

Chapter 1: Introduction

The general aim of this book is to address the issue of the nature and the unity of the various forms of imagining and to present and compare the different theoretical approaches to this issue. This requires both a close study of the distinct kinds of imagining and, in particular, of their main features, similarities and differences; and a critical discussion of the main accounts of imagining put forward both in the distant past and in more recent times. The book may therefore serve as an introduction to the main ideas and positions which have been adopted with respect to imaginative phenomena. But it does so from the perspective of an attempt to provide an account of imagining, which unifies the different forms this aspect of our minds may take. Accordingly, my approach will be more systematic than centred on particular philosophers.¹ In addition, a more specific goal is to develop in detail what I call the *Agency Account* of imagining and to defend it as the best unified account of imagining available. The main claim of this theory is that imaginings are mental actions of a certain kind. Accordingly, imagining is something that we actively and voluntarily do.

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

The issue of formulating a unified account of imagining has often been neglected in the philosophical tradition. Many of the discussions of imagining in the past and the present have focused, not on the nature of imaginings, but on their role in our mental lives and our interactions with other people and the world. It has been widely acknowledged that imagining is very prominent in and significant for various parts of our lives, ranging from our emotional engagement with other people (e.g., Goldie (2000): 194ff.) and our moral

¹ Another reason for this is that - with some notable exceptions, such as the works by Husserl (1980), Sartre (2004), Casey (1976), White (1990) or O'Shaughnessy (2000) - many philosophers have not presented fully developed and focussed theories of imagining, but instead embedded their claims in discussions of other, often more general issues. And even among the noted exceptions who devoted whole books or lecture series to the topic, there are some who have not always aimed at (or succeeded in) formulating a cohesive account, but rather show the tendency to describe and discuss a list of more or less loosely connected ideas and observations.

evaluation of actions (e.g., Johnson (1993)) to the aesthetic appreciation of artworks (e.g., Walton (1990) and its many followers) and even the cognition of parts of the world.² And the respective philosophical discussions have shed light on important aspects of many different kinds of imagining, such as sensory imaginings (e.g., visualizing a face), intellectual imaginings (e.g., supposing or imagining that it rains), affective imaginings (e.g., imagining an itch), or imaginative projects (e.g., imagining being a certain person in a certain situation). But the imaginative nature common to all kinds of imagining has typically remained uninvestigated.³ Indeed, when philosophers have addressed the question of what it means for a mental phenomenon to be imaginative, they have usually concentrated exclusively on specific forms of imagining, notably on sensory or visual imaginings.⁴ The neglect of the issue of what all imaginings have in common *as* imaginings may thus have often been closely related to the neglect of non-sensory or complex kinds of imagining. As a result, most discussions of imaginings have been concerned either with aspects of imaginings other than (though perhaps dependent on or otherwise linked to) their imaginativeness, or with the imaginativeness of only a certain kind of imaginings. Only a few philosophers have attempted to provide a satisfactory account of imagining in its (more or less) full variety.⁵

² Although imaginings are typically held not to provide knowledge or epistemic support themselves (but cf. section 7.2 for an opposing view), it seems beyond doubt that they are often involved in other ways in the acquisition of knowledge. Cf. the discussions on thought experiments (e.g., Sorensen (1992)), the link between conceivability and possibility (e.g., Gendler & Hawthorne (2002)), the role of mental imagery in geometry (e.g., Giaquinto (1992)), or the project of trying to determine how many windows are in one's house (e.g., Pylyshyn (2002): especially 164).

³ For instance, Walton, who spends considerable time on specifying "a number of dimensions along which imaginings can vary", maintains that we have to be content with an "intuitive understanding of what it is to imagine", and that we cannot "spell out what they have in common" (Walton (1990): 19; cf. ch. 1 in general).

⁴ Cf. Collingwood (1958): chs. 9f., Sartre (2004), Peacocke (1985), Hopkins (1998): ch. 7, and, it seems, Wittgenstein (1984b): vol. II, sections 63-147, to name just a few of those who focus on sensory or visual imaginings. McGinn discusses sensory and intellectual imaginings as well as imaginative projects (i.e., daydreams), but does not (aim to) provide a unified account of them. Instead, he argues only that they form an "imagination spectrum" which extends from the most simple and temporally and conceptually prior imaginative phenomena (e.g., those involved in sensory representation) to the most complex and developed ones (e.g., those involved in creativity; cf. McGinn (2004): 13). Cf. the discussion of the five main forms of imagining in the next chapter for further references to accounts which focus on particular kinds of imagining.

