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Hume and the Recreative Imagination

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If you walk up from the Placa Espanya to the National Art Museum of Catalonia in Barcelona, you pass a Modernist building on your right hand side that looks very much like Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion, and which serves as a museum for this famous building. But the structure that you can nowadays see and enter is not the original building, which existed only for less than a year during the International Exhibition taking place in Barcelona in 1929. Instead, it is just a recreation or reconstruction of the original, made on the basis of floor plans and photographs.¹

As a recreation, the current building stands in a complex relationship to the original. First, it resembles the original in structure and appearance. Second, it depends for its status as a recreation on the prior existence of the original. If the Barcelona Pavilion had not already been built in 1929, the structure constructed in the 1980s could not count as its recreation: there would have been nothing to be recreated. Rather, the current building would have to be said to be an original in its own rights – perhaps, indeed, the original Barcelona Pavilion by Mies van der Rohe. Third, these two aspects of the relationship are non-accidentally linked, in two different ways: (i) the current building has been intended as a reconstruction of the original (and that this intention has been successfully realised) explains why the two buildings resemble each other; and (ii) the resemblance achieved ensures that the current building succeeds in recreating the original.

What this example illustrates is that recreations are characterised by the fact that they constitutively and asymmetrically depend on what they recreate and, in close relation, resemble the latter – at least if the recreation has been successful. Applying this characterisation to imaginative episodes or states (e.g., visualising or supposing) and understanding them as recreations of cognitive episodes or states (e.g., seeing or believing) means therefore understanding imaginings as constitutively and asymmetrically dependent on cognitions, in such a way that the imaginings non-accidentally share many of their central features with cognitions.² My aim in this essay is to discuss several ways of understanding imaginings as recreations, and to investigate which makes best sense of this idea – an idea that can already be found in the writings of the British Empiricists,

1 See Berger (2007). I assume here that works of architecture like the Barcelona Pavilion are generally like paintings or sculptures – and not like photographs or pieces of music – in that they do not allow for multiple instances (see Rohrbaugh (2003)). That is, the work of architecture created by Mies van der Rohe is identical with the building erected in 1929 in Barcelona and torn down again in early 1930 – and not, say, with the floor plans or elevations produced by him prior to the construction of the pavilion. If you are not convinced by this claim about van der Rohe's work or similar pieces of architecture, consider instead the truthful recreation of a lost painting on the basis of photographs of the original. Besides, note that there are other works of architecture with respect to which the possibility of multiple instances is more plausible to assume – for instance, the social housing projects built in Germany in the 1920s (e.g., May's 'Römerstadt' in Frankfurt or Taut's 'Hufeisensiedlung' in Berlin) which include many identical flats and buildings, none of which can reasonably be said to be the original that the other copy. Though, even here it may be argued that the work of architecture is the estate as a whole, and not the single apartments or houses that make it up.

2 The claim about constitutive dependence is commonly accompanied by a claim about conceptual dependence: that the concept of imagining has to be elucidated partly in cognitive terms. But, here, I focus primarily on the meta-physical relationship between imagination and cognition, and not on the logic relationship between our respective concepts. One reason for doing so is that the metaphysical link will be more fundamental than any conceptual link (if there is any). That is, if our concept of imagining is indeed conceptually dependent on our concept of cognition (i.e., our concept of perception or judgement), then this conceptual connection will reflect and be due to an underlying metaphysical connection, rather than being a conventional or stipulative truth, say.

notably Hume (1739), and has since then not lost anything of its attractiveness.

Understanding imaginings as recreations of cognitions requires assigning to each type of imagining a particular type of cognitive state on which it is modelled (see Budd (1989): 100; Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11). Thus, sensory imaginings are usually modelled on perceptions, intellectual ones on beliefs or judgements, affective ones on feelings or similar states, and so on. What prompts the specific assignments are the similarities holding between the respective types of representation concerned. The counterpart of visualising, say, is seeing because both kinds of episode represent the same kind of entities and features (i.e., visible ones), and do so in the same mode or manner (i.e., visually). This also explains why cognitions are the natural candidates for the dependence base for imaginings: the two kinds of episode resemble each other almost perfectly in what they are capable of representing, and in which type of representation they may instantiate (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 2.1).

