intentional structure that he has in mind is invidious for my purposes (besides being not especially convincing in general compared to the Husserlian alternative – but I do not want to get into that here). The problem is that, if one adopts Sartre's account of intentionality, one seems committed to the idea that imagining really is a relation to some object outside of consciousness; and then we are back to the idea that imagining involves standing in a genuine relation to some sort of object.

The alternative that I advocate is to retain the notion of positing as nothingness, especially for its acute description of the ways in which imaginative objects can be entertained; but to reject the underlying model of the structure of consciousness in favor of a more orthodox Husserlian model. The idea is this. Imagining involves non-sensory, intrinsic intentional content, which is sufficient to amount to the positing of an intentional object. That is, the content is sufficiently determinate that an accurate description of the mental state will involve reference to an object, as the best way

¹⁸¹Sartre's theory of consciousness and intentionality is mainly laid out in Jean-Paul Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*. Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes. London: Routledge, 1943/1995, pp. 3-32. Perspicuous commentary and criticism can be found in Dermot Moran. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 356-363, 385-387.

of describing what the content is about. So an object is posited as the complement of the intentional content, but that positing – as Sartre rightly says – is inherently negative; the object is posited as, at the very least, not present to perception.

This conception of positing retains the Husserlian idea that intentional mental states involve intrinsic intentional content, and that intentional objects amount to little more than the correct characterization of that content; reference to them thus does not commit one to the possibility of reference to non-existent objects (I will examine this idea in more detail later in the chapter). But I also keep Sartre's idea that it is of the essence of imagination that the intentional object is posited as – taken to be – absent, or non-existent, or elsewhere. It is just that the positing is done by the entertainment of intentional content, not by taking up an attitude towards a transcendent object. Further, I agree with both that the experience is about the object; it is an experience of whatever is posited, not an experience of the content which posits.

So to imagine is for some intentional content to characterize an object which is posited by that content as not present to consciousness. This idea of positing can account for two things about imagining. The first is the fact that imagining seems to be of objects, rather than of mere appearances. What the experience is about is the posited object, and it is about that object because the experience is best characterized as intentionally directed towards that object. The second is the way in which imagined objects seem dependent on the conscious state of which they are parts. If intentional objects of imagination are merely characterizations of content, and that content is intrinsically such that it posits its object as absent, it should be

no surprise that the overall state is one in which the subject is implicitly aware the object of their consciousness is dependent on that conscious state for its existence.

I will explain the first point more shortly, when I examine the idea that sensible properties are predicated of the posited object. But before that, I want to expand on the point about positing being active. What I am proposing is that, because positing as nothingness involves taking up as an object of experience some thing that the subject knows is not present, imaginative awareness is thoroughly, inherently active; it is of its nature to actively posit an object in order to make something out of nothing. This active, organizing nature is what distinguishes imaginative positing of objects from perception of objects. Where perception is merely receptive of the objects and sensible properties presented to it, imagination involves actively positing an object, which structures sensible properties so as to deliver the appearance of that object. This active organization via positing is part of what distinguishes imagination from perception; it is the way in which imagination's objects are subject to the will.

Two caveats need to be appended. First, this is not active awareness in the sense intended by enactive theories of perception. The idea there is that perception involves active engagement with the world, and that our (alleged) perceptual awareness of occluded parts of objects is to be explained by awareness of potential motor activity. But I am not proposing that imagining involves engagement in this sense; I am not supposing that imaginative awareness confers a sense of possible motive engagement with the world in this sense. That would, effectively, be to deny the point I made above about expectations in perception, and certainty in imagination.

Second, one might wonder if the distinction between passive perception and active, positing imagination is as stark as I have just made it out to be. For example, the Gestalt psychologists held that perception often involves active organization of stimuli, according to certain laws of organization. So it is not the case that perception is wholly passive. This is a point on which I agree. In fact, I will go on in the next chapter to advocate Gestalt theory as a way of elucidating both imaginative awareness and imaginative intentionality. But the recognition that perception is active and organizing too need not derail my point about positing. The idea is that imaginative awareness is wholly active – all aspects of the organization of stimuli are determined by it. Perception, by contrast, is only partially active and organizing in this sense. Indeed, the point that perception is somewhat active should augment the point I am making about imagination. If it is not outlandish to suppose that perception is partially a process of intentionally conferring meaning and organization, it is not such a big step to suppose that imagination involves all meaning and organization being conferred intentionally.

So the idea of positing, in sum, is this. When you imagine, you posit an object. That is, you actively assume a certain object as the intentional object of imaginative experience. That object is posited as nothingness, in one of several ways, and your reflexive awareness that it is so posited explains why the object feels dependent on you for its spatiality, and why it does not admit of expectations and disappointments. The fact that imagination involves this sort of active positing of an intentional object is the sense in which it is subject to the will; the object is actively posited, and can be just as actively changed or dismissed.

Now, I have said that this posited intentional object does not only make the experience about some thing; it also structures the sensible properties involved in the experience in such a way that an appearance of an object is manifest to the subject. And I said that this is achieved by predication of the sensible properties to the intentional object. I will now say something about just what I mean by predication, and how it figures in the view.

4.3.2 Predication

I have asserted several times now that imagining involves predicating sensible properties of posited objects. Supposing that the notion of a posited object is clear enough, I should explain what it means to predicate properties of one. The idea, in essence, is that the sensible properties you are aware of are assigned to some object of experience; this structures the sensible properties into something like the appearance of the object. But as I have just explained, that intentional object does not exist as an item of relational awareness; it is merely an intentional posit, based on intentional content, which makes the experience about an object, rather than a heap of sensible properties.

The sensible properties involved in visual appearances of all sorts must be organized or structured in such a way that an appearance of an object is manifest to the subject. One element of organization necessary for sensible properties to manifest an appearance of an object is spatial or temporal organization. They must seem to be at certain positions relative to each other in time or in space in order to compose an

appearance. With regard to visual appearances, the sensible properties involved in the appearance of a black horse with a white streak on its nose must be arranged such that the white streak appears surrounded by black (the rest of the nose) and contiguous to much more black (the rest of the horse). With regard to auditory appearances, the notes of a melody must be arranged temporally such that they follow each other sequentially, with the apposite durations. If sensible properties were not manifested at positions relative to each other, no experience of appearance could emerge.

Now, three-dimensionality and perspective can together explain this spatial organization. But though spatial organization is necessary for the manifestation of object-appearances, it is not sufficient. Some sort of compositional binding of properties into appearances of objects is also necessary. Consider the example just given, of the black horse with the white streak. If the sensible properties were merely spatially organized, you would have an experience of a set of contiguous irregular shapes. But you have an experience of an appearance of a horse; an appearance of a coherent object. This is especially clear if you imagine two horses standing in a paddock. In this case there are two distinct objects being imagined, each with its own appearance and each involving spatial organization of sensible properties; but the whole experience also involves spatial organization of the two objects relative to each other. The objects appear as composed wholes, which are capable of standing in spatial relations to each other. So for appearances of objects to be manifest in visual experience, sensible properties need to be not just spatially organized, but also composed into appearances of objects; this involves something over and above mere spatial organization of sensible properties.

In perception, of course, what binds properties into objects is that they are properties of objects, which are items of awareness. But since I have ruled out relational views of imagination, I need some theory of how the sensible properties we are aware of are assigned to intentional objects, without saying that they are enjoyed by some actual object of awareness. Predication is the notion that will serve this purpose.

To predicate a property of an object, in this context, is to ascribe that property to that object. To clarify the notion at hand, I want to make use here of a distinction which Geach makes between two ways of ascribing a property to an object. According to Geach, some adjectives are predicative, and some are attributive. The distinction is that:

in a phrase ‘an AB’ (‘A’ being an adjective and ‘B’ being a noun) ‘A’ is a (logically) predicative adjective if the predication ‘is an AB’ splits up logically into a pair of predications ‘is a B’ and ‘is A’; otherwise... ‘A’ is a (logically) attributive adjective.¹⁸²

For example, the phrase “that is a black horse” can be split logically into two predications which conjoined are equivalent to the original phrase, viz. “that is a horse and that is black”. So ‘black’ is predicative. By contrast, “that is a big horse” cannot be so split: “that is a horse and that is big” is not equivalent to the original sentence. As Geach points out, if it were so equivalent, it would be simple to show that fleas are enormous and elephants are tiny.

Now, my suggestion is that sensible properties are predicated of imagined objects in Geach’s sense. If you are imagining a black horse, you are imagining a horse, and you are imagining a black thing. You are imagining a black horse because the

¹⁸²P.T. Geach. “Good and Evil”. In: *Analysis* 17.2 (1956), pp. 33–42, p. 33.

distinct property black of which you are aware is being predicated of a horse, which is the intentional object of your experience as posited. My further suggestion is that non-sensible properties of imagined objects are all attributive in Geach's sense. They are so, because they are functions of posited intentional content, rather than things of which you are aware. And since they are such functions, they cannot be decomposed from the intentional object.

In the sense that I am using it, then, predication is simply an intentional action which assigns a uninstantiated sensible quality to a posited object. The reason I use predication as the notion is simply that it gives us a good clear grasp of what is going on. Predication is an ascriptive relationship between an object and a quality. As I have argued, imagining does not just involve sensible qualities – if it did, it would amount to no more than an inner light show or some assortment of noises. So those sensible qualities must be apprehended as qualities of something. To say that you are imagining a black horse is to say that you are aware of some black quality as a quality of a horse. That is to say, the black quality is being predicated of some object, namely a horse. But predication does not require that the object exist; it merely requires that you are able to assign the sensible qualities to some object. Rather than actual instantiation by an object, as on relational views, it is this predication to an object that delivers object-like structure, and thus quasi-observational experience of an object.

4.3.3 Summary

I have articulated a mixed view of imaginative appearances, which is mixed because it incorporates both intentional content and relational awareness. When you imagine, you are aware of sensible properties, which are predicated of an intentional object; that intentional object is formed of intentional content which provides the non-sensuous aspects of the experience, including the space. Because the object is actively posited, it is subject to your will, and because it is actively posited, it does not admit of disappointments associated with perspectival variation.

The view is, to be sure, complex, but imagination is a complex phenomenon. And in explaining the view, I have accounted for the quasi-perceptual nature of imagination. Imaginative appearances are different from perceptual appearances, because they are dependent on the subject: imagined objects do not appear to be objective. This is because they appear in subjective space, and do not admit of disappointments. Further, I have given some sense of how imagination can be subject to the will; it is so, because it involves the inherently active, volitional act of positing an object as the object of imaginative experience.

There are two challenges that this view faces. The first is that I have said nothing much about the ontological status of these intentional objects, and one might think that they are dubious. The second is to do with how imaginative experiences can be about particular objects, rather than generic ones. Smith's view of hallucination also faces these problems. So in an attempt to meet them, I will first outline what Smith

says about the ontology and particularity of intentional objects of hallucination, and then evaluate the possibility of adopting his explanations for imagination.

4.4 Objects and particulars

The accusations I just leveled against my own view are first, that it trades on a notion of intentional objects which is ontologically suspicious; and second, that it does not account for how objects of imagination can be particulars. It is instructive to see how Smith deals with similar problem for his view of hallucination. To address the first, he adopts what he takes to be an ontologically innocuous notion of intentional objects. To address the second, he more or less denies that it is really possible. So far as imagination goes, I am going to endorse the first move, and reject the second.

Smith's view of hallucination is Meinongian in the sense that he takes seriously and attempts to defend the notion that, when you hallucinate, you are aware of an object that doesn't exist. This object is an intentional object; hence, he calls his view 'intentionalism'. The intentional object of an experience is what it is of or about. So Smith's position is that hallucinatory experiences are experiences of objects that do not exist. In this respect, Smith's view is similar to the general Meinongian view discussed above.

In its details, though, Smith's view is rather different. According to the general Meinongian, when you imagine (or hallucinate), you are aware of some non-existent object, which enjoys sensible properties of which you are also aware. But according to Smith, the sensuous nature of hallucination is due to qualia, or as he terms them, sen-

sations. Smith explicitly rejects an act-item analysis of sensory awareness, on which the act of sensory awareness is separate from the sensible item of awareness.¹⁸³ This, he thinks, leads inexorably to the sense-data view, via the argument from illusion.¹⁸⁴ So hallucinations have a sensory character because they are experiences which have sensory qualities inherently, but we are not aware of those sensory qualities.

So what are we aware of when we hallucinate? This is the Meinongian aspect of Smith's position. Smith's is a restricted view, in that he adopts a Meinongian view of certain objects without adopting a Meinongian view of all putative non-existent objects. He argues that "in hallucination a subject is sensorily aware of an object that does not exist", without affirming that all putative non-existent objects should be taken seriously.¹⁸⁵ This allows him to articulate his position while avoiding objections to Meinongianism predicated on the implausibility of (for example) the round square having some form of existence. Smith is solely concerned with articulating the idea that hallucination presents us with "*normal objects*: normal *physical* objects, to boot, in the sense that they are presented in three-dimensional space... the only difference between a veridically perceived object and a hallucinated one is that the latter *does not exist*."¹⁸⁶

Despite what you might usually suppose of a Meinongian view, and despite what seems to be suggested in the passage just quoted, Smith is at pains to stress that his

¹⁸³Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

¹⁸⁴I've not mentioned this argument much, since it seems to bear hardly at all on imagination. But briefly, the argument is that, since illusions show us that appearances and reality differ, perceptual appearances must be due to sensible properties distinct from the properties we usually suppose objects have.