⁵ Cf. Scruton (1974): ch. 7, Casey (1976), and O'Shaughnessy (2000): chs. 11f. for clear examples. Apart from Casey, however, none of the three discusses daydreams or similar imaginative projects in any detail. Whether other proposals (are intended to) constitute a unified account of imagining is less clear. Hume's account of imaginings as a certain kind of "ideas" may apply to all kinds of imaginative episodes as well. But it seems untenable since it treats the difference between sensory and intellectual representations, as well as between imaginative and cognitive ones, to be quantitative (i.e., a matter of "vivacity") rather than qualitative (cf. Hume's comments on the differences between "impressions" and "ideas", or between the "ideas" of belief, memory and imagination: Hume (2000): sections 1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.3; 1.1.1.5; 1.3.5.3; 1.3.7.7; cf. also section 5.2. below). Although Ryle discusses mainly sensory cases, his account of imagining as a form of "internal" pretending or pretending "in one's head" seems to capture cases of both sensory imagining (e.g., visualizing) and intellectual imagining (e.g., fancying; cf. Ryle (1963): chs. 7f., especially section 8.6; cf. also the brief discussion in section # below). White analyses both visualizing and intellectual imagining in terms of thinking of the possible (White (1990): 122f; 184); cf. also note 8 below), but does not explicitly connect the two analyses. And although Currie and Ravenscroft treat both sensory and intellectual imaginings as simulations of their respective cognitive counterparts (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002):

Relatedly, it has been common in discussions about imaginings and their role in our mental lives to take for granted what it means to imagine something - as it is likewise often assumed that we have a good grasp of what it means to believe something or desire it. One particular difficulty with this approach is that imaginings - perhaps in contrast to beliefs and desires - do not seem to constitute a mental kind. Hence it is not obvious that there is a unity in imagining; nor, if so, what it consists in or comprises. This may lead to cases in which a certain kind of imagining is postulated or appealed to in the context of a promising explanation of a particular phenomenon; while the lack of further elucidation of the nature of the type of imagining in question may generate in others considerable doubts about its proposed role or even its existence.⁶ Such complications, as well as more generally the prominent position of imaginings in our lives and interactions with each other and the world, provide sufficient motivation for the investigation of the possibility of a unified account of imagining. It may be helpful and illuminating to learn more about what it means for a representation to be imaginative, and how this relates to or influences the various forms of engagement involving imagining. The nature and unity of imagining is of great philosophical interest both in itself and in relation to many important aspects of our lives.

But the general interest inherent in the question of whether we can provide a unified theory of imagining, and the significant function of imaginings in our mental lives are not the only motivation for the search for such an account. The hope and belief that at least the central cases of imaginings share a common nature arises also from the perception of the need to explain two facts about our actual treatment of such representations. The first is simply that, even after discounting the less obvious cases, we do group together a large variety of mental occurrences in the class of imaginings, while excluding many others. Thus we accept visualizing, supposing, daydreaming, being engaged with fictions, empathizing, and so on, as paradigm instances of imagining, or at least as essentially involving such instances; but not seeing, judging, deliberating, or feeling an emotion or desire. If such imaginings had nothing in common with each other, but shared features with the non-imaginative phenomena, this tendency would be rather mysterious: there has to be something about the imaginative mental phenomena which causes us to treat them - but not other mental phenomena - as members of one and the same class (cf. Scruton (1974): 91f.). The second relevant observation is that our classifications are typically stable, and that we usually have a good grasp of whether - though not necessarily of why - a given mental state is imaginative or not. This means that we normally repeat the same classifications and do not locate certain representations today on one side and tomorrow on the other; that it typically does not take us much effort or thought to come to an appropriate categorization; and that we are seldom unsure about how to treat a certain mental phenomenon (e.g., when confronted with an instance of an unusual or rare kind of representation). This fact too strongly suggests the existence of a certain kind of unity among imaginings to which we appear to have epistemic access (and which is still in want of further elucidation). Otherwise, it would be very difficult to explain the firmness and ease with which we classify

11; 49; cf. also the brief discussion in section # below), their main concern is with the imagining involved in imaginatively adopting a perspective on the world different from one's current one (ibid: 8f.; 11).