Two particular approaches to the imagination as a recreative capacity have recently gained prominence: neo-Humeanism and simulationism. According to neo-Humeanism, imaginings have cognitions as a constitutive part of their representational contents; while simulationists maintain that, in imagining, we essentially simulate the occurrence of certain cognitive states.³ Two other kinds of constitutive dependence, that figure regularly in the debate, concern the necessity of cognitions for, respectively, the causation and the semantic power of imaginings. In what follows, I discuss each of these kinds of dependence and assess how useful they are for spelling out the conception of imaginings as recreations of cognitions. My conclusion will be that, if imaginings should be taken to be recreations at all, then they should be taken to be representational recreations. That is, neo-Humeanism will turn out to be the most plausible way of understanding imaginings as recreations of cognitions.

In the first two sections, I critically discuss Hume's conception of imaginings. His view of imaginings as causal reproductions (or 'copies') of cognitions differs from contemporary neo-Humean accounts in that it endorses a specifically causal – rather than intentional or relational – conception of the representational link between imaginings and cognitions. Accordingly, Hume maintains that imaginings are both causally and representationally dependent on their cognitive counterparts: they represent precisely those particular cognitions on which they causally depend.

The third section is devoted to the discussion of the causal element in Hume's 'copy principle' and his related conception of imaginings. In particular, I aim to show that the causal dependence of imaginings on cognitions is in fact semantic in nature. Our representational capacities involved in imagining need to be acquired by means of certain perceptions or judgements, which are thus necessary causes for our imaginative employment of those capacities.

After concluding that neither Hume's conception of imaginings as causal reproductions of cognitions, nor reference to the causal or semantic dependence of imaginings on cognitions may help us to come to a satisfactory interpretation of the idea that it is distinctive of imaginings that they recreate cognitions, I turn in the fourth section to another option: namely to take imaginings to be simulations of cognitions. My discussions thereby focus on the account of imagining proposed by Currie and Ravenscroft (2002), primarily since they are more explicit about the recreative nature of imaginings than other simulationists (e.g., like Heal (2003) or Goldman (2006)). However, I will find their simulationist approach wanting as well because they fail to elucidate the nature of the

3 Neo-Humeanism with respect to the sensory imagination (or, at least, visualising) has been defended by Peacocke (1985), Martin (2001; 2002a) and Dorsch (2010b). O'Shaughnessy (2000) endorses it also with respect to intellectual imaginings, such as supposing or making-believe. References to defenses of simulationism can be found in the main text.

asymmetric dependence of imaginings on cognitions and its close link to the resemblance between the two types of mental representation.

The fifth and final section introduces the neo-Humean approach and highlights the continuity of both its relational and its intentional variant with the Humean conception spelled out before. I conclude with the claim that neo-Humeanism is best equipped to shed light on what it may mean for imaginings to recreate cognitions.

1. Hume's Conception

For Hume, episodes of imagining belong to the class of 'ideas'. And, as such, they are taken to be dependent on the corresponding 'impressions' in the sense that they are 'copies' of these impressions. To understand this claim, it is necessary to take a closer look at some of the details of Hume's theory of the mind. He divides the class of mental episodes (or 'perceptions' in his terminology) into impressions and ideas – or, as he also says, into 'feelings' and 'thoughts'. The former comprise 'sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul' (Hume (1739): 1.1.1.1) – that is, perceptual experiences, bodily sensations, and basic feelings of desire and emotion. By contrast, the latter include 'the faint images of [impressions] in thinking and reasoning', such as imaginings and occurrent beliefs or judgemental thoughts.⁴

Hume characterises the difference between both kinds of mental episode in two different, though related ways. According to the first, impressions and ideas differ in vivacity: the former are said to be generally more vivid than the latter. Vivacity comes in degrees, however. And some impressions and ideas may be of almost equal vividness, so that we may sometimes be unable to distinguish them.

Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions [...]. [...] The common degrees of [impressions and ideas] are easily distinguish'd; tho' it is not impossible but in particular instances they may very nearly approach to each other. Thus in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions: As on the other hand it sometimes happens, that our impressions are so faint and low, that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas. But notwithstanding this near resemblance in a few instances, they are in general so very different, that no one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign to each a peculiar name to mark the difference. (Ibid.: 1.1.1.1)

The 'near resemblance' of instances of the two types of mental episode and our subsequent problems to tell them apart are still not meant to imply that some ideas might be more vivid than some impressions – they only 'approach' each other very closely.⁵

Another point is that Hume takes the vivacity of our mental episodes to be an aspect of their subjective characters which enables us to tell apart, from the inside, instances of the various kinds of mental episode. For he acknowledges that the vividness of mental episodes is part of how they appear to us in consciousness and of what lets us distinguish them from our first-personal per-

4 See Hume (1739): 1.1.1.1, and also some of the passages quoted further below. Memories are a special case and will be discussed separately further below.

5 In Hume (1739): 1.3.5.7, the focus is also on the effect a de- or increase in vivacity has on what we take a given episode to be. Hume also notes there the possibility that an imaginative episode may change into a cognitive one – that an often enough repeated idea of the imagination may become an idea of judgement or memory. But again, this makes clear that a sufficient de- or increase in vivacity leads to a different kind of episode.

spective. This becomes apparent in the passages where Hume describe the subjectively accessible differences among ideas of three kinds, namely those of judgement, memory and imagination.

For tho' it be a peculiar property of the memory to preserve the original order and position of its ideas, while the imagination transposes and changes them, as it pleases; yet this difference is not sufficient to distinguish them in their operation, or make us know the one from the other; it being impossible to recall the past impressions, in order to compare them with our present ideas, and see whether their arrangement be exactly similar. Since therefore the memory is known, neither by the order of its complex ideas, nor the nature of its simple ones; it follows, that the difference betwixt it and the imagination lies in its superior force and vivacity. (Ibid.: 1.3.5.3)

An idea assented to feels different from a fictitious idea, that the fancy alone presents to us: And this different feeling I endeavour to explain by calling it a superior force, or vivacity, or solidity, or firmness, or steadiness. [...] [I]t is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgement from the fictions of the imagination. (Ibid.: 1.3.7.7)

One may wonder whether the enumeration of different terms really already helps to 'explain' what vivacity amounts to. But Hume offers more, namely the claim that a higher degree of vivacity comes with two other important aspects: (i) an increased sense of presence or reality with respect to the objects and features presented⁶ to us by the episodes at issue; and (ii) a higher motivational (or rational, as one would feel inclined to say today) impact on our beliefs, emotions and actions.

This variety of terms, which may seem so unphilosophical, is intended only to express that act of mind, which renders realities more present to us than fictions, causes them to weigh more in the thought, and gives them a superior influence on the passions and imagination. (Ibid.: 1.3.7.7)

In the case of judgemental thoughts, their high degree of vivacity also ensures that they lead to the formation of a more stable and enduring belief.

It gives them more force and influence; makes them appear of greater importance; infixes them in the mind; and renders them the governing principles of all our actions. (Ibid.: 1.3.7.7)

Accordingly, the subjective vivacity of a mental episodes reflects the closeness of its connection to perception and its impact on belief – which is, of course, in line with Hume's thought that perceptions are the most vivid episodes that we enjoy, and that imaginings are characterised by the least degree of vivacity.

His second and less explicit characterisation of the difference between impressions and ideas introduces both the idea of a resemblance between the two and the notion of a causal dependence of the latter on the former.

Thus we find, that all simple ideas and impressions resemble each other; and as the complex are form'd from them, we may affirm in general, that these two species of perception are exactly

⁶ My use of the term 'presentation' is meant to be neutral enough to allow for both intentional or relational forms of presentation of objects, as well as for the sensory or intellectual presentations of objects that may be given as past, present, actual, non-actual, and so on. The presentation of an object is, however, always taken to be a conscious presentation. The expression 'representation', on the other hand, is intended to highlight the fact that the represented perceptions or judgements are thereby not themselves present in the stream of consciousness, but instead merely re-presented by the respective episodes.

correspondent. [...] Let us consider how they stand with regard to their existence, and which of the impressions and ideas are causes, and which effects.

The full examination of this question is the subject of the present treatise; and therefore we shall here content ourselves with establishing one general proposition, that all our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv'd from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent. (Ibid.: 1.1.1.6f.)