¹⁸⁵Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 237.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 234, Smith's italics.

position is utterly ontologically innocuous. It does not imply that we need to accept a plurality of types of existence, a realm of subsistent entities, or anything of that sort.¹⁸⁷ The things of which we are aware are intentional objects, and talking about them as if they exist is “not just ‘a way’ of talking about perceptual [including hallucinatory] experience, but the phenomenologically necessary, only adequate way.”¹⁸⁸ But neither being aware of an intentional object, nor talking about an intentional object, requires that the objects exist. Smith is aiming for an “ontologically reductive account of intentionality”, according to which “[n]on-existent intentional objects supervene on intentional experiences”, but he does not want to give a “psychological reduction”.¹⁸⁹ So we are to understand the intentional objects of hallucination as being ways of characterizing intentional states: things that we need to talk about in order to “do phenomenological justice to the nature of perceptual consciousness”, but things that are ontologically dependent on those states and ultimately reducible to them.

To really get clear on Smith’s view, we need to examine more closely exactly what these intentional objects are, and what it means to be aware of them. The awareness question is, in a way, settled by the ontological reduction just mentioned and the insistence that intentional objects do not exist. Since intentional objects supervene on intentional experiences, and since they do not otherwise exist, awareness cannot be a relation in which we stand to them. Relations require the existence of their relata, and intentional objects do not exist. To say we are aware of an intentional

¹⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 237-242.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p. 244.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., p. 244.

object, then, is just to characterize a mental state; it is not to say that that mental state consists in a relation to some object. Note that this account of awareness differs from the one used in the relational views discussed in the previous chapter. On all those views, awareness is a genuine relation.

Now, we need to know more about what these intentional objects consist in if we are to settle the question of whether they are going to be useful explanatory tools for imagination. One way of inquiring into intentional objects is to ask what their identity conditions are: what makes one intentional object different from another? When it comes to hallucination, Smith's answer is that "the nature of the intentional object... [is] wholly determined by the subjective character of experience, by how things seem to the subject."¹⁹⁰ He does not think this is true of veridical perception or illusion, but that need not concern us here. The point is that, when you hallucinate, the object of your hallucination is wholly determined by how things seem to you. This is a natural move; if intentional objects are just meant to characterize phenomenal states, they shouldn't have natures that go beyond what is apparent in those phenomenal states.

What follows from this is crucial for present purposes. Smith asserts that "MacBeth did not see a dagger... [w]hat he saw was something that *looked like* (perhaps exactly like) a dagger."¹⁹¹ MacBeth's hallucinatory state is "subjectively identical to *both* a possible perception of a real dagger *and* a possible perception of a real [much misshapen] carrot."¹⁹² According to Smith, "true characterizations of hallucinations cannot exceed what is *sensorily given* to the subject."¹⁹³ So though MacBeth did not

¹⁹⁰Ibid., p. 257.

¹⁹¹Ibid., 263, Smith's italics.

¹⁹²Ibid., 263, Smith's italics.

¹⁹³Ibid., 264, Smith's italics.

see a dagger, he did see something that was dagger-shaped, dagger-colored, and so forth.¹⁹⁴ Smith teases out and accepts several implications of this: that you cannot hallucinate objects you have previously seen; that hallucinated objects necessarily do not exist; that there are not *de re* hallucinations; and that “there is no distinction between hallucinating an apple and hallucinating an existent apple.”¹⁹⁵ So the intentional objects of hallucinations are appearances of objects, and are not – never can be – real objects or possible objects. They are just appearances, since that is all that is given or presented to the subject in hallucination. The subject may take their hallucination to be of an existent object, or something they have seen before, but really, it is of – about – an appearance, and nothing more than that.

I can now summarize Smith’s view of the objects of hallucination. To hallucinate is to be have an experience with inherent sensational qualities. What you hallucinate is an intentional object. This object is something you can refer to as if it were real, but it is not a real thing; it is just a way of characterizing the mental state you are in, and to that extent, supervenes on the state. The non-existent object is not anything more than an appearance, which may be exactly like a real appearance. But it is not an appearance of an existent thing, and it is an appearance that necessarily does not exist. So the qualitative aspects of hallucination are due to qualia, and the object of hallucination is fixed by what appears to the subject in virtue of the qualitative aspects of the experience. I will now assess the suitability of this position on as an explanation of the ontology and particularity of imagination’s objects.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 264.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 265-266;245.

4.4.1 Smith's view assessed

Smith's view of hallucination's objects has a feature which I propose to endorse, and feature that I propose to reject. The feature that I propose to endorse is the insistence that it is not at all ontologically committing to refer to intentional objects as objects. The objects of imaginative awareness – the object over and above the sensible properties – should be treated as intentional objects just as Smith suggests.

In case this seems too hasty, I would like to note that this view of intentional objects as mere descriptive complements of intentional content is in many ways a commonplace view of the nature of intentional objects. Smith says that his view of the matter is thoroughly Husserlian in origin, and refers to the idea that appeal to intentional objects is “free of excess existential commitments” as the “majority view”.¹⁹⁶ The idea is that, at some point in explaining intentional experiences where there is no object present, one will have to invoke something like an intentional object; and at that point, the choice becomes between, as Johnston puts it, a “a substantial and controversial doctrine... or a minimalist doctrine.”¹⁹⁷ Johnston himself, as I said in the previous chapter, invokes intentional objects and a “minimalist doctrine” of them in order to explain how hallucination can be directed towards particulars. So it is not even an option for certain relational theorists to avoid reference to intentional objects; but even those theorists think that that reference is and should be taken as ontologically innocuous, despite their insouciance about positing extraordinary objects of awareness (like sensible profiles). So I think it is both acceptable

¹⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 241-242.

¹⁹⁷Johnston, “The Obscure Object of Hallucination”, op. cit., p. 161.

and justifiable to simply cleave to this view of intentional objects without further comment.

However, Smith's view of what, exactly, the intentional objects of hallucinatory appearance are cannot be adopted for imagination, and this failure will generate the problems that will occupy me for the final chapter of the thesis. The main difficulty with Smith's view is that, in the end, the objects turn out to be *only appearances*. Now, as a view of hallucination, this might be unproblematic. At least, I do not want to engage with that question. But as a view of imaginative experience, the view seems at best incomplete, and at worst inadequate. As I said above, Smith accepts several consequences of his view, which we can summarize as: the intentional objects of hallucinations are not – never can be – real objects or possible objects. As a view of imagination, this is badly awry. We really do sometimes imagine particulars; they are sometimes the intentional objects of our experiences. And we also sometimes imagine ways the world might be, *possibilia*. In both cases, it is not that we do so because we take an indeterminate appearance to be an appearance of a particular, or a possible appearance; we just imagine actual or possible things. To hoist Smith by his own petard: affirming that we really do this is the only phenomenologically adequate way to characterize imaginative experiences. Whether or not there is a distinction in hallucinating, there is certainly a difference between imagining an apple and imagining an existent apple. I can imagine the very apple that is in my fruit-bowl, and wonder whether it has a worm in it; and I can imagine some but no particular apple, which may or may not be worm-ridden as I choose. The problem, in summary, is that an adequate characterization of imagination's objects has to make room for their being

existent, possible, or in some cases not existent and avowedly so. The objects are not just appearances. Though it is appropriate – perhaps desirable – for a view of hallucination to divorce the experience from the real or the possible, it is a serious failing in a view of imagination.

Note that, although Smith's view is far more sophisticated, this is essentially a recapitulation of a criticism made of the general Meinongian position in chapter three: that the view elides any sense in which imagining can be an experience of, about, real objects. So you might also wonder whether the criticism concerning creation holds true too. Remember, the point was that the general Meinongian view fails to account for the intuition that we (sometimes) create things by imagining them, since the objects of imagining are somehow pre-constituted and just waiting for us to grasp them.

Smith's view is not subject to precisely this criticism, but there is a related worry. The view is not subject to the criticism, because Smith does not hold that the objects of hallucination are pre-existing things which we somehow grasp or become aware of. They are just characterizations of intentional states. So Smith does not hold that the things we hallucinate *already* exist, and does not need to deny we create them for that reason. Unfortunately, he is committed to the converse, and this is just as problematic: Smith has to deny that we create things by hallucinating, because according to him the things we hallucinate *never* exist. It is part of Smith's view that intentional objects do not exist, in any substantive sense of 'exist', and hence he explicitly denies that anything is created when we hallucinate.¹⁹⁸ Now, again, this

¹⁹⁸Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 243.

may not be a problem for a view of hallucination; perhaps we never really create things when we hallucinate. But it does seem a problem for a view of imagination, because we really do seem to create things by imagining them. This is demonstrated by the fact that things created imaginatively can come to be common objects of reference for a multitude of people. So, again, Smith's view is at best incomplete when it comes to imagining. Perhaps the *appearances* we imagine never exist, and so are never created; but the *things* we imagine are sometimes created.¹⁹⁹

So Smith's view cannot give a satisfactory account of what the intentional objects of imaginative experience are, because those objects are sometimes real, and sometimes created. The view explains our experiences of appearances, but does not explain our experiences of things that have appearances. And this criticism applies just as much to the view of imagination I have based on Smith's view of perceptual intentionality. It seems that what I have given is an explanation of how imagining can be about a certain appearance, not about a certain object; and it is this latter that is the real explanatory challenge.

¹⁹⁹Though I have let it pass in the main text, I am not at all sure that Smith should get away with this creation point regarding hallucination either. He addresses it via an argument of Kit Fine's, in which Fine questions whether any view of fictional objects can be ontologically innocuous, given the strong intuition that these are things which authors create, i.e. bring into existence. Smith counters this by saying (again) that, so far as hallucination goes, intentional objects are just characterizations of intentional states, and as such, nothing is created when we hallucinate. But as we later learn, these intentional objects – characterizations – are just appearances. Yet Fine's argument is about fictional objects, which plausibly consist in more than appearances. So the question should really be: do we ever create fictional objects by hallucinating? If the answer is 'yes', and if fictional objects are more than appearances, Smith is in trouble even on his home ground of hallucination. One reason to think that the answer is 'yes' is that several poets claim to have created fictional objects while hallucinating; for example, the "stately pleasure-dome" and "damsel with a dulcimer" which figure in *Kubla Khan* are products of Coleridge's opiated visions. The passage in which Smith addresses Fine is at *ibid.*, p. 243; Fine's argument is in Kit Fine. "Critical Review of Parsons' *Non-Existent Objects*". In: *Philosophical Studies* 45 (1 1984), pp. 95–142, pp. 132–133.

This is, in the end, a most frustrating position to be in. The apparently simple fact that needs explanation is that imagining can be directed towards particulars. This is so obvious that I did not even number it among the basic explananda: and yet it threatens to derail the project here. For all that is left to Smith (and me) to say – and all that he does say – is that a hallucinating subject sometimes takes (e.g.) an appearance of a dagger to be an experience of a real dagger, on the basis of their background beliefs and cognitive inclinations.²⁰⁰ To the extent that the experience is of an object, not an appearance, it is so because an appearance is taken to be an appearance of some thing. And if this is the only option open, for all the argument that has come since the first chapter, I have simply ended up with an elaborate version of the pictorial view: a version, no doubt, with a nice account of the picture, but nothing to say about what makes it a picture of a particular. This similarity to pictorialism is what did for the sensible profile account; it now threatens the intentional account too. This is clearly a bad position to be in. In the next chapter, I will work my way out of it.

The source of the problem for Smith (and Johnston, and the pictorialist) is the idea that what, if anything, fixes the intentional object of imagining (where this is something more than an appearance) is separate from what delivers the appearance of an object within the experience. This sort of two-stage view, an additive view on which there is an appearance and something which is added to it in order for intentionality to emerge, is attractive, simple, and wrong. It is wrong because it leads inevitably to a sort of pictorial view, on which imagining is to apprehend and

²⁰⁰Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 263.

interpret a picture. What is needed, instead, is a view on which a particular object can be an inherent element of the experience, tied into an appearance in such a way that a separation into two separate experiences is impossible. This is the view that I will develop in the next chapter; the additive view will serve as a foil for that development.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have articulated a view of the intentional content of imaginative appearances. I started by giving Smith's account of the content of perceptual appearances – of what, besides sensations, is necessary for perceptual experience. I pointed out that Smith's account, adopted wholesale, would not allow for a distinction between hallucinatory and imaginative appearances; and also that it relies on a conception of qualia that I have already rejected. By way of rectifying these problems, I first and simply proposed that the role of qualia in the theory be taken instead by uninstantiated sensible properties. I then spent rather longer on the issue of separating imaginative and hallucinatory appearances. I argued that Smith's account misses out two necessary conditions on perceptual appearances: spatial independence, and the possibility of disappointment. Both these are necessary if perceived objects are to appear independent of the subject; they are conditions fulfilled in perception, and unfulfilled in imagination. I explained how, instead, imaginative appearances incorporate an appearance of subjectivity, via the constitution of subjective space and

the absence of expectations. I went into more detail about how, via positing and predication, the appearance of a subjective object is thus achieved.