⁶ Cf., for instance, the scepticism - expressed in Budd (1992b), Hopkins (1998): ch. 1, and Wollheim (2003) - about the existence of the specific form of imagining seeing something, which Walton refers to in his account of pictorial experience (cf. Walton (1990): ch. 8, and (2002); cf. also the discussion in section 9.5 below).

the sometimes very different phenomena to be of the same kind, and why it is that they, but no other phenomena, count for us as imaginative. Any satisfactory analysis of imagining needs to provide an elucidation of this unity of the paradigm instances of imaginings.

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

This raises the question of which proposals for a unified account of imagining are on offer and should be considered. When looking at the theories of imagining put forward in the philosophical tradition, two major recurring themes can be identified: the relationship (or lack thereof) of imaginative representations to the world, and their relationship to the will. These two motives identify the two broad alternative ways in which the distinctive nature of all central instances of imagining may be elucidated: either in terms of how they stand in relation to reality and to our epistemic interaction with it, or in terms of their connection to mental agency.⁷

A theory of the first kind specifies the difference between imaginings and cognitions by reference to the idea that only the latter concern reality - at least in some particular sense still to be specified. Our minds interact with the world by means of cognition and action. And both forms of interaction are at least primarily the domain of cognitive representations, such as perceptions, memories or beliefs. In accordance with this, the proposals of the first kind to be found in the literature typically identify a lack of cognitive concern with reality as the distinctive feature of imaginings (cf. section 5.1 for references). It is conceivable that a unified account of imagining may also be formulated in terms of their specific insignificance for our active engagement with the world. The idea is that imaginings - in contrast to, say, desires, intentions, beliefs or

⁷ Although it might be possible to endorse a view which characterizes imaginings in terms of both their relationship to reality and their relationship to agency (without also tracing back one characterization to the other), such an approach to imagining would seem to be over-complex. As will become clear in the subsequent chapters, reference to one kind of relationship will presumably suffice to account for the distinctive nature of imagining and, if necessary, for the other kind of relationship. The idea is that imaginings will turn out either to lack a cognitive concern with reality precisely because they are voluntarily formed by us; or instead to (be able to) be mental actions precisely because they are not cognitively constrained by how reality is.

perceptions - cannot motivate us to act or guide us in our actions (e.g., by providing us with information about our relevant environment, or about appropriate means). But the claim that imaginings lack a guiding role in agency can presumably be traced back to the idea that they lack a cognitive concern with the world: they cannot guide us in action (if at all) because they do not provide us with knowledge about the relevant aspects of reality (i.e., the environment and the means). And the claim that imaginings cannot move us to act is not only controversial (cf. note # 12 in chapter 2), but also cannot distinguish them from many other non-imaginative phenomena - such as perceptions or memories - which do not seem to be able to motivate us either. It is hence not very promising to formulate a unified account of imagining in terms of their seeming unimportance for our actions. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the focus in the literature on imagining has been on their apparent lack of a cognitive concern. The resulting view, which specifies imaginings - in contrast to cognitive states - in terms of their failure to play a role in cognition, may be labelled the *Epistemic Account* of imagining. And different versions of this theory may vary in how precisely they characterize the lack of a cognitive concern.

A theory of the second kind, on the other hand, proposes an element of mental activity as the characteristic feature of imagining. It maintains that imaginings are in a particular way intrinsically active; while cognitions are taken to be either passive, or at best active in a different way. The general idea is thus that imaginings constitute a special kind of mental action. Accordingly, this view amounts to the *Agency Account* of imagining already introduced. Different versions of this theory may differ in how exactly they specify the active character distinctive of imaginings. The particular version of the Agency Account which I intend to put forward maintains that imaginings are mental actions which aim at the active and direct formation of mental representations with specific contents. The requirement concerning the representational specificity demands that the underlying motivational states (e.g., desires or intentions) determine which features are to be represented as being instantiated by which objects; while the directness requirement is meant to ensure that the motivational states end up determining the content of the formed representations without making use of epistemic or merely causal mechanisms of content determination (e.g., those mechanisms involved in the manifestation of mental dispositions, or in the formation of beliefs on the basis of evidence) as means.