Since Hume describes this multi-faceted relationship between impressions and ideas also in terms of the latter being 'copies' of the former (see, e.g., *ibid.*: 1.1.1.5, 1.1.3.4, 1.3.7.5 and 1.3.14.15), it has come to be known as his copy principle. Simple 'perceptions' are thereby understood as 'perceptions' which cannot be further divided or analysed into smaller 'perceptions' (*ibid.*: 1.1.1.2). And since complex ideas are composed of simple ones, the former inherit their resemblance with and dependence on simple impressions from the latter. Hume thus maintains that we cannot think of, imagine or remember something, the various parts and aspects of which (e.g., their colours, shapes, etc.) we have not previously perceived. This does not require that complex ideas have to be actually caused by corresponding complex impressions. It is sufficient if they are constructed out of simpler ideas which are causally dependent on precedent simple impressions (*ibid.*: 1.1.1.4f.). This entails that complex ideas – despite being possibly caused by corresponding complex impressions – causally depend for their occurrence only on the respective simple impressions.

Now, the causal derivation of ideas from impressions is not the only aspect of their relationship highlighted by the copy principle. One further aspect is that Hume also understands ideas as corresponding to the respective impressions by resembling them in all respects but their degree of vivacity (*ibid.*: 1.1.1.3). In particular, they resemble each other in which objects and features they present us with, albeit presenting them in differently vivid manners (*ibid.*: 1.3.7.5). Moreover, there is a third aspect which, like the causal dependence but unlike the resemblance, is asymmetric in nature: ideas are 'images' or 'representations' of impressions (*ibid.*: 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.4, 1.1.1.7 and 1.1.3.4).

That a given complex idea may be caused merely by several simple impressions, and not also by a corresponding complex one, raises the issue of which impression(s) it is said to resemble. It seems plausible to maintain that the complex idea resembles each of the simple impressions in so far as it possesses parts (i.e., simple ideas) which resemble the latter. On the other hand, and as already noted, the resemblance at issue here concerns primarily the (non-mental) objects and features presented by the ideas and impressions compared. And this similarity is unlikely to hold between complex ideas and simple impressions, at least with respect to the presentation of objects and of higher-level properties. For Hume understands simple impressions as presentations of basic features, such as colours, tastes or smells (*ibid.*: 1.1.1.2). Hence, although complex ideas may resemble each of the respective simple impressions, this is not the kind of similarity referred to in the copy principle. Instead, what is meant is the resemblance of ideas on those impressions that present the same objects and features as the former – in this case, the resemblance of complex ideas on similarly complex impressions. However, it remains unclear which complex impression could be relevant in cases where a complex idea is not preceded by any corresponding complex impression. It is true that such ideas would resemble a complex combination of the relevant simple impressions, if any would actually come into existence. But this is not the same as saying that the complex idea resembles an already given impression.

The same set of issues does not arise with respect to the proposed representational link between ideas and impressions. On the one hand, in contrast with resemblance, representation need

not be genuinely relational in the sense of requiring an actually given second relatum. And, on the other hand, a complex idea represents not simply individual simple impressions, but also their complex structure. Imagining a blue book on a brown table corresponds to seeing a blue book on a brown table, and not to seeing a brown book on a blue table, despite both complex impressions involving the same simple ones. Accordingly, what complex ideas represent are complex impressions, though not necessarily particular ones (e.g., the one I had yesterday when looking at my friend's house).⁷

This suggests perhaps also a solution to the resemblance issue. The key thought is that ideas present certain (non-mental) objects and features precisely because they are representations of impressions which present those objects and features. This has the result that impressions and ideas differ in immediacy. But it also means that ideas resemble the impressions that they represent in so far as they present the same (non-mental) objects and features as the latter – albeit typically in a less vivid way. For they represent an impression with a certain property – such as a certain content or phenomenal character – and thereby acquire themselves this property, or at least a property very similar to it. A complex idea therefore resembles the complex impression that it represents. And although the latter need not enjoy actual existence in the past or present, it is clear which complex impression is relevant. Moreover, we do not generally find claims about the resemblance between actual and merely represented entities problematic. We may recognise similarities between friends of ours and characters in a film; or between a real person and our mental image of her which we have formed prior to meeting her or knowing anything about her appearance.