Two challenges seemed pressing at this juncture: to say something about the ontology of these objects, and to say something about how the experience could be about objects, rather than appearances of them. I again turned to Smith in order to approach these problems. I suggested that his view of the ontology of intentional objects can be adopted without much further comment. However, I argued that his view of what the intentional objects of hallucination are – mere appearances – cannot be adopted for imagination, because imagination's objects are often particulars, or real objects, not just their appearances. I argued briefly that the only way Smith allows for this possibility leads us back to pictorialism; and I have promised to avoid this trap in the next chapter.

So the view on the table is this: imagining consists in awareness of sensible properties, which are structured into an appearance of an object by virtue of being predicated of posited intentional objects. These intentional objects are functions of intentional content; the specific elements of imaginative intentional content responsible for object-appearances are three-dimensionality, perspective, spatiality, and certainty regarding occluded parts. Most of this is achieved via the mechanism of active intentional positing of objects. The challenge for the next section is how to get particularity into this model without succumbing to pictorialism.

Chapter 5

Particularity

In the previous chapter, I articulated a view of imaginative appearances which accounts for their quasi-observational nature, and I adopted Smith's account of what should be said about the ontological status of the intentional objects that are manifested in those appearances. But I argued that Smith's view is, at best, incomplete, owing to its inability to account satisfactorily for the fact that imagination's objects are sometimes particulars. What this requires is an account of how the intentional object of imaginative experience comes to be more than an appearance. The view of imaginative appearances I have given explains how, for example, an appearance of a horse can be manifest to the subject of an experience. But it does not explain how some particular horse, like Red Rum or Black Bess, can be the intentional object of the experience. In the last chapter, I criticized Smith's view of hallucination for simply discounting this possibility, or at best offering a pictorial account of how it could be so. The challenge here is to do better: to account for the fact that imaginative experiences can be about particular things, real or fictional or novel.

I start by explaining in detail why it should be of real concern to get particularity into the explanation of imagination. In the second section, I discuss the possibility of simply accepting the model implied by Smith, described by Johnston, and endorsed by a host of other philosophers. I agree that this two-part structure of appearance plus interpretation, which I call the additive view, is a simple and tempting way to explain the particular-directed aboutness of imagination. However, I raise one simple and to my mind crushing objection to it; an objection which, in essence, is just a sharper version of the criticism of pictorialism that has recurred throughout the thesis.

The third section begins the task of replacing the additive view. What is needed is an explanation of how intentional directedness towards particulars can be, as it were, built into the appearance, rather than being a further imposition on it. I develop Johnston's notion of cathected thought and Sartre's theory of the analogon to deliver an account of how this might be achieved. In the fourth section, I point out some problems with this account, which I call the aggregative account, mostly related to its evidential basis.

In the fifth section, I identify as the root of these problems the theoretical assumption that the elements of imaginative experience can be cleaved apart and examined separately – an assumption implicit in both the additive view, and the aggregative account. Using Gestalt theoretical tools, I argue that the total imaginative experience is explanatorily prior to the parts manifest in it. This gives a theoretically motivated reason to reject the theoretical assumption I mention. However, there is still a problem, since the Gestalt approach seems to be nothing more than an ele-

gantly motivated way of avoiding the evidential problem, rather than meeting it; the idea seems to be that there are parts of imagination, but no evidence for this, and no possibility of evidence. In the sixth section, I meet this challenge by employing the notion of *Prägnanz* to give an indirect argument in support of the idea that imaginative experience does indeed involve parts. I conclude that imaginative experiences are Gestalt wholes consisting in a variety of parts which deliver a coherent, single experience of an intentional object.

5.1 The problem

The problem about object-directedness is this. Imagining is often about – directed towards – particular objects of various sorts: existent, fictional, novel, and so on. Yet those objects are not present during the experience. So, how does imagining come to be about those objects?

The very simplest answer is to say that an imaginative appearance just is an appearance of some thing, and the intentional object of the experience is whatever thing the appearance manifests. But even disregarding problems concerning the identity of the things, objects, and appearances, the very simple answer faces a major problem as an explanation of particular-orientation. The problem is that imaginative appearances can be ambiguous. Just the same appearance can stand for a range of intentional objects. Yet there is usually some determinate answer to the question of what object you are imagining. Further, if there is a determinate answer, its determination is a product of what you take yourself to be imagining.

Compare the situation with perception. Suppose you see a gray horse in a field. In imagination, you can imagine a horse, but no particular horse. But in perception, it is of the nature of the experience that you are seeing some particular gray horse. Now, you might take it that the particular horse you are seeing is Desert Orchid (perhaps he is the only gray horse you know of). But what determines whether or not you are in fact seeing Desert Orchid is whether the horse in the field is in fact Desert Orchid, not some other gray horse. In imaginative experience, things are different. Whether or not the gray horse you are imagining is Desert Orchid is determined by whether or not you take yourself to be imagining Desert Orchid.

So there are two related observations about imagining that need accommodating in whatever explanation is given of its intentionality. The first is that the ‘mental image’ of an imaginary experience is sometimes not enough to determine what is being imagined, or to account for other details of what is being imagined. For example, Peacocke says that there is a difference between imagining a suitcase, and imagining a cat occluded by a suitcase; and this difference cannot be accounted for by a difference in what one ‘sees’ in each case. In both cases, one will ‘see’ a suitcase. And nor can the difference be accounted for by facts about the thing being imagined, since there is no actual cat or suitcase for there to be facts about.²⁰¹ The image is ambiguous between two imagined situations, and nothing about the image can determine which situation is being imagined. Similarly, an image of Black Bess may just as well be an

²⁰¹Christopher Peacocke. “Imagination, Experience, and Possibility; a Berkeleian View Defended”. In: *Essays on Berkeley*. Ed. by John Foster and Howard Robinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 19–35, nn.

image of Black Beauty, and nothing about the image can determine which horse is being imagined.

The second observation is that when a mental image is ambiguous, its owner is apparently incorrigible on the question of what they are imagining. Wittgenstein makes this point when he suggests that it is simply nonsensical to ask someone who says they are imagining King's College on fire whether they really are imagining just that building:

Someone says, he imagines King's College on fire. I ask him: "How do you know that it's King's College you imagine on fire? Couldn't it be a different building, very much like it? In fact, is your imagination so absolutely exact that there might not be a dozen buildings whose representation your image could be" – And still you say: "There's no doubt I imagine King's College and no other building."²⁰²

To deal with these observations, what is required is an account on which an ambiguous image can come to be an image of some determinate thing, or part of an experience with elements beyond those given in the image. A common account which meets these desiderata is what I will term the additive view of imagination. The next section explains what this view is. The section after explains why it is not a good view.

5.2 The additive view of imagination

Wittgenstein and Peacocke describe their cases in a way which implies a certain model of imagination. Peacocke in particular goes on to suggest this model more explicitly. The suggestion is that there is a distinction in imagination between the image or

²⁰²Ludwig Wittgenstein. *The Blue and Brown Books*. Harper Torchbooks, 1942, p. 39.

appearance which is manifest, and some sort of extra, non-sensory content which is added to the image and determines what it is an image of. This additive view is a neat and simple way to explain those two observations about imagination. What is required is a view on which a person gets some sort of authority over what it is they are imagining: over both the identity of the objects being imagined, and the details of what is not visible (or audible, and so on). One way of explaining how this works is to say that imagining consists in the supplementation of some sensory material with extra interpretative content, perhaps propositional or conceptual. What emerges is an aggregative or additive view of the structure of imagination. On this view, the sensory image gives the experience its distinctively qualitative aspects; this is what sets the experience apart from non-sensory imagining. The additional non-sensory content both stipulates what exactly the image stands for, and fills out the non-qualitative aspects of the scene. In this way, the extra material is what makes the experience about some particular thing.

Peacocke is far from alone in suggesting the additive view. As I said at the start of the present chapter, Johnston's primary-and-secondary object explanation of how hallucinations can be about some particular thing has just the same structure. Additionally and more pertinently, something very much like the additive view has been suggested by a lot of philosophers as a model of imagination. Though few philosophers have made focused and sustained attempts to explain imagination's structure, several have adumbrated a view of it, often as part of a larger project. Many examples can be found in the literature on modal epistemology; some in work on aesthetics and representation; and more generally, whenever some role for imagination is posited, a

conception of how imagination comes to be about something is often sketched.²⁰³ In many of these cases, the view suggested is just the two-part structure under discussion. Here is a representative sample, including Peacocke, Byrne, and Kung:

[T]he differences between imaginings which, though having a common image, still differ... are differences in which conditions are S-imagined to hold. ‘S’ is for ‘suppose’.²⁰⁴

[T]o imagine *p*... requires more than merely entertaining *p*. Something extra is needed: a mental image.²⁰⁵

[I]magination has two kinds of content, qualitative content and assigned content.²⁰⁶

Assigned content covers background stipulations and the labels and foreground stipulations made about the objects presented by the mental image.²⁰⁷

I would like to make two comments before discussing the additive view. First, though these philosophers converge on the same sort of view, there is differentiation in the details (to the extent that details are given). One major difference is over exactly what is added to the sensory element of the experience. Peacocke, for example, seems wedded to the view that what is added is propositional or linguistic content; Byrne, by contrast, seems more inclined to think that it is conceptual content.²⁰⁸ Others,

²⁰³Examples of sketched views of imagination abound, though not all of these fit the common model I will soon be criticizing. For examples of sketches, besides those I will quote from shortly, see David J. Chalmers. “Does Conceivability Entail Possibility?” In: *Conceivability and Possibility*. Ed. by Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 145–200; Gendler and Hawthorne, *Conceivability and Possibility*, op. cit.; Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, op. cit.; Stephen Yablo. “Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda”. In: *Conceivability and Possibility*. Ed. by Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 441–492.

²⁰⁴Peacocke, “Imagination, Experience, and Possibility; a Berkeleian View Defended”, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁰⁵Alex Byrne. “Possibility and Imagination”. In: *Philosophical Perspectives* 21 (2007), pp. 125–144, pp. 130–131.

²⁰⁶Peter Kung. “Imagining as a Guide to Possibility”. In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 81.3 (2010), pp. 620–663, p. 632.

²⁰⁷Ibid., p. 625.

²⁰⁸Peacocke, “Imagination, Experience, and Possibility; a Berkeleian View Defended”, op. cit., pp. 24–26; Byrne, “Possibility and Imagination”, op. cit., pp. 130–137.

like Johnston, make do with an unexplained notion of how things strike one, or how an image is interpreted. I don't think settling this question matters for the points I want to make against the additive view. The question may well make a difference for how the view would be developed into a fuller explanation of imagining, but I don't need to concern myself with that here. Since interpretation is a more general notion, naming an action which might be performed using either propositional or conceptual content, I'll talk about 'interpreting content' as what is added to sensory material.

Second, it's worth noting that I'm not accusing any of these philosophers of holding the absurd view that imagining is a matter of first calling up an image and then applying a name to it. Kung explicitly denies holding this view, and I doubt any of the people I've quoted would believe it either.²⁰⁹ It is sometimes intimated that this is how the additive view should be read, but I doubt that the intimation is intentional. As I mentioned above, the additive view is generally sketched as a part of a larger project, and so is not always phrased in the most careful terms; but I take it that the

²⁰⁹Peacocke seems to think that Wittgenstein holds just this view, quoting as evidence a sentence from the passage in the *Blue Book* where Wittgenstein gives the King's College example: "For saying ["I'm imagining King's College"] is like writing the words "Portrait of Mr. So-and-so" under a picture." This seems to me quite mistaken; the lines immediately following this one make it clear that Wittgenstein is mentioning the view to rule it out. For those interested in the niceties of Wittgenstein interpretation, here is the passage in its entirety:

What I said of thinking can also be applied to imagining. Someone says, he imagines King's College on fire. I ask him: "How do you know that it's King's College you imagine on fire? Couldn't it be a different building, very much like it? In fact, is your imagination so absolutely exact that there might not be a dozen buildings whose representation your image could be?"—And still you say: "There's no doubt I imagine King's College and no other building." But can't saying this be making the very connection I want? For saying it is like writing the words "Portrait of Mr. So-and-so" under a picture. It might have been that while you imagined King's College on fire you said the words "King's College is on fire". But in very many cases you certainly don't speak explanatory words in your mind while you have the image. And consider, even if you do, you are not going the whole way from your image to King's College, but only to the words "King's College". The connection between these words and King's College was, perhaps, made at another time.

Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, op. cit., p. 58.

additive view is not intended to describe a two-stage process. Rather, it describes a two-part structure.

With those qualifications made, I can outline the appeal of the additive view. It has two major points in its favor; its simplicity, and its explanatory power.

The additive view is a simple and elegant way to model imagination. As I have frequently said throughout this thesis, imagining has some features that make it like perceiving, and some that make it like thinking. What simpler explanation could there be of this than a combination of elements of the two? The interpretative element is imported from thinking, and makes the experience intentional; the sensory element is imported from perceiving, and makes the experience sensory. No special work is needed to come up with a theory of imagination, then; all that is required is a theory of how thinking comes to be intentional, and an account of how something like sense-perception is possible in the absence of stimuli. A combination of the two will produce a model of imagining. Note that this approach avoids the mistake of assimilating imagination to either thinking or perceiving; the experience stands distinct from both, in that it includes elements of each.