My defence of this version of the Agency Account of imagining will be paired with a general rejection of the Epistemic Account. The prominence in the literature of the particular ideas underlying these two approaches reflects the fact that they are the main contenders for a unified theory of imagining. Accordingly, I will concentrate my discussion in the subsequent chapters primarily on these two proposals.

But I will also - though more briefly - consider and argue against other contenders for an account of the unity of imagining. Often, these further views start from the same - or at least very similar - basic ideas as the Epistemic or the Agency Account. But they do not always fully develop into a proper theory of what is common to the various forms of imagining - not the least because their proponents have seldomly been interested in this task. So my discussion will sometimes have to construct and fill in the details of the best unified account of imagining which these views might be used to formulate. Besides, the resulting positions may show some considerable overlap in their ideas. But they exclude each other at least in that they provide

different fundamental accounts of the common nature of the different kinds of imaginings.

One alternative proposal - the *Extrinsic Account* - distinguishes imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena solely by reference to their extrinsic features, such as their causal origin or their mental context. This account is closely related to the view that the two kinds of episode differ phenomenologically only in degree (e.g., in their vivacity), rather than in kind.

Another approach - the *Ontological Account* - elucidates the distinctive character of imaginings in terms of the specific nature of their intentional objects. The central idea is that there is a categorical ontological difference between objects which are perceived, remembered or judged to be a certain way and objects which are visualized or supposed to be a certain way. In particular, it may be said that imagined and cognized objects differ in their type of existence, their spatio-temporality, their determinacy or (as also proposed by one version of the following account) their modal status.⁸

The central idea of the *Modal Account* is that, while it is characteristic of imaginings that they represent possibilities, it is characteristic of cognitions that they represent actualities.⁹ This suffices to strictly distinguish the two kinds of phenomena and provide a unified account of imagining only if the possibilities concerned are meant to be mere possibilities, and not to include also actualities. The resulting view may come in two guises, depending on whether mere possibility is understood as one of the represented features, or instead as qualifying an imaginative attitude or commitment towards what is represented. Accordingly, the first version of the Modal Account takes imaginings to be characterised by the fact that they consist in representations of merely possible entities or states of affairs and thus comes close to the Ontological Account; while the second version takes imaginings to be characterised by the fact that they consist in representations which make a claim, not about how things actually are, but about how things might possibly be.

The *Attitude Account* is one of the simplest unified account of imagining, given that it treats the attitudinal difference between imaginative and cognitive episodes as basic and not to be analysed further. It may stay neutral, however, on the issue of whether this implies that there is a distinctively imaginative attitude, in addition to the cognitive attitude. But the felt need to distinguish imaginative episodes not only from cognitive episodes, but also from other kinds of episodes (e.g., experiences of understanding, or pathological hallucinations) has moved proponents of the Attitude Account to specify the commitment involved in imagining more positively, such as in terms of the act of positing entities as absent or non-existent!¹⁰

Next comes the *Mental Origin (or Spontaneity) Account* which maintains that imaginings differ from

⁸ Some of these ideas can be found in Sartre (2004) and Casey (1976), for instance.

⁹ The view presented in White (1990) comes close to the Modal Account, although White presumably does not intend to restrict imaginings only to mere possibilities.

¹⁰ The idea of a specifically imaginative attitude has been put forward notably in the writings of the phenomenologists, such as Husserl (1980), Sartre (2004) or Casey (1976).

cognitions in their specific origin in the - voluntary or involuntary - spontaneity of the mind, rather than in a causal chain leading back to the world or to events in the brain. Although the view comes close to the Agency Account, especially in its insistence that the origin of imaginings is not merely causal, it differs from the latter in extending the realm of the imagination to the involuntary, thereby loosely drawing on the Kantian distinction between sensitivity and spontaneity.¹¹

And a final approach - the *Sub-Personal Account*, and the only to which I will not return at one point or another in the subsequent chapters - tries to characterize imaginings in terms of the specific nature or use of the sub-personal cognitive mechanisms or modules involved in imagining, as they are studied by cognitive psychology or neuroscience. Someone following this line may propose that imaginings are sub-personally formed in a distinctive way - for instance, by means of certain "imaginative" areas or processes in the brain, or by means of certain "imaginative" ways in which the relevant mechanisms or modules are employed. But even if the postulation of the existence of such sub-personal phenomena were (assumed to be) empirically plausible, it could at best supplement a unified account of imagining (e.g., by showing how the difference between imaginings and cognitions in the relationship to the world or the will are implemented by the brain). For, as the considerations above about the stability and ease of our ordinary classifications of imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena have illustrated, the primary task of a unified theory of imagining is to investigate and illuminate those aspects of the common nature of imaginings to which we have conscious access without having to empirically and scientifically study the workings of our brains. It would in fact be astonishing if our respective categorizations of mental phenomena turned out to be determined by some merely sub-personal factors. While the respective research into how our minds ultimately function may further support or complement a unified account of imagining, it should be considered as the main source for such a theory only if all other plausible alternatives - including specifically the Epistemic Account and the Agency Account - are exhausted.

In addition to this introduction and a conclusion, the book consists of three parts with three chapters each. The first part is meant to prepare the stage for the debate between the two main rivals in the provision of a unified account of imagining. It includes one chapter on what should be expected from any theory aiming to capture the unity of imagining, another on the main differences between imaginative and cognitive episodes, and a third on those theories of imagining which are less promising as unified accounts of imagining than the Epistemic Account and the Agency Account. The other two parts of the book are each reserved for the discussion of one of these two main contenders for a unified account of imagining. The three chapters of the second part will be devoted to the Epistemic Account, while the three chapters of the third and last part will turn to the Agency Account.

The first part begins with chapter 2, in which I will further develop the idea of a unified account of imagining. The two main requirements in this context are to specify in more detail what a theory has to achieve in order to count as a unified account of imagining, and to clarify which particular mental phenomena are to be captured by such a theory and which not. First, I will formulate two desiderata for

¹¹ Cf. Sartre, etc. #

theories aspiring to provide a unified account of imagining: (i) that they have to be extensionally adequate with respect to both imaginative and non-imaginative phenomena; and (ii) that they have to show explanatory power with respect to the imaginativeness common to the former and lacking in the latter. But I will also point out what a unified account of imagining does not have to accomplish. In particular, it should not be expected to provide an analysis of our ordinary concept of imagining. I will then be concerned with the specification of those mental phenomena relative to which theories of imagining have to be assessed if they are intended to present a unified account. My chief concern will be with the introduction and description of five main forms of imagining which I take to be central cases: (i) sensory imaginings (e.g., visualizing something); (ii) affective imaginings (e.g., imaginatively feeling pain or jealousy); (iii) intellectual imaginings (e.g., supposing that *p*); (iv) internal imaginings (e.g., imagining having the experiences of another person); and (v) imaginative projects (e.g., daydreaming about something). But it also needs to be clarified which mental phenomena are paradigmatically non-imaginative. The most important examples are cognitive states and projects - there has been a long tradition of contrasting imaginative episodes with cognitive ones. The primary reason for the typical focus on cognitive phenomena in the traditional attempts to characterize imaginings seems to have been that the two kinds of phenomena show many similarities and close links - notably, that they can possess the same contents, and that what we can imagine seems to depend in some important way on what we can think (i.e., on our conceptual capacities) and on what we have already perceived. (I will return to this kind of dependency in the sections 5.1ff. and #) Finally, I will deal briefly with unclear, controversial or borderline instances of imagining (e.g., dispositional imaginings, or representations symptomatic of psychological disorders). My chief point will be to make it plausible that most of these cases should not play a significant role in the evaluation of the prospects of the various candidates for a unified theory of imagining.

Chapter 3 will pay special attention to the contrast between imaginative and cognitive episodes and highlight (what have been taken to be) the main differences between them. The discussion of these differences and the related features of imagining will be of particular interest for what follows because most theories of imagining to be considered later on make reference to one or more of these features in their explicit or implicit attempts to provide a unified account of imagining. Two differences will be of particular importance, since they characterise the fundamental divide between the two kinds of episode: one is their difference in their phenomenologically salient attitude towards what they represent, and the other their difference in their typical functional role. That is, the two facts at the heart of the discussion will be that only cognitions, but not imaginings, make a claim about how things are; and that we normally rely only on cognitions, but not on imaginings, when we form or revise our beliefs and decide on or perform our actions. But I will also consider important features of sensory imaginings - namely their 're-presentational' character, their lack of vivacity, determinacy and a full-blown observational character, their capacity to refer to reality and to be veridical, their immunity to error through misidentification of what they represent and, finally, their related involvement of some judgemental thought or guiding intention - which distinguish them from perceptions and, partly, also from sensory memories.