The additive view's second virtue is that it gives simple explanations of the cases that initially motivate it, and promises to explain further puzzling features of imagining. The view explains Peacocke's cat; what makes the difference between the two scenarios is a difference in the interpreting content applied to the identical images. It also explains why you are incorrigible about what you are imagining, in Wittgenstein's sense: a person has the privilege of applying whatever interpreting content she likes to her image, and it is the interpreting content that fixes what the image is an

image of. So the additive view gives a neat explanation of how it is that imaginative experiences come to be about some particular thing. In addition to explaining those cases, the view promises more: for example, a neat explanation of the limits and uses of imagining. Regarding its limits, for example, the additive view implies that you can (roughly) imagine anything that you can think about propositionally and conjure up some relevant image for. Given the contexts in which the additive view is often advanced – discussions of the utility of imagining for modal discovery, for example – this is a great explanatory benefit. It means, for example, that a view of how useful imagining is for assessing possibilities will simply follow from a view of how you can think about possibilities at all.

So the additive view has quite a lot going for it. And further, adopting it would complete the view articulated in the previous chapter. There, I argued that the view at which I had arrived accounted only for appearances. But if I allow that appearances can be subject to later interpretation, such that a particular object is determinately the object of the experience, the view is completed. Unfortunately, for all its clarity, simplicity, and explanatory power, there is a crushing reason to think that the additive view is inadequate to the task of explaining imagination. I absolved the philosophers quoted above of the sin of promulgating a very crude pictorial view. But there is a clear risk that any view on which some sort of sensory content or image is interpreted, labeled, or supplemented by additional content in order to produce an intentional experience will end up as nothing more than a pictorial view of some sort or another. Now, I have discussed the problems of pictorialism already, so I do not want to go over the same ground again. But give that I am discussing the

additive view in the context of imagination's particular-directed intentionality, there is a specific problem I wish to raise. There is a sense in which, rather than solving the question of how imagination comes to be about particulars, the additive view multiplies the intentional objects requiring explanation. For it seems to imply that the image and the interpreting content are separately and independently intentional; they each on their own represent some object.

Consider Peacocke's cat. What seems to be implied is that the experience involves both a mental image that represents a suitcase, independently of any interpretative content, and also some sort of mental content that represents (the presence or absence of) an occluded cat, independently of any image. So there are two parts to the experience, and each is separately representative of some thing. So to fully explain the structure of imagination, we need to first explain how the image comes to be representative of some range of objects, and then explain how it can be made to be determinately representative of one object out of that range. This parallels a plausible pair of explanatory demands of theories of depiction; we might want to know, first, how the portrait manages to represent a person at all (perhaps it does so by resemblance); and second, how it comes to represent some particular person (perhaps it does so because the artist intended it to represent that person).

The problem in imagination is that, on this model, the additive view explains certain elements of imagination's intentionality; it does not explain the intentionality of the experience overall. It requires – leans on – a prior explanation of how images can be intentional, and then introduces a method of specifying exactly what the image represents. Now, I argued in the previous chapter that what makes for an

imaginative appearance of a suitcase (rather than of a bundle of suitcase parts) is the positing of an intentional object, namely a suitcase. So I have an explanation of how the suitcase image is an image of a suitcase. But what is implied here is that there are two intentional experiences involved: an experience about a suitcase, and an experience about a cat hiding behind a suitcase. It is this last point that ultimately does for the additive view. What is implied, what must be so if the view is true, is that imagining involves two intentional experiences: an image-experience, and an interpretation-experience. But imagining is one, unified experience. There are not two intentionally-directed elements.

What is needed instead of the additive view is an account of how directedness towards particulars can be an integral component of the appearance, rather than an additional intentional element combined with an already intentional image. In the next section, I explain how this can be accounted for.

5.3 Cathexis and analogons

The aim of this section is to articulate a conception of how imagination can be about particular objects, within and complementary to the theory of imaginative appearances given in the previous chapter. Here, in summary, is how the view looks.

The view I propose is that imagining is a matter of intentional predication of sensible properties to objects, with that intentional act incorporating an intentional object in the experience as a basic component via a process of something like cathected thought. This object can be a particular. This notion of cathexis first cropped up

in discussion of Johnston's relational view of hallucination, back in chapter three. Johnston proposes it, very briefly, as a way in which the intentional object of a hallucination may be incorporated in the appearance without additional interpretation being necessary to fix that object. I am going to adopt this idea. I will first explain what it means, and how it should work; I will then put some flesh on the bones of the idea by considering how it relates to Sartre's theory of imagination. This discussion will lead into the next section, where I motivate some problems for this aggregative view.

5.3.1 Cathexis

I am going to offer a developed gloss on Johnston's idea of cathected thought as a method of fixing the intentional object of imaginative (in his case, hallucinatory) experience. The idea is that, somehow, the identity of the object imagined is built into the imagined appearance, rather than being imposed by some additional reference-fixing content.

Now, 'cathexis' is not a term that suffers from a surfeit of definitional baggage. If anything, the term is under-defined (and one might suspect that this is just why Johnston employs it). At a first pass, the term means something like: a process by which thought or experience comes to be charged with mental energy. So what Johnston seems to suggest, and what I want to endorse and expand upon, is that some sort of mental energy – some drive towards an object – can fix the identity of an imagined appearance as an integral part of the process of that experience being

generated. I can make this proposal more concrete by doing two things: first, relating it to the view of imaginative appearances given in the previous chapter, and second, making something of this somewhat mystical idea of mental energy.

The view of imaginative appearances I gave has it that an object is posited of which sensible properties are predicated. Now, this positing has to have inherent in it some degree of object-directedness, even if it only results in the appearance of an object. There has to be some determinate object-appearance involved already if the experience is going to be of the appearance of some object – a horse, say, rather than a collection of horse-parts. Even the additive view must allow this; the appearances involved in that view are ambiguous, but ambiguous within a certain range of possibilities. The precise identity of the imagined object is fixed by additional content, but the image has some sort of objectual direction already. Whether it is King's College or a facsimile that is being imagined, it is certainly an image of a building-appearance. So there is some degree of determining objectual content built in from the very start if the experience is going to an appearance of anything.

Given this, it is no great stretch to suppose that the content is more determinate than just this. What I propose is that the object posited in the experience is posited as a whole. Rather than positing an objectual appearance and then identifying it as some determinate object, one simply posits a determinate object from the beginning. The imaginative experience is not generated piecemeal; it arrives intact, as a whole. What is posited is a determinate object from the start, not an appearance of an object.

The view, then, is simply this. To imagine an object is to posit an absent object which structures sensible properties; that absent object is the object of the experience, whether it is a particular or a general object. I do not know that there is much more that one can say about how an object is posited. It simply seems to be the basic fact of imaginative intentionality that this is how it is manifest to the subject.

This sounds simple enough, but then what is the appeal to this notion of ‘mental energy’ doing? It seems that what Johnston, at least, has in mind is that hallucinatory appearances (and by extension imaginative ones) can have their objects fixed by some sort of content besides conceptual or propositional content, and that this additional content can be built into the experience from the beginning, as part of positing an object (in my terms). That he has this sort of thing in mind seems clear from the examples he uses at this juncture – examples in which the object of the hallucination is some person, like your mother, with whom you might associate emotional content. The idea, then, is that there needs to be a term wider than ‘conceptual’ to capture the sort of content that can be built into appearances in order to make them about particulars. ‘Cathexis’ is just a name for positing which makes clear that more than just concepts can contribute to intentional determinacy; ‘mental energy’ is just a term for the wider, more affective range of content that can so contribute.

This might still sound somewhat vague, but the idea of mental energy can be elaborated to provide some guidance here. What Johnston seems to have in mind is that something like emotional involvement with the intended object of the experience can lend to the experience some sort of determinate identity, as well as or instead of some sort of conceptual content playing that role. And further, this emotional

content can be built into the experience from the beginning. This, I think, is correct, though the details are hard to spell out. What we should suppose is that, as Sartre supposes, various elements inherent in the intentional act of positing can lead to the complete experience various properties. They together determine the intentional object; so though conceptual content is part of the determination, it is not the sole determinant. To explain this, I turn now to Sartre's theory of imagination, and specifically his notion of the analogon.

5.3.2 Sartre

The proposal of cathexis – the idea that various sorts of mental content, not just the propositional or conceptual, combine with sensory material to deliver an experience of an object – bears instructive similarities and dissimilarities to Sartre's positive view of imagination. But Sartre's model of imagining has been criticized by several philosophers. Since I do not want my theory to be subject to those criticisms, I would like to be very clear on where I agree with him, and where we diverge. So it is worth digressing to explain Sartre's theory; explain the criticisms; and explain what I am taking from him, how my theory differs, and how it thereby avoids those criticisms. So I will explain that view and its relevance in the present context.

As should be apparent from the first chapter, much of the value of Sartre's work on the imagination inheres in his critical evaluation of the perceptual and pictorial models, and in his careful examination of the phenomenology of imagining. He is somewhat less successful when he tries to articulate a model of imagining which

explains the phenomenology while avoiding the flaws of the two models. Sartre's proposal is that imagining involves a special sort of mental content called an *analogon*. The analogon is a synthesis of several specific proto-intentional sorts of mental content. The analogon acts as a representative of the object of imaginative experience. It is not itself an item of awareness, or even an object of awareness, but it is a necessary component of imaginative awareness of some object.²¹⁰

According to Sartre, to imagine something is to have an experience in which the analogon acts as a source of representative material, to which is added a sort of active, intentionality-imbuing knowledge, 'imaging knowledge', which is distinguishable from genuine knowledge of the object of the experience only by abstraction. This imaging knowledge "constitutes the active structure of the experience."²¹¹ It is an intentional consciousness that seeks to transcend itself (as, according to Sartre, all consciousness does) "by positing its content as existent through a certain density of the real that serves as its representative."²¹² So what Sartre proposes is that you have, in the first instance, knowledge about an object. That knowledge undergoes a "degradation" and becomes "imaging knowledge", a sort of intentionality which gives structure to the representative material provided by the analogon. The analogon itself is made up of one or both of two elements: – affective states and kinesthetic sensations. The

²¹⁰I think, though I will not press the comparison here, that there is an interesting similarity between Sartre's view of imagination and the content views that I dismissed in chapter three. They certainly seem to have the same sort of structure – there is some sort of content which you are not aware of, which you are nevertheless related to in some fashion, and via which you are aware of some object.

²¹¹Sartre, *The Imaginary*, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

²¹²Ibid., p. 66.

latter provide qualities of spatiality and movement; the former give a certain “affective depth” to the experience.

The kinesthetic analogon, according to Sartre, is what lends imaginative experiences the impression of motion, and to some extent the impression of spatiality (though this is not entirely clear). The idea is that imaginative experience – if it involves motion or shape – is partially generated by subliminal muscle movements. For example, if you imagine watching a pendulum swing, your eyes move in their sockets from left to right in time with the motion. Sartre’s idea is that spatial awareness in imagination is a result of such subliminal movements; they stand as representatives of actual spatial dimensions and movements. The affective analogon is what gives an imaginative experience affective or emotional depth. It consists in something like normal emotional states, but emotions which have a degree of generality, in that they are not specifically attached to any object (as Sartre thinks they usually are). Rather, the affective analogon suggests a range of possible intentional objects, one of which is fixed upon by imaging knowledge.

Sartre contends that the combination of either sort of analogon with imaging knowledge is sufficient to deliver an imaginative experience of a particular object. Experiences that involve an analogon composed of both sorts will be richer, more replete experiences. The analogon and the imagining knowledge, he says, are synthesized in such a way that the individual parts are indiscernible in the emergent experience, and nor do they persist after an imaginative experience. The basis on which he adduces their existence is somewhere between indirect argumentation and a priori speculation.

Now, Sartre's model has obscurities and problems, but I do not propose to address them in detail. This is because the only thing I really want to take from Sartre is the idea that various elements and sorts of mental content can be contributors to the complete intentional imaginative experience. So I want to note a couple of points on which his ideas match up with the account I am advocating, and a couple where they differ. First, Sartre insists that imaginative experiences consist in complexes made up of various elements. This accords nicely with the idea that imagining involves various sorts of content being included in the experience from the beginning, such that conceptual or propositional content is not the sole determinant of the intentional object's identity. Though it might be unclear that Sartre's list is exhaustive, the idea that affective content and kinesthetic motion can play a role along with conceptual content augments the idea of cathexis.

Second, Sartre's talk of imaging knowledge 'structuring' the material presented is in some ways congruent with the account of appearances I gave in the previous chapter (as you might expect, since that account relied to an extent on Sartre's notion of positing). The idea is that something – some sort of intentional content – structures the sensory material present in the experience.

However, Sartre's view also differs from the one I am advocating in significant ways. First, he thinks that imaging knowledge is ultimately responsible for making the experience about something, some particular. This seems, in rather more sophisticated form, to be very much like the additive view. Once again, something like concepts, propositions, or knowledge is added to ambiguous representative material, with the knowledge determining the object of the experience. My aim, of course,

is to avoid this structure. So I cannot agree with Sartre's view as it stands. The point I wish to press is that the various sorts of material that combine to deliver an intentional object are equally responsible for identifying that object – the task is not wholly given over to conceptual content.

Second, as I said in the previous chapter, Sartre's account of the relation in which you stand to an imagined object is not one I wish to endorse. I will not repeat that point here, but it is worth noting that his idea of the analogon seems confusing when contrasted with his idea that there is nothing in consciousness but direction toward transcendent objects. The only way he can make good on this idea is, as I have said, to say that the content is in the mind but not in consciousness, and this is a strange position, especially given his ideas about the transparency and openness of consciousness. Again, I cleave to the view that there is intentional content, and that intentional objects are functions of that content.