In chapter 4, I will discuss the main alternatives to the Epistemic and the Agency Accounts of imagining and

argue that they are less promising than the latter in respect of characterising the common nature of imaginings. The Extrinsic Account, which takes the difference between imaginative and cognitive episodes to be merely extrinsic, has difficulties to capture the various intrinsic and phenomenologically salient differences between the two kinds of phenomena, notably the episodic differences in attitude and in typical functional role introduced above. One problem for the Ontological Account - which claims that the difference between imaginative and cognitive phenomena consists fundamentally in the fact that they are concerned with entities of two very different ontological categories - is that its postulation of the two distinct categories of objects lacks independent motivation. In particular, neither semantic considerations about the status of fictional entities, nor phenomenological considerations about the difference in attitude can be of help here. More importantly, however, the Ontological Account fails to capture the basic fact that imaginings can refer to, and be veridical representations of, precisely those entities which we can cognize - namely actual parts of the real world.¹² The Modal Account of imaginings assumes that what is distinctive of them is their representation of mere possibilities. Two general objections to this view are that it cannot be easily applied to sensory, affective or other non-intellectual kinds of imagining, and that there are many non-imaginative representations of mere possibilities. But there are also more specific problems with each of the two guises in which the Modal Account may come. The idea that imaginings represent entities as being merely possible faces the challenge to distinguish them from other thoughts about mere possibilities and to make sense of non-intellectual modes of presentation of the merely possible. By contrast, the thought that imaginings involve a specific attitude towards what is imagined lacks substance. It is not clear what it means for an episode to make a claim about how things might possibly be, if not simply that it does not make a claim about how things actually are and therefore does not purport to be true. The idea of one or more distinctive imaginative attitudes, as proposed by the Attitude Account, faces the related problem of failing to provide a positive characterisation of them, notably one that does not also apply to, say, episodic memories which present their objects as absent as well. In addition, there is no good reason to assume that the attitudinal difference between imagining and cognizing cannot be elucidated in more fundamental terms, as both the Epistemic Account and the Agency Account illustrate. The Mental Origin (or Spontaneity) Account, on the other hand, is forced to treat spontaneously occurring images and thoughts as imaginative as well (against which I will argue in section 9.3). And its characterisation of spontaneity does not enable us to distinguish imaginings from judgements - or even from perceptions, for that matter. Finally, I will investigate how imaginings may fit into a Kantian view of the mind. This view is of particular interest since it shares with the Epistemic Account its broad epistemological motivation and approach - but also, and relatedly, some of its main shortcomings. Given that Kant's notion of objectivity links the idea of the provision of knowledge inseparably to the idea of reference to spatio-temporal objects that are subject to causal laws of nature, the fact that imaginings may refer to real entities in time and space cannot be squared with the fact that imaginings are (or need) not be concerned with the cognition of such objects (cf. the discussions of the Ontological Account and of the Epistemic Account). My diagnosis will be that the Kantian distinction between subjective and objective episodes is too crude to pay justice to the richness of the conscious mind. This fits well with my overall conclusion that the account of what unifies imaginings and distinguishes from other mental phenomena should not fundamentally be spelled out in epistemological terms.¹³

¹² Apart from this, any potential ontological difference between imagined and cognized objects would presumably be inseparably linked to - and perhaps even due to - some co-extensional difference in how imaginings and cognitions relate to the world or the will. The investigation of the latter might thus render the investigation of the former at best supplementary, and at worst superfluous.

¹³ To be fair, Kant's main concern was with the epistemic - and, in particular, transcendental - status of our cognitions

Moving on to the second part, I will present the key claims of the other epistemological theory of imagining - the Epistemic Account - in chapters 5 and 6. As already mentioned, this theory takes imaginings to be non-cognitive by nature. It thus embraces the common strategy of contrasting imaginative phenomena with cognitive ones. The proposed non-cognitiveness of imaginings is usually spelled out in terms of a lack of concern with reality. More precisely, it is claimed that imaginings lack a certain cognitive feature that cognitions possess and which is essential to their cognitive character and their cognitive interaction with the world. A main task of this chapter will therefore be to describe why proponents of the Epistemic Account assume such a constitutional difference between imaginative and cognitive episodes, and also why they think that this difference is sufficient to ensure that only the latter can play a role in cognition. The key idea seems to be that imaginings are brought about in ways which prevent them from being constrained by reality in the manner required for cognitive access to it. However, since postulating the *lack* of a cognitive concern with the world does not say much positive about the nature of imaginings, proponents of the Epistemic Account tend to supplement their theory with the further claim that imaginings are constitutionally or conceptually dependent on cognitions in some important way, which reaches beyond the already mentioned restriction on what we can imagine by our conceptual capacities and our past experiences.

My exposition of the Epistemic Account in chapter 5 will therefore focus on the two kinds of claims characteristic of this theory, the first (which I label "negation claims") maintaining that imaginings lack an important cognitive feature, and the second (which I call "echo claims") stating that imaginings are in one way or another dependent on cognitions. In particular, I will trace the history of the latter from Hume's causal echo thesis to more recent endorsements of representational echo claims (e.g., by Peacocke, O'Shaughnessy or Martin); discuss alternative approaches (notably those of Currie and Ravenscroft, as well as of Ryle) which understand the dependency of imaginings on cognitions as a semantic dependency or in terms of simulation or pretence; and evaluate the negation theses to be found in the writings of Sartre and Wittgenstein. My critical discussion of the ideas of these historical and contemporary philosophers leads me then, in chapter 6, to the detailed presentation of the richest, most sophisticated and most developed version of the Epistemic Account, the theory of imagining put forward recently by Brian O'Shaughnessy in his book *Consciousness and the World* (O'Shaughnessy (2000)).

Chapter 7 is devoted to the assessment and rejection of the Epistemic Account, primarily in respect of the question of whether they could figure as a unified theory of imagining. The main issue will be whether the Epistemic Account can satisfy the two desiderata of extensional adequacy and explanatory power. To answer this question, I will discuss in turn each of the two kinds of claims distinctive of the Epistemic Account, and assess to which extent they can make a substantial contribution to a unified account of imagining - that is, whether they can capture all main forms of imagining, and whether they can help to illuminate their imaginativeness. As I argue, both kinds of claims are significantly limited in their scope due to their

of the world, rather than with the - in his view psychological - distinctions among our mental episodes. However, the focus on the place of imaginative episodes in mind and, later on, also on their positive role in cognition (cf. section 7.2) suggests that the two issues are less independent than Kant appears to have thought.

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

The third part of the book starts with chapter 8, in which I will introduce the Agency Account of imagining and develop a specific version of it as my own proposal for a unified account of imagining. As already indicated, my key idea is that imagining aims at the voluntary formation of representations with specific contents determined by the respective underlying desires or intentions. In order to elucidate and motivate this thesis, I will develop an account of mental and, especially, cognitive and imaginative projects (a topic which has often been neglected in discussions of imaginings or the mind); and I will argue that actively formed episodic representations constitute, as episodes of mental agency, simple mental projects. My approach to the topic differs crucially, then, from the other, often more traditional approaches, including those endorsed by most proponents of the Epistemic Account. Their strategy has usually been to investigate the nature of (certain kinds of) imaginative *episodes* (e.g., visualizings or suppositions) and to compare them with and set them apart from cognitive ones. But one of the resulting problems has been that they fail to pay attention or do justice to imaginative projects (e.g., daydreams) - especially since these projects do not seem to have cognitive counterparts in terms of which they can be characterized. In contrast, the strategy which I will adopt is to begin with the discussion of imaginative *projects* and then, after having determined how to best account for their imaginativeness, to try to apply the resulting theory to episodic imaginings. Accordingly, it will first of all be necessary to spend considerable time specifying the nature of mental projects in general and of imaginative projects in particular. My hypothesis will be that imaginative projects are (typically complex) mental actions aiming at the formation of representations with specific contents that are directly determined by their respective motivational states. I will thus have to clarify what it means for a content to be specifically and directly determined by what we want; and to make plausible that my resulting characterization of imaginative projects promises to be adequate. Once this is done, it remains to be seen how the theory can apply also to imaginative episodes. My idea will be that imaginative episodes should be understood as simple imaginative projects (i.e., imaginative projects which contain only a single episodic representation). Consequently, the central claim of my version of the Agency Account of imagining - which will, however, have to be further qualified - will be that imaginings are mental actions aiming at the formation of representations with specific contents.