Third, as Sartre explains it, it is not clear exactly what the model is meant to be explaining. Sartre sometimes sounds like he is trying to give a causal explanation of imaginative states. If he is, it seems that the sort of thing he is attempting would be much better served by empirical psychology and biology. The question of whether imagined motion is always accompanied by subliminal muscle movements, for example, is surely straightforwardly empirical. However, for the most part, it seems that Sartre is attempting to give an account of what the intentional content of imagining is likely to be, given its descriptive phenomenology. But, as I have just said, this sits uncomfortably with his ideas about content, or rather its non-existence.

So what, specifically, I am taking from Sartre is the idea that the imaginative experiences involve a complex synthesis of parts. Those parts may be of several different sorts, and their presence can explain different elements of total imaginative experiences. I am not adopting his idea of the analogon as a representative medium thorough which an object is apprehended; nor am I adopting his idea that some sort of knowledge is the determinant of what the experience is about. I am using Sartre's ideas to augment the notions of cathexis and mental energy. Cathexis can be understood as the process by which things like affective states and kinesthetic sensation come to be incorporated into an imaginative appearance; these things can be thought of as a fleshing-out of the notion of mental energy. The idea, in sum, is that lots of different elements of cognitive content contribute to the determination of an imaginative intentional object.

5.3.3 Summary

Here, in summary, is the view as it now stands. What I am proposing is that, when an object is intentionally posited which structures sensible properties, that object is determinately some object – whether a quite general one merely sufficient to lend structure, or a quite specific one which makes the experience about a certain particular. What particular is imagined is a function of the contribution of various parts which bring different things to the experience. These parts may include conceptual material; emotional material; kinesthetic sensation; and perhaps other sorts of content. So the view is that lots of intentional or proto-intentional parts combine into

one intentional experience. However, there is a set of serious problems for this view. I will explain those problems in detail in the next section, but the nub of the problem is this. I have proposed that imagining consists in the amalgamation of various parts. But this may not, in fact, improve on the additive view. First, though the elements and process of the amalgamation have been adjusted, it is still an amalgamation of intentional, or proto-intentional, parts that is being proposed. Second, it is not clear what evidence there is that there are such parts. These problems are problems for the additive view, but more pertinently, problems for my own. I spell them out in detail in the next section.

5.4 More problems

I am now going to articulate three problems for the aggregative view, on which imagining consists in the aggregation of various sorts of content, which determine an object, of which sensible properties are predicated, such that a quasi-perceptual experience of the object emerges. I think these are also problems for the additive view, but I will phrase them as challenges to the aggregative view. Here are the view's failings.

5.4.1 Phenomenological lack

If imagination is an aggregative act of putting together sensible properties and various sorts of mental content, it's reasonable to expect that the resulting experience should show some evidence of this. That is to say, you might expect that in imagining, you

should be aware of both the sensible properties, and the various content elements. To focus the point, here is a particular example: to the extent that there is something it is like to entertain or suppose a proposition or a concept, that phenomenal character should be present in an imaginative experience that involves entertaining propositions which fix the object of the experience.

The trouble for the aggregation view is that the phenomenal character of entertaining a proposition or concept is simply not apparent in imaginative experience. When you, say, imagine a horse, you simply imagine a horse. It doesn't appear to you that you are imagining an image of a horse, and also entertaining a set of that's-a-horse-stating propositions. And matters are worse for the aggregation view when it comes to particular horses. If you are imagining Desert Orchid, it doesn't seem to you that you are imagining an image of a gray horse while entertaining the thought, "that's Desert Orchid". You just have an experience of imagining Desert Orchid, without having two separate items of awareness. This shows that sensory imagining doesn't involve anything much like cognitive phenomenology, and this casts doubt on the aggregative view's claim that the entertaining of various sorts of mental content is somehow involved in the experience. There is no experience of propositions, concepts, or general diffuse emotional states manifest in the experience.²¹³

²¹³Some philosophers doubt that there is any distinctive phenomenology of cognition. But the present argument does not rely on the claim that there is. What is at issue in the debate over cognitive phenomenology is whether such phenomenology is unique to cognition (there is something unique about grasping a proposition), or akin to other sorts of phenomenology (one hears or sees the proposition). On either view, the argument I am presenting works, so long as one accepts that neither some sort of unique cognitive phenomenology, nor anything like hearing or seeing a proposition, is apparent in imaginative experience. On the debate over the nature of cognitive phenomenology, see the papers collected in Tim Bayne and Michelle Montague, eds. *Cognitive Phenomenology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Note that the argument here is not that imagining is never accompanied by cognitive phenomenology and suchlike. You can think about what you're imagining, but this does not mean that something like thinking is necessarily part of imagining, just as the fact you can think about what you're perceiving does not mean that thinking is necessarily part of perceiving.

5.4.2 Phenomenological excess

The aggregative view purports to explain how we end up with imaginative experiences of objects by decomposing such experiences into several discrete elements. One element, sensible properties, establishes what the experience seems like qualitatively, and the others establish what the experience seems like intentionally. But it's dubious that the view can really explain how relatively impoverished material can deliver relatively replete experiences. As Wittgenstein points out in the quotation above, it is rare for your image to be so precise as to leave no doubt about the object of the experience. The aggregative view implies that adding various sorts of content to sensible properties is enough to transform the experience into one of a particular object. But it is hard to see how this can be sufficient to account for the difference between, say, imagining a heap of sensible properties and having some rich, replete imaginative experience. Even though the aggregative view allows itself lots of sort of content, it is not clear how that should help.

The point is perhaps best illustrated with a musical example. Suppose that you want to imagine some distinctively-voiced singer performing a certain song that you

know fairly well (Billie Holliday, or Bob Dylan; “Summertime”, or “Hurricane”). Suppose further that you don’t have perfect pitch (quite likely). I take it that it’s quite possible to accomplish this imaginative project. And I take it that, ordinarily, it would simply be described as an experience of hearing Billie Holliday singing “Summertime” in your head. Now, if the aggregative view is right, it should be possible to examine the experience more closely, and discern the individual parts that make up the whole. In particular, you should be able to identify the ambiguous or impoverished elements of the sensory material; you should be able to hear that the notes you’re imagining are a bit off-key, and you haven’t quite got the timbre right, and so on. Nevertheless, it is an experience of Holliday singing, because you’ve stipulated it as such – it’s not an experience of a poor-quality Holliday imitator (which is more what it actually sounds like). So what makes it an experience of Holliday singing is something to do with the imagined sound, and something rather more to do with the label you’ve appended to the imagined sound.

The point is, though, that the experience simply does not seem like that. Adding stipulative content of whatever sort to impoverished, ambiguous, inaccurate sensory properties does not seem to be enough to deliver the rich imaginative experience. The experience of imagining Billie Holliday singing “Summertime” is replete in a way that cannot be explained by the aggregative view. Once we break the experience into two parts, there does not seem to be enough in any of the parts individually, or in the sum of the parts’ properties, to explain the richness of the total experience. This suggests that decomposing the experience into parts – or at least into these sorts of parts – is an erroneous approach.

5.4.3 Thinking and imagining

The aggregative view has the implication that applications of imagining are often, crudely speaking, a sort of thinking with images. When you employ your imagination to solve some problem or conjure up some scenario, something like propositional content is doing most of the work, and the qualitative elements of the experience, the images, are an optional extra there to smooth things along, help out a little, or make the experience more interesting. You could achieve the same results just by thinking, perhaps with a little more cognitive effort. For example, suppose you are trying to work out whether the sofa you're considering buying will fit up the stairs to your flat. You could do this by visually imagining the task. But presumably, you could also do it by thinking about the measurements and dimensions involved. And on the aggregative view, it's the conceptual or propositional material – the thinking about measurements – that does the real work; picturing the sofa and the stairs is superfluous to the task at hand. It's clear why this would be: all the sensory material is doing is lending a certain qualitative phenomenal character to the experience; the interpreting content is doing all the real cognitive work.

But there are things that you can do by imagining that you can't do just by thinking, and this shows that imagining is more than image-augmented thinking. The most vivid example of this rehearsal, both sporting and musical. Athletes and musicians alike frequently practice by imagining themselves playing, going over in their head the complex series of triggers and movements necessary to perform well.

Let me set out an example in detail. Consider a cricket batter who knows he needs to work on his pull shot. A pull shot is played to a delivery that bounces relatively far from and in line with the batter, and so comes to him relatively high and straight. To play the shot, the batter shifts his weight onto his back foot, opens his chest and shoulders, and brings his bat around in a horizontal arc at waist height or above, rolling his wrists as he connects with the ball. If successful, the ball is sent along the ground to the batter's legside, at an angle of about 70° to 110° to the line of the delivery.²¹⁴ The diligent batter can, of course, go into the nets with a willing bowler and practice. But he can also practice by imagining playing the shot, over and over again. To do so, he has to imagine watching the bowler run up, the ball being released and heading on a certain trajectory, shifting his feet and weight, bringing his bat round, and rolling his wrists over it. He has to imagine a complex series of actions, judgments, and movements. And further, he has to stop himself and correct what he is doing when he gets something wrong; for example, he has to notice that he forgot to move his back foot across his stumps, and go back and do it correctly. The point is that this kind of detailed rehearsal is something that you couldn't do if you simply thought about playing. It is crucial if the exercise is going to work that you imagine yourself doing the right actions, with a fair degree of vivacity and

²¹⁴I have chosen this example for the complexity of the movements and judgments involved, and also because I know what I'm talking about with it. The action and outcome are roughly similar to a right-handed baseball batter hitting a waist-high pitch from over home plate towards and beyond the on-deck circle on his left; or alternatively, to a tennis player hitting a double-handed forehand from the baseline with the intention of taking out the line judge who calls foot faults, rather than returning the ball.

verisimilitude. By imagining yourself playing, you can rehearse doing so in a way that you couldn't if you simply thought about playing.²¹⁵

Now, the aggregative view would be able to accommodate such examples, if the process involved was most naturally described as one in which you think about playing and accompany the thinking with images. And certainly, it seems that you have to be thinking about what you're imaginatively doing in order to actually practice – to notice and correct mistakes. But again, just as you can think about what you

²¹⁵This claim about the efficacy of visualization in improving sports performance is backed by far more than just anecdotal evidence; there is a wealth of psychological literature on the subject. A 1983 meta-analysis of 60 studies found that practice involving mental imagery is an effective way of improving performance of motor tasks; see Deborah L. Fellz and Daniel M. Landers. "The Effects of Mental Practice on Motor Skill Learning and Performance: A Meta-analysis". In: *Journal of Sport Psychology* 5 (1 1983), pp. 25–57.

Many studies since have concentrated on sports specifically, rather than on more-or-less arbitrary motor tasks, and have consistently found that performance in a wide range of sports is improved by imaginary practice, and improved more than by cognitive practice or no practice. There are dozens of such papers; see, for example, Geraldine H. Van Gyn et al. "Imagery as a Method of Enhancing Transfer From Training to Performance". In: *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 12 (4 1990), pp. 366–375; Craig R. Hall, Wendy M. Rodgers, and Kathryn A. Barr. "The Use of Imagery by Athletes in Selected Sports". In: *The Sport Psychologist* 4 (1 1990), pp. 1–10; A.R. Isaac. "Mental Practice – Does it Work in the Field?" In: *The Sport Psychologist* 6 (2 1992), pp. 192–198; M.M. Millard, C.C. Mahoney, and J.J. Wardrop. "A Preliminary Study of Mental and Physical Practice on the Kayak Wet Exit Skill". In: *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 92 (3 Part 2 2001), pp. 977–984.

Indeed, the efficacy of imaginary practice is so well-established that there are many studies in which its efficacy is taken as given, and attention is directed to questions such as how it is effective, or which specific ways of imagining might be more or less effective; for example, whether it is more effective to imagine oneself bowling from the inside, or from a third-person perspective. Again, there is a lot of this sort of thing: see, as a sample, S. Gordon, R. Weinberg, and A. Jackson. "Effect of Internal and External Imagery on Cricket Performance". In: *Journal of Sport Behavior* 17 (1 1994), pp. 60–75; R. Roure et al. "Autonomic Nervous System Responses Correlate With Mental Rehearsal in Volleyball Training". In: *European Journal of Applied Physiology and Occupational Physiology* 78 (2 1998), pp. 99–108; Sanna M. Nordin et al. "Mental Practice or Spontaneous Play? Examining Which Types of Imagery Constitute Deliberate Practice in Sport". In: *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 18 (4 2006), pp. 345–362; Dave Smith et al. "It's All in the Mind: PETTLEP-Based Imagery and Sports Performance". In: *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 19 (1 2007), pp. 80–92; Sanna M. Nordin and Jennifer Cumming. "Types and Functions of Athletes' Imagery: Testing Predictions from the Applied Model of Imagery Use by Examining Effectiveness". In: *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 6 (2 2008), pp. 189–206; Jenny O. Hall and Craig Hall. "A Quantitative Analysis of Athletes' Voluntary Use of Slow Motion, Real Time, and Fast Motion Images". In: *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 21 (1 2009), pp. 15–30.

The evidence concerning musical performance is more anecdotal, perhaps because there is less money to be made improving the performance of classical musicians, but there have been (and are) classical musicians of the highest caliber well known for doing a lot of their rehearsal "in the head"; Glenn Gould is probably the best known.

are perceiving without that thinking being a necessary part of perceiving, you can think about what you are imagining, without that thinking being a necessary part of imagining. In the sort of case under consideration, that corrective thinking is something extra you do in response to the imaginative experience, not a part of it. The question is whether the imaginative experience itself – imagining yourself playing the pull shot over and over again – and the result – improvement in your pull shot – could be as they are if the aggregative view of imagination is correct.

The imaginative experience involves imagining a complicated network of sights, judgments, motor actions, and so on. The improvement consists in doing some or all of these things better. While it might be possible to think through all of these things without imagining them, it is hard to suppose that the process of doing so could be nearly as efficacious in improving your performance as imagining doing them. The problem for the aggregative view here is that it would seem to be necessary, if the view were true, to attend to all these various elements and their source in cognitive content individually in order to deliver the experience and the effect. But this is not what one does when one practices imaginatively. You simply attend to the overall experience; you do not manipulate or concentrate on parts of the experience. The psychological studies referred to above bear out this thought.

What this strongly suggests is that imagining – especially imagining yourself doing something – is a substantially different way of engaging with some task or action, not merely an augmented way of thinking about it, and not merely the aggregation of various bits of content related to that task. It is a way of addressing an action that integrates all the motor, sensory, and cognitive parts inherent in it, so that the whole

experience is manifest to you. This militates against the implication of the aggregative view that using one's sensory imagination in things like rehearsal or problem-solving is an optional addition to the real work of puzzling things out. What is needed is a view of how the experience comes to be a coherent, seamless whole that can enable rehearsal; what the aggregative view seems to deliver is a clanking piece of machinery.

Note also that this example highlights what is at least a lacuna in the aggregative view. Imagining is often episodic, or dynamic. When you imagine playing a pull shot, you imagine a fluid episode, something happening in a period of time. The aggregative view seems geared towards explaining experiences of static imaging; of, for example, imagining a horse standing in front of you. It seems less well-adapted to explaining an imaginative experience of riding a horse to victory in the Grand National. The problems above may each seem even more pressing against the aggregative view when exemplified by dynamic episodes. Is it really plausible, for example, that your horse-riding fantasy is composed of a set of images accompanied by an ever-changing and perfectly synchronized set of content-fixing propositions, as you overtake particular competitors on the home straight? The problem of phenomenological lack seems especially stark in this situation, and I submit that the other problems are similarly intensified by dynamism.

5.4.4 Summary

I have articulated three problems for the view I am proposing. There is little, if any, phenomenological evidence that the sort of content I have appealed to is involved; the

mere summation of various sorts of content fails to adequately capture what imagining is like; and the implicit notion of how imagining can be useful falls short of explaining the things which can actually be accomplished by imagining. In addition, I have suggested that dynamic imaginative episodes present special difficulties for the view. Now, these problems might all be surmountable, given a detailed enough development of the aggregative view, outlining all the parts that can make up imaginative experiences. But I find it unlikely. What all the problems indicate is that something fundamental about the aggregative view is deficient, not any particular application of it. In the next section, I will identify this fundamental deficiency, and take the first steps towards a better alternative.

5.5 Imaginative gestalts

In this section, I am going to argue that both the additive view and the aggregative view incorporate a certain theoretical approach to the analysis of complex mental states; that a better alternative approach is available; and that this alternative avoids the problems I have just outlined. In the next section, I will use the tools of this approach to quell the worry that it is short of evidence.

The theoretical approach I am going to advocate is that of Gestalt psychology. What I am going to argue is that the views I have been discussing are derived from an approach on which complex mental states should be analyzed by a process of decomposition into parts, parts whose properties should collectively explain the properties of the total state. This, I think, is a mistake. It is not the case that imaginative

experiences inherit their intentional nature – their object-directedness towards particulars – from some already-intentional elements of the total experience. Rather, the elements involved in imaginative experience inherit their nature from the whole of which they are parts. If you adopt the decompositional approach, you will inevitably end up with an aggregative view, and the problems inherent in it. But if you opt to start from the ideas that only whole imaginative experiences are intentional, and that the elements of the experience are not individually intentional independent of the whole, you can motivate a better view.

All of this is suggestive, but somewhat abstract. To put some flesh on the bones of the proposal, I will first give an explanation of Gestalt theory, followed by an account of its application to the question at hand.

5.5.1 Gestalt theory: a brief introduction

Gestalt psychology emerged early in the 20th century, as a reaction against the dominant trends in psychology at the time. Structuralists and behaviorists held (*inter alia*) that experiences could be broken down into atoms of experience; that analysis of those atoms would then suffice as an analysis of the whole experience; and that the association of one atom with another was simply a matter of custom and habit. Note how this describes the approach that I said underpins the additive view. Gestalt psychologists, by contrast, argue that experiences are wholes – *gestalten* – whose properties are not simply aggregations of the properties of their parts. So analysis of the parts of an experience is not enough to, indeed never can, deliver a complete

description or analysis of the experience. The parts can only be fully understood in their relation to the structure of the whole, and come to have new properties as a consequence of their integration into a whole. Further, the association and combination of the parts is governed by identifiable principles. Gestalt wholes tend towards *Prägnanz* – literally, ‘simplicity’, ‘concision’, ‘pithiness’. The idea is that the elements of an experience will be combined in such a way as to bring about the most stable, simple, symmetrical total experience.²¹⁶

These two Gestalt ideas – experiences as *gestalten*, and tending towards *Prägnanz* – will be my focus, and so I’ll explain them further by examples. The most significant and detailed contribution of Gestalt psychology has been to the study of perception, and the principles are most easily demonstrated with perceptual examples.

The notion that experiences are wholes over and above their parts, and that parts inherit features from the wholes, is often illustrated with musical examples. For example, An identical sequence of three notes will sound – be experienced – differently, depending on how they relate to the melody in which they appear. For example, consider this melody:

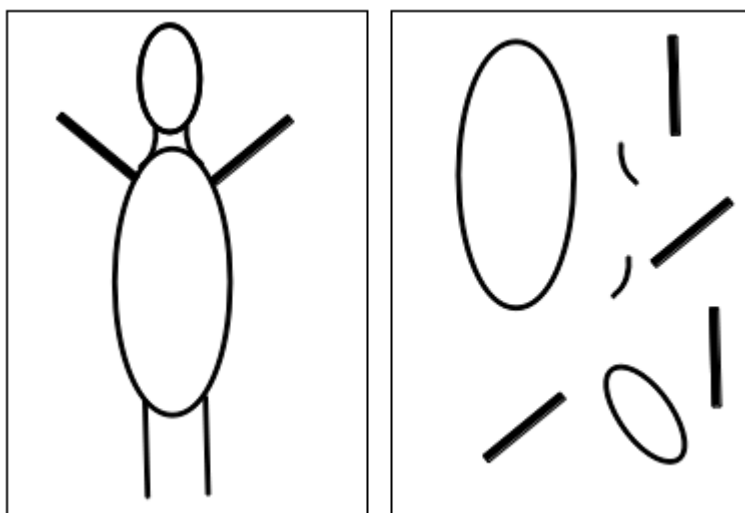


You may have managed to work out that this is the first line of “Three Blind Mice”. The interesting thing, and the germane point, is that the first three notes are just the same as the first three notes of the chorus of “Let it Be” – same pitch,

²¹⁶This is a very brief summary of a large volume of work. A good, concise account of Gestalt theories of perception can be found in Ian E. Gordon. *Theories of Visual Perception*. Third edition. New York: Psychology Press, 2004, ch.2. A detailed account of Gestalt ideas and their application is Kurt Koffka. *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935. A good collection of articles including several that move beyond perceptual applications is Willis D. Ellis, ed. *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*. New York: Humanities Press, 1967.

same duration, and so on. But the sequence of three notes sounds different in the two different contexts. The part derives its meaning, its significance, from its involvement in the whole.

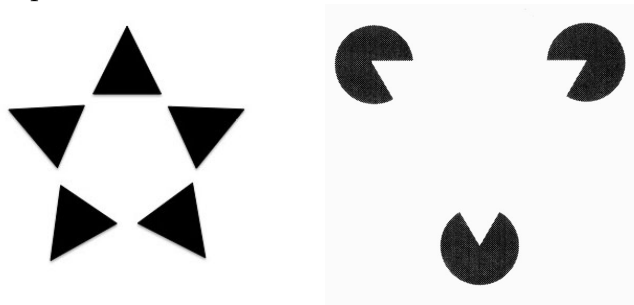
Striking visual examples are also available. Consider the two illustrations below. One is, it seems, just a jumble of lines and shapes; the other is a drawing of a person. The parts of the person become meaningful – take on extra properties – as a consequence of their organization and combination into a meaningful whole. Ovals become heads, lines become arms, and so on. And one cannot explain the properties of the whole as a function of the properties of the parts, considered independently of each other. The oval is a head because it is part of a person; the head is not a head because the oval was already a head.



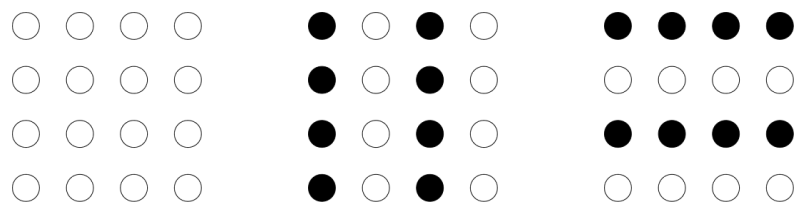
The point in both the visual and musical examples is that the perceptual experience has properties that are not simply aggregations of the properties of the parts; and the parts involved take on certain properties that they do not have separately as a consequence of their organization and combination into a whole. So analysis of

the experience can't proceed by decomposition, and consideration of the properties of the compositional parts. The experience can only be understood as a whole, and the parts must be analyzed in the context of that whole. This is the idea of experiences as gestalten.

The other Gestalt principle requiring explanation is Prägnanz. Prägnanz is a difficult concept, not least because it is often associated with the “law of Prägnanz”, which suggests that there is one immutable law governing the assembly of Gestalt wholes. In fact, Prägnanz is best understood as a set of tendencies, governed by principles, that describes the ways in which you most usually tend to experience things. The exact identity of those principles is a matter of continuing empirical research, and there is no clearly agreed set. But at least some are well-established. For example, the principle of closure suggests that, when faced with figures such as those below,, you tend to see a shapes which ‘closes’ the figure, though no such shape is in fact present.



As another example, the principle of similarity describes the tendency to view stimuli that are similar as grouped together into an object, as when an evenly-spaced grid of dots is organized into rows or columns depending on the coloring of the dots.



The idea of Prägnanz, then, is just that gestalt perceptual experiences tend towards the most optimally simple, stable interpretation of the stimuli, and that this tendency is a matter of the operation of principles.

The sort of gestalten that are the optimal product of Prägnanz tendencies are sometimes called “good gestalten”. They are good in that they are the most simple, stable, well-organized experiences possible given the stimuli. Bad gestalten are experiences which are structurally unstable, in that they have discordant elements, or properties which violate a principle of Prägnanz. Bad gestalten tend to demand resolution or adjustment in the direction of the good, in accordance with Prägnanz principles. One way to experience something like this is to try to see a trick drawing in the wrong way. Once you have seen how the drawing is meant to be seen – once the stable, simple, good gestalt experience has been established – it is possible, but difficult, to go back to seeing it as a confused mess of shapes, a bad gestalt. Maintaining that latter experience takes almost palpable effort, because the experience strains towards resolution into the stabler, simpler good gestalt.

Thus far, I have only discussed gestalten as they relate to perception, and to the organization of perceptual stimuli. But what I want to argue is that complex mental states can be thought of as gestalt wholes. That is, they are composed of parts, but

the properties of those parts do not dictate the properties of the whole; rather, the parts inherit properties from the whole. And, further, the way in which the parts form a whole mental state is guided by Prägnanz principles. So I will spend some time talking about how, in general, Gestalt principles may be applied beyond perception.

The foundational Gestalt psychologists thought their principles were widely applicable. Some went so far as to suggest that physical and chemical processes are best understood in gestalt theory terms.²¹⁷ More conservatively, others tried to explore Gestalt-theoretic interpretations of mental processes besides perception.²¹⁸ This is the direction I am heading in; I want to argue that imaginative experiences are best understood as gestalten. I will get there via a brief discussion of Max Wertheimer's work on productive thinking. To be clear, I am not intending to endorse fully everything Wertheimer has to say; I am more interested in the way in which he tries to apply gestalt principles to thought.²¹⁹

Productive thinking, as Wertheimer describes it, is more or less reasoning, a process of thinking that has the solution to a problem as its end product. Wertheimer identifies two traditional approaches to the analysis of such thinking: traditional logic, and associationism. Neither, he thinks, is entirely wrong, but neither is satisfactory. Wertheimer's worry is that, when applied to concrete examples of productive thinking, important aspects of the process are under-described and under-explained. The traditional approaches overlook systematic operations and processes that are essen-

²¹⁷See Wolfgang Köhler. "Physical Gestalts". In: *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*. Ed. by Willis D. Ellis. New York: Humanities Press, 1967, pp. 17–54; for discussion, see Gordon, *Theories of Visual Perception*, op. cit., pp. 22-26.

²¹⁸For a range of examples, see Ellis, *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, op. cit.