Before I will bring this book to a conclusion, I will be concerned in chapters 9 and 10 with the defence of the proposed Agency Account as a unified theory of imagining. This task will require not only giving an idea of how the various instances of the five main forms of imagining identified in this chapter conform to my theory, but also - and more importantly - showing that there are no counterexamples to my view.

Chapter 9 will deal with the latter's extensional and explanatory adequacy, as well as, with the threat of potential imaginative counterexamples, that is, imaginings which do not fit into my account. There might be two kinds of such cases: non-representational imaginings and imaginings with passively or indirectly determined contents. If it is assumed that, say, certain feelings or moods are non-representational (e.g., feelings of pain or anxiety), it might be maintained that the respective affective imaginings (e.g., imaginatively felt, or imagined feelings of, pain or anxiety) are non-intentional too. My strategy to accommodate such cases of imagining will be to argue that they involve the representation of the corresponding non-imaginative mental episodes (e.g., real feelings of pain or anxiety). On the other hand, the three main candidates for imaginings which are passive with respect to the determination of what they represent appear to be spontaneously and passively occurring images and thoughts, freely associative daydreams which are not guided by a purpose to form certain representations, and pictorial experiences. What I will aim to render plausible is the idea that they should not really be classified as imaginative, despite all appearances.

In Chapter 10, I will finally address the possibility of non-imaginative counterexamples to the version of the Agency Account put forward in this book - that is, non-imaginative phenomena with an actively and directly determined content. My focus will thereby be on two particular kinds of cognitive episode over the content of which we may be said to have some voluntary control: judgements and guesses. It has indeed been suggested that there are deliberately formed judgements or beliefs, the content of which reflects what we want them to represent.¹⁴ But, in general, there is wide agreement about the fact that judgements are as resistant to the will as perceptions and memories are, and that we cannot bring about any of these episodes with specific contents by merely willing to do so.¹⁵ There is disagreement, however, about how best to argue for this claim. Most of the recently presented arguments against the possibility of deciding what to believe focus on the rational or normative nature of judgements or beliefs and identify therein some feature - typically their being aimed at truth or knowledge, or being subject to a respective norm - which is incompatible with the influence of direct agency.¹⁶ However, as I aim to show, this approach faces a dilemma: if judgements are allowed to fail to achieve their aim or to satisfy their norm, their link to the latter does not suffice to rule out any active intervention on our behalf; while if the satisfaction of the aim or norm is taken to be constitutive of being a judgement, many instances of judgemental thought cannot be captured

¹⁴ Cf. James (#). But note that even some of the proponents of the idea that we can directly will judgements or beliefs into existence base their argumentation on examples which in fact seem to support only the claim that we can bring them about indirectly (e.g., Ginet (2001)).

¹⁵ Defences of this widely accepted view are put forward by, for instance, Williams (1970), O'Shaughnessy (1980): vol. I, pp. 21ff., Bennett (1990), Pink (1996): especially 195ff., Owens (2000): ch. 2, Noordhof (2001a), and Owens (2003).

¹⁶ Cf., e.g., Williams (1970), Winters (1979) or Shah & Velleman (#).

by the view. A promising alternative approach is to highlight instead the (perhaps contingent) ways in which we experience judgements and mental actions, and to show that the two experiences are phenomenologically incompatible - an incompatibility which may then be explained via more fundamental features of judgements and agency.¹⁷ Perhaps the possibility of voluntary control over what we are guessing poses a more pressing difficulty, since it seems to be a defining feature of guesses that they involve a deliberate choice, on our behalf, of what they end up representing. My goal will be to illustrate that there still is a contrast between imagining and guessing, given that they possess different ultimate intrinsic purposes. While the former is concerned with the purpose of actively forming representations with specific contents, the latter is aimed at getting things right about a certain theoretical issue. Accordingly, guessing is a certain kind of cognitive project. And, as such, it has to involve epistemic considerations which - although epistemically undecisive - have the function to limit the options to choose from. So judgements and guesses do not constitute counterexamples to the Agency Account of imagining to be defended in this book, which comes to a close with the respective considerations.

¹⁷ I defend this approach and its advantages over the normative approach in more detail in Dorsch (2009).