²¹⁹The rest of this section is mostly based on Max Wertheimer. *Productive Thinking*. Enlarged edition. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.

tial to productive thinking, and they do so because they concentrate on identifying and analyzing the static atoms of thinking – propositions, connectives, and the like – while neglecting to study the dynamic wholes of which those atoms are parts.²²⁰ What Wertheimer proposes, then, is that reasoning should be approached as a gestalt process, in which an instability inherent in a particular arrangement of elements of thought is corrected by a movement towards a stable, *Prägnanz* resolution, where the parts are brought into balance. The elements of thought described by traditional logic and associationism are to be reinterpreted in terms of the roles they play in systematic, structural processes; and a particular part may only be fully understood in terms of its role in a particular structure.²²¹

Now, whether or not Wertheimer is right about exactly how Gestalt principles can be applied to reasoning, I think it is apparent that doing so can deliver some explanatory insight. Gestalt principles do not only pertain to perception. I want to highlight four things about Wertheimer's work which will guide my application of Gestalt principles to imaginative experiences. The first two concern gestalten; the second two concern *Prägnanz*.

The first point about gestalten I wish to emphasize is the idea that whole mental states or experiences should be understood as gestalten. Though perceptual examples are the easiest way to explain Gestalt principles, using them has the unfortunate effect of suggesting that just the *objects* of perception or thought are gestalten, the wholes that are explanatorily prior to their parts. Rather, as Wertheimer suggests,

²²⁰Ibid., pp. 5-12.

²²¹Ibid., pp. 234-259.

the total perceptual or cognitive experience is the *gestalten*, not just its object. In the perceptual case, you could put this rather loosely by saying that the thing seen and the way in which it is seen are both elements of a *gestalt* experience; it is not that there is a *gestalt* thing seen. The *gestalten* which should be the principal focus of inquiry are whole experiences, not objects which are parts of experiences.

The second point about *gestalten* worth highlighting is Wertheimer's insistence on the importance of considering mental episodes or processes as *gestalten*, processes that may stretch over days, months, or even years. He makes this clear when he considers the process by which Einstein came to propose the theory of relativity. What Wertheimer suggests is that this process, which spanned several years, should as a whole be thought of as a *gestalt*.²²² The thought I want to take from this is that just as elements of individual mental states can only be understood properly as parts of a whole state, mental states themselves can only be understood properly as parts of whole processes or episodes. As Wertheimer emphasizes, to understand reasoning, it is necessary to consider the whole dynamic process of productive thinking, rather than just the static atoms, the individual mental states, of which the whole process is composed.

The other two things I want to mention concern Wertheimer's use of *Prägnanz*, and the explanation of it above in the context of perception. The first point is that Wertheimer thinks the things which give a productive thought process its motive force are *Prägnanz* tendencies. What drives the process forward from an initial state of problem-recognition to a terminal state of problem-solution is the tendency of

²²²Ibid., ch. 10.

wholes, initially in a state of instability and complexity, to progress towards a stable and simple resolution.²²³ Prägnanz is here invoked as an explanation of why certain experiences, certain steps in the process, occur as opposed to others, or as opposed to none at all. The initial, puzzled state is troubling, because the cognitive gestalt is unstable; and a process of thinking, reasoning, is set in train because of the way in which gestalten tend towards stability, in accordance with Prägnanz principles.

The second point concerns what the principles of Prägnanz actually are. Above, I gave simple demonstrations of two laws of perceptual Prägnanz, and I mentioned that there are others, and that their precise nature is a matter of ongoing research. But when it comes to productive thinking, Wertheimer is (maddeningly) unspecific about what the analogous laws of cognitive Prägnanz might be. He refers to them in the abstract, but never in detail. So, at least so far as Wertheimer goes, it is not possible to give a similarly simple demonstration of some law or principle of cognitive Prägnanz. The closest Wertheimer comes to giving actual principles is when he gives his examples, like that of Einstein mentioned above. But he also seems to suggest in the same discussion of Einstein that what one person finds troubling or unstable will not be so for another person. The things that troubled Einstein about the state of physics might not at all have concerned another person. The perceptual laws of Prägnanz, it seems, are in a sense given, and more or less universal; they describe normal, typical perceptual experience. But the cognitive principles are harder to identify, perhaps because the experiences in which they can be discerned are more

²²³Ibid., p. 239.

diverse, and it is harder to typify them. So though Wertheimer adduces the existence of laws of cognitive Prägnanz, he does not say what they are.

The point here is that Prägnanz, understood as a set of tendencies, can play an explanatory role even if the actual principles involved are not identified. As Wertheimer does, one can use the concept of Prägnanz to explain how mental states come to be as they are, and even to explain features of them, without having to first identify principles of Prägnanz that apply to those states. If anything, the way to derive such principles is to examine the states with the concept in mind.

I will argue towards the end of this section that this is just the role Prägnanz can play in examining imagination, and that using the concept in this way delivers indirect evidence that imagination involves parts. However, the most important Gestalt principle for my immediate purposes is the very idea of gestalten. So I now turn to discussion of how it can be applied to imaginative experiences, and why it should be.

5.5.2 The approach applied

The central thought to be pursued now is that imaginative experiences are gestalt wholes. Thinking of imaginative experiences as gestalten means thinking of them as structured wholes whose properties are more than the sum of the properties of their parts. Further, the wholes are to be considered as explanatorily prior to the parts which compose them; and the parts can inherit properties from the wholes. So I am not abandoning the basic idea of the aggregative view, that imagining consists in a complex of various elements. But I am abandoning the theoretical approach

that underpins the view, according to which the way to understand imagination is to decompose it into its elements and then look for the properties of the whole among the properties of the parts. Most pertinently, I am abandoning the idea that the particular-directedness of imagining is to be explained by the particular-directedness of one or another of its elements. Rather, the total experience is particular-directed, and its parts are only particular-directed in virtue of their involvement with the whole.

So far, this is an explanation at a level of abstraction. I will make the ideas more concrete by exemplification, and then explain how adopting them avoids the problems of the aggregative view.

What I am looking for in this chapter is an explanation of how imaginative experiences come to be about particulars. Because it seems that, for example, a mental image of a black horse may equally well be part of an imaginative experience of Black Bess or Black Beauty, the explanation also has to account for how imaginative experiences with ambiguous images can be determinately of one thing or another. Since this last feature rules out properties of the image as being the particular-determining part of the experience, the aggregative view suggests that supplementary, intentional content to the image, content which determines the object of the experience in virtue of being itself determinately about an object. You have a sort of content composed of intentional parts which sum up into a complete intentional experience.

The gestalt approach is to reject the idea that one part or the other – the thought of a black horse, emotions about it, and so on – must itself have the property of being about Black Bess. The whole imaginative experience has the property of being about Black Bess, but this does not entail that one of its parts must have that property.

Rather, insofar as the parts are about Black Bess, they are about her because they are parts of the whole experience. The image is of Black Bess because it is part of an experience of Black Bess; and whatever cognitive additional material is present is about Black Bess for the same reason. No part is individually about Black Bess. The parts take on a different meaning, and have different properties, when they are combined in the whole. The aggregative view, it seems, takes the approach of dissecting a rich, lively experience into components. Puzzlement then arises because none of the parts exhibit that richness or liveliness, and it seems mysterious that they ever could do so in combination. It is rather like dissecting a frog and then being puzzled that the individual legs do not hop, and baffled as to how they ever could. The gestalt approach takes the richness and liveliness to be a property of the whole, which should not be looked for among the properties of the parts. The frog's liveliness is better understood by observation, not dissection.

Adopting this theoretical approach delivers several advantages over the aggregative view. In particular, the approach avoids the problems I suggested for the aggregative view, by holding that the parts of an imaginative experience are integrated in a seamless whole whose properties are prior to those of the parts, and whose parts inherit properties from the whole. If the whole can have properties that are different from properties of the parts, it should be no surprise that the whole experience lacks phenomenological properties that might be apparent in the parts individually. Conversely, since the parts have some properties only in virtue of being parts, it is no surprise that considering the parts individually makes it mysterious how their properties could ever sum up to the rich imaginative experiences we have. And further, even

if the parts integrated in the whole are somewhat similar to perceptual or cognitive items, it should be no surprise that the experience that emerges is different enough to constitute a very different way of approaching objects or tasks, a way which allows you to do more than we could by just thinking.

All of this, I think, suggests that a Gestalt theoretic approach is superior to the approach implicit in the aggregative view. We should look first to study imaginative experiences as integrated wholes; in particular, we should not look for intentional directedness among one or another of its parts. The gestalt approach suggests that it is not going to be fruitful to try and identify the individual elements of an imaginative experience by examining the whole experience and its properties. As I suggested earlier, we can by examining the total experiences, and adopting something like Sartre's ideas, say something about what the parts might be; but we should not expect to thereby identify some particular element that makes the experience intentional.

However, simply adopting this alternative theoretical approach does not quite solve all the problems I have raised in this chapter. The gestalt view, as I have explained it, is so far merely a way of thinking about imagination, not a model of it; and the latter, after all, is the aim of the thesis. Further, gestalt psychological theories of perception are often reproached for providing good descriptions of phenomena, but no explanations of them. This same accusation may fairly be leveled against the approach I have taken. The problems of the aggregative view are, it seems, avoided simply by accepting the cases that cause trouble as accurate descriptions of the phenomena of imagining. I have not solved the problems; I have just accepted that they are problems, and made an evasive maneuver.

These worries can be coalesced and focused into a sharp complaint about what I have said thus far. The complaint is that, insofar as the gestalt approach addresses the question of how imaginative experiences are intentional, it does so in a distinctly unpromising manner. The approach I have suggested incorporates these two ideas: that there are parts to imaginative wholes which are modified by their membership of the whole; and owing to that modification and the explanatory priority of the whole, it is to be expected that there will be no direct (phenomenological) evidence concerning the nature of the parts, since to the limited extent that they might be apparent in the whole, they will perforce have different natures than they would independently. In short, the gestalt approach relies on parts, but denies that there is direct evidence for their existence. This does not seem to be a happy conclusion.

The complaint is, in fact, one that has also been made against Sartre's view. Though Sartre posits an analogon made up of various sorts of content, he delivers little evidence that it exists; and indeed, denies that direct phenomenological evidence can ever exist. This is just the same problem that my own view faces. Over and again, the idea is posited that imagining involves various elements. But there is little if any direct evidence for this claim, and merely denying that there can be such evidence for some theoretical reason does not assuage the worry about its lack.

I am going to address this complaint by making an indirect argument for the hypothesis that imaginative experiences involve parts, using the idea of *Prägnanz*. I will argue that considering the role of *Prägnanz* as a explanation of certain phenomena of imagination provides us with good indirect evidence that the experience really does involve parts combined in the manner suggested by the Gestalt approach. By the

end of the chapter, then, I will have a view of how imaginative appearances come to be intentional, which depends on a gestalt conception of whole-part relations, which conception's applicability in the present context is evinced by the contribution Prägnanz can make as an explanatory device. Though there is no direct evidence for the presence of parts in imaginative wholes, there is reason to think that they are in fact present.

5.5.3 Parts; Prägnanz

The challenge here is to give some reason to think that imaginative experiences really do involve parts, combined as the Gestalt conception suggests. The argument is as follows. There are cases where it seems it is hard, or perhaps even impossible, to imagine certain things. The only reasonable explanation for this sort of case is that the cases involve parts which are somehow not being combined as they should be to deliver an imaginative experience. So that is evidence that there are parts involved in the experience. The role of Prägnanz is to suggest a principled reason for why there is a felt difficulty in imagining such things, and why even when one can, the imagined situation is harder to maintain. Prägnanz predicts that there will be some imaginative states that will be inherently less stable – less easy to maintain – than others. The mooted explanation is that there is structural disunity among the parts involved in the experience. There is a tendency towards stable, good gestalten; towards imaginative states which involve parts harmonized into stable wholes. I thus have evidence for parts, and evidence for Prägnanz; this supports the Gestalt approach to imagination.

Let me first set out some problem cases. The first sort of problem involves what might be called cross-modal imagining: attempts to imagine in two different modalities at once. Imagine again Billie Holliday singing, this time as you watch her on stage. It should be easy enough to imagine both the song in her voice, and at the same time her appearance. But now try to imagine seeing Billie Holliday sing, while hearing the song in a horrible caterwaul, or a deep bass voice. While this may not be impossible, it is considerably more difficult than the first case.²²⁴

The second sort of problem involves trying to imagine certain sorts of object as having qualities very different from the ones usually ascribed to them. Imagine, for example, an apple, way past its best and rotting. It is easy enough to imagine this apple as being horrible, disgusting, and so on. But it is very hard to imagine being appetized by it, being drawn to eat it and savor its taste.²²⁵

Third, consider cases where you try to imagine yourself acting a certain way. For example, suppose you want to imagine how you would react if your horse, the one

²²⁴McGinn suggests that it is hard to imagine any cross-modal experience, let alone one involving the sort of disconnection between sight and sound that I have suggested here. Supposing this is so, the point I am making is that the second sort of case is even harder. See McGinn, *Mindsight*, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

²²⁵Something like this phenomenon has been discussed by psychologists, who have given it the rather unfortunate name ‘sympathetic magic.’ The idea, roughly, is that objects which are known to be innocuous are nevertheless held to be unpleasant or to be avoided, owing to their history or their appearance or some such property. For example, people are less willing to drink a glass of water from a glass labeled as poison, even if they have applied the label themselves. In a somewhat different example, people display more or less willingness to wear a garment depending on who has worn it in the past (friend or foe), even if they know it has been thoroughly laundered. The ‘magic’ element of the phenomenon is that it is (descriptively) as if people believe that there is a sort of magical process of contagion, whereby things like labels and historical contingencies can ‘infect’ objects with unpleasant properties. I think this is an interesting phenomenon that is worth studying in the context of imagining, but it is hard to marshal it into an argument concerning specifically sensory imagination, and so I will set it aside. See Paul Rozin, and Carol Nemeroff. “The Laws of Sympathetic Magic”. In: *Cultural Psychology*. Ed. by G. Herdt J. Stigler and R. Shweder. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 205–232; Carol Nemeroff and Paul Rozin. “The Contagion Concept in Adult Thinking in the United States”. In: *Ethos* 22.2 (1994), pp. 158–186.

on which you have bet the mortgage, cantered home first in the Grand National. It should be easy enough to imagine being fairly pleased, excited, overjoyed at this. What is hard is to imagine being miserable, depressed, saddened at the outcome of the race.

No doubt there are more sorts of cases that could be adduced here, but these three will get the argument going.²²⁶ The point is that, in all three, there is a difficulty in imagining a certain sort of situation – an incongruous sound and sight, an object with a counterintuitive quality, or a situation and an inappropriate emotional reaction. I have already advertised the conclusions I want to draw from these cases, but let me make them plain. The most reasonable and obvious way to explain these cases is that there are parts to the imaginative experiences involved, and those parts are somehow in conflict, or incongruous. In the first sort of case, there are two parts: two imaginary sensory experiences. In the second, there are again two parts: the qualitative experience of a rotting apple, and the ascription to it of the property of being appetizing. In the third sort of case, there are again two parts: the imagined

²²⁶You might be wondering at this point why I have not referred to the literature on imaginative resistance, where more cases of this sort might be found, along with discussion of them. The main reason is that a lot of that literature is not obviously concerned with puzzles of sensory imagination. Rather, the cases typically invoked involve suppositions, or fictional accounts that somehow go wrong, or bizarre applications of moral principles. Though I think the approach I am suggesting may be germane to such cases, I do not think they are obviously involved with sensory imagination. Imaginative resistance was first raised as a problem in the contemporary literature by Kendall Walton; see Kendall Walton. “Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality”. In: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 68 (1994), pp. 27–50. The most thorough (though not necessarily the most convincing) treatment of the issue is probably Weatherston’s. He makes the point that there are really several different puzzles in the area, which might each admit of several different solutions: another reason to avoid engaging directly with this literature here. See Brian Weatherston. “Morality, Fiction, and Possibility”. In: *Philosopher’s Imprint* 4.3 (2004). Other discussants include Gendler and Stock; see Tamar Szabó Gendler. “The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance”. In: *The Journal Of Philosophy* 97.2 (2000), pp. 55–81; Kathleen Stock. “Resisting Imaginative Resistance”. In: *The Philosophical Quarterly* 55.221 (2005), pp. 607–624.

experience of seeing your horse win, and the imagined sadness. In all the cases, the simplest way to explain what is going on is, in the first instance, to appeal to parts.

Now, this gets me to the point where I have some indirect evidence of the existence of parts in imaginative experience. It does not yet vindicate the idea that the parts are combined as *gestalten*; nor has any special role for *Prägnanz* being evinced. The evidence for both comes from an attempt to develop an explanation of why these experiences are hard to imagine.

Suppose that it is the case that the parts of imaginative experiences compose *gestalten*, and suppose that the *gestalten* – the complete experiences – do tend towards simplicity, stability, and harmony, as the idea of *Prägnanz* predicts. Then we have a simple and elegant explanation of why certain things are hard to imagine, but not impossible. The idea is that, in all the cases above, there is disharmony or incongruence among the parts involved, and this manifests in the complete experience as a difficulty in imagining the case in the first place, and a further difficulty in maintaining the imaginative scenario. Though you might, for example, succeed by some effort in imagining Billie Holliday singing in a bass voice, you are likely to find it effortful, and to slip back into imagining her singing as she really did.

The contribution that *Prägnanz* can make in these cases is to suggest reasons for why there is difficulty. The idea is that the hard cases are ones where there is disharmony and disagreement among the parts involved; that is, they are bad *gestalts*. It's hard to imagine rotten fruit as appealing, because the combination of the two tends towards instability. The imaginative experience is subject to a tendency to render the fruit as disgusting, and this overwhelms the attempt to imagine it as

tasty. Similarly, the cross-modal case is one in which the parts of the experience do not enmesh harmoniously. The good gestalt, in which the sound and the picture are complementary, is more harmonious than the bad gestalt when they are not.

The advantage that the explanation in terms of *Prägnanz* has over the explanation that might otherwise be given is that there is a principled reason given for the difficulty experienced, the feeling that certain cases are easier, and the tendency to fall back to those case. The alternative explanation of these cases, the sort that you might give if you took the approach implicit in the aggregative approach, is that the parts involved just, somehow, do not fit together, perhaps for reasons of prior association. But this gives no explanation of why, once combined, the parts should not stay combined – why there should be then still a problem of maintaining the imaginative scenario. The *Prägnanz* approach can give this explanation: it is because the scenario, even when successfully imagined, remains unstable and unharmonious. In short, one cannot explain the difficulties above adequately without positing that there are principles underlying the combination of parts in imaginative experiences, principles which dictate the relative difficulty of imagining various scenarios. We can appeal to *Prägnanz* without identifying those principles; we just need to adduce their existence in order to explain the cases.

I do not suppose that this discussion has done much more than outline a case for thinking of imaginative experiences as tending towards *Prägnanz*. What would be needed to seal that case would be some suggestions for what the particular laws of imaginative *Prägnanz* might be. One way to proceed would be to examine cases like those above in a systematic manner, in order to work out laws or principles.

One might suggest, for example, that it is a law of Prägnanz that disharmonious elements from different sensory modalities result in an unstable gestalt, which is hard to maintain. Similarly, one might suggest that it is a law of Prägnanz that imagining things to have counterfactual properties is more difficult, the further you get from how things actually are; and that you will tend, instead, to try to imagine things as being closer to how they actually are (or how you think they are). This is not a project I have the space to undertake here.

Nevertheless, I think I have done enough now to motivate the idea that Prägnanz can provide explanations of certain imaginative phenomena. Further, I have argued that any explanation of these phenomena is going to have to rely on the idea that there are parts to imaginative experiences. So whether or not you find the idea of Prägnanz convincing, the idea that imaginative experiences involve parts should be well enough established. This is sufficient to dispel the remaining problem with the Gestalt approach to imagining. The problem was that the approach relied on an appeal to parts, while denying that there could be any direct evidence of their existence. What I have shown now is that there is good indirect evidence that imaginative experiences involve parts. So I conclude that I can safely say that imaginative experiences are gestalten, composed of parts, which are integrated into a seamless, unified whole. The parts inherit properties from the whole. Thus, there is no answer to the question, what part of the imaginative experience makes it intentionally directed towards a particular? It is the whole experience that is about a particular; its parts are so only in virtue of their role in the whole.

5.6 Summary

I started this chapter with a challenge for the view of imaginative appearances I have developed: how does an imaginative experience come to be of one thing, rather than another? I laid out a simple, widespread view: the additive view, on which to imagine is to aggregate conceptual and sensory material. I rejected the additive view, because once again, it recapitulates the problems of the pictorial view. I suggested that progress could be made by adopting Johnston's idea of cathexis, and Sartre's ideas about the contribution of various sorts of content to imaginative experience. This aggregative view, I argued, delivers a model of imagining, congruent with the view of appearances, whereby intentional directedness towards particulars is built into appearances, rather than being added on to them. I then argued that this view faces further difficulties; there is no direct evidence that there are parts to imaginative experiences, and it is not clear how the mere aggregation of parts can deliver such rich experiences. I argued then that conceiving of imaginative experiences as gestalten allows us to keep the basic insight and appeal of the aggregative view, which avoiding its problems; and further, that employing the gestalt concept of *Prägnanz* can deliver principled explanations of some imaginative phenomena; the fact that it can do so gives indirect evidence that imaginative experiences do indeed involve parts, even if they are not obviously manifest in the experiences. Though I have by no means given a complete account of a gestalt approach to imagination, I conclude that I have demonstrated the appeal and fruitful possibilities of the approach. Imagining is an

experience in which disparate parts are combined into whole, complex, intentional experiences, with properties that are not inherent in the parts.

Conclusion

To claim that I have in the course of this thesis fully explained imagination would be quite an exaggeration. Nonetheless, I have both articulated a view which accounts for the explananda that I set myself, and given reasons to think that competing views will struggle to achieve this. Let me summarize the positive view, and recapitulate the criticism of its rivals.

The view I have endorsed consists of several elements. I have argued that imagining must involve a genuine relation to uninstantiated sensible properties. This is the best way to explain not just imagination's sensory phenomenology, but also the capacity imagination has to furnish original *de re* reference to sensible properties. I have argued that these sensible properties of which you are aware when you imagine are structured into appearances by the application of intentional content. Specifically, imagining involves the active intentional positing of an absent object, of which sensible properties are predicated, such that an appearance of an object is manifest. The special, active, organizing way in which the intentional objects of imagination are posited explains why they appear to be subjective, dependent on the observer for their appearance. This dependent appearance, which is apparent in imaginative

experiences via quasi-observation of objects and the subjective space of imagining, is what sorts imaginative appearances from perceptual ones.

This view of imaginative appearances seems to account for how imagined objects appear different to perceived ones, but it seems to do so at the cost of making the intentional objects of imaginative experiences mere appearances. I have argued that, to avoid this consequence, it is necessary to adopt a Gestalt theoretic approach to imagination. On this approach, imaginative experiences consist of a range of parts, which are seamlessly synthesized into a whole experience. The whole experiences are intentional, but the parts are not; they inherit their intentionality from the whole. It is not the case that one generates an image and then applies intentional content to it; rather, the image, the intentionality, and the rest of the content come combined. I argued that this approach not only helps to explain how experiences can be about particulars, but also promises to be fruitful in explaining features of imagination, in part via the Gestalt idea of *Prägnanz*.

In the course of the thesis, I have set aside several competitors to this view. I have argued that the very crudest views of imaginary experiences – denialism, the perceptual model, and pictorialism – will not do. I have also argued that views like the dependency thesis, on which imagination does not share structural features with other sensory experiences, are mistaken. I have argued that content theory views, on which to imagine is to stand in a relation to something you are not aware of, cannot account for imagination's *de re* capacities. And I have argued that relational views, the main rivals to intentional views, consistently replicate the features and problems of the pictorial view.

So even if the details of the intentional view proposed are not fully worked out, the idea that an intentional view is the best alternative seems secure. And the elements of an intentional view that I have explained – positing, predication, intentional content, cathexis, the Gestalt approach – individually and collectively promise to explain more about imagination. I will end by briefly saying how.

There are, broadly, two further lines of inquiry that might be pursued using the Gestalt approach, and these relate to the distinction I drew in the introduction between phenomenology and capacity questions. On the one hand, there are several facets of the phenomenology of imaginative experiences that I have barely touched on, or not even mentioned. Among them are imagined emotions; imagination's relation to the body; the dynamic nature of imaginary episodes; and the relation between imagination and the self. The Gestalt approach and the intentional view suggest that such things are best approached by examining the way in which they are apparent in imaginative experiences, rather than by trying to work out how they might emerge in some derivative manner from perceptual experiences. If, for example, imagined emotions inherit their intentionality from being part of the imaginative experience, it would be a mistake to try to identify the intentional emotional states that act as precursors or templates for imagined emotions.

The second line of inquiry concerns the capacities of imagination. As I said in the introduction, though many of the roles that have been adduced for imagination do not clearly involve sensory imagination, they do depend on some link between the imaginary and the real. And so the key task in investigating imagination's capacities is to elucidate how the experience might be linked to the world. Now, the Gestalt

approach does not provide an obvious or easy answer to this question. But the idea that I think should be pursued is that the individual elements of imaginative content are not separately world-related. The only thing that is world-related in imaginative experience is the whole experience, because it is only this that is intentional. So, again, the lesson for further inquiry is in a sense cautionary. It would be a mistake to try to identify elements of imaginary content which give the whole experience some properties or other, which in turn allow it to fulfill its roles. It is the whole experience, or it is nothing, which is world-related. This means that, for example, you cannot get an account of how imaginative appearances relate to possibilities via an account of how thought relates to possibilities. The two experiences relate to the world differently.

I will finish by outlining one area of inquiry in which it is clear that the contribution of the Gestalt approach can be illuminating, rather than merely cautionary. I came to the study of imagination via an interest in creativity. It seems clear – indisputable – that imagining is involved in creativity, or more strongly, that creation is an imaginative process. It is not at all clear how creativity works. The Gestalt approach suggests an answer, tied up with Wertheimer's ideas about productive thinking. Creativity is the process of synthesizing parts in imagination to create new, stable, seamless wholes. What separates good creative products from bad ones is whether the whole created is a good gestalt.

This is barely a theory, but it is a start which promises quite a lot, and it is a start suggested by the approach I have advocated. So I conclude that an intentional view of imagination, based on and informed by Gestalt theory, is both the best way

of explaining the phenomenology of imaginative experiences, and the most promising base from which to start further inquiries into their phenomenology and capacities.

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