These considerations allow now for a more precise reading of Hume's copy principle. Since the symmetric resemblance between ideas and impressions is probably best understood as a consequence of their asymmetric representational link, we need not any more mention the former separately.⁸ According to the resulting interpretation, the principle maintains that particular ideas are copies of particular impressions in that they (i) causally depend on the latter, and (ii) are representations of the latter in such a way as to end up presenting the same (non-mental) objects and features. In the case of simple ideas, both the causal and the representational relation hold between the ideas and simple impressions. And a specific simple idea always represents a particular simple impression. Complex ideas, on the other hand, causally depend on each member of a certain set of particular simple impressions, while representing and resembling a complex impression – though not necessarily a particular one.

Hume's conception of the relationship between simple ideas and simple impressions seems thus to be that the former are causal reproductions of the latter – perhaps not dissimilar to photocopies or photographs.⁹ For such reproductions combine the same three elements of causal dependence, representation and resemblance. It is constitutive of photocopies of sheets of paper that

7 The preceding considerations liken Hume's complex ideas to pictures, given that both allow for the presentation of some kind of object, without the need to present a particular and actual instance of that kind; and given that both may perhaps still give rise to an experience of resemblance. A painting may depict a type of man with a certain appearance, without depicting a particular man (e.g., Socrates or Napoleon); and it may still look like such a type of man (see Hopkins (1998); and Dorsch (2012): sec. 10.3f.). This analogy may provide further support for the suggested interpretation of copies as reproductions similar to photocopies or photographs.

8 At one point, Hume writes that 'impressions and ideas [...] are exact copies of each other' (Hume (1739): 1.1.1.5). This seems to equate the relation of copying with the relation of resembling. My different usage follows instead that to be found in the contemporary literature on Hume, as well as presumably in other passages in Hume's text (e.g., *ibid.*: 1.3.7.5). My aim is, in any case, a reconstruction, not of Hume's use of the word 'copy', but of his conception of the relationship between ideas and impressions.

9 I follow here a general line of interpretation proposed by M.G.F. Martin in a research seminar on the *Treatise* at University College London in the academic year 2002/03.

they are causally dependent on the respective original sheets, and also that they are photographic representations of the latter and resemble them in respect of what is written or drawn on them. Complex ideas deriving from complex impressions may equally count as causal reproductions of the latter – with the exception that they are not causally dependent on them, given that they might have come into existence without the involvement of the complex impressions. For those cases, the analogy of a collage of photocopies seems more fitting. If we glue together several photocopies, the resulting collage is causally dependent on the initial sheets of paper, while representing and resembling a corresponding potential collage of the originals, though no particular one.

Drawing the analogy with photocopies may perhaps also offer an explanation of why ideas are less vivid than impressions – and therefore also of how the two distinct characterisations of the difference between the two types of mental episode fit together. In the case of photocopies, the contrast and saturation of the marks on their surface tend to be less than those of the marks on the original sheets of paper. Similarly, the vivacity of episodes might be understood as an aspect of their subjective character which is bound to decrease when mentally reproduced. That is, this reproduction might be of such a nature that it results not only in the episodes' inheritance of the presentation of certain objects and features, but also in a diminishing of their sense of reality or presence and of their impact on beliefs, emotions and actions.

We have finally reached the point where we are in a position to become more concrete about Hume's conception of imaginings. Both his examples of imagining and his discussion of the difference between imagining and remembering something suggest that he takes imaginings to be complex ideas. Imagining 'the New Jerusalem, whose pavement is gold and walls are rubies' (ibid.: 1.1.1.4), or 'winged horses, fiery dragons, and monstrous giants' (ibid.: 1.1.3.4), means combining simpler ideas – whether the latter are still somewhat complex (such as the ideas of horses, wings, and so on) or indeed among the simplest (such as the ideas of colours, tastes, smells, and so on). Correspondingly, ideas of the imagination differ from ideas of memory in whether they preserve the order in which the relevant impressions occurred before (ibid.: 1.1.3.2).¹⁰ And this, again, presupposes that both are complex ideas possessing an internal structure. According to the proposed reading of the copy principle, Hume therefore maintains that it is constitutive of imaginings that they represent complex perceptions and causally depend on the prior perceptual occurrence of the simple aspects of those perceptions.¹¹ In other words, imaginings are recreations in the sense of being causal reproductions of cognitions.

2. Problems and Objections

Hume's theory of the mind faces many challenges, some of which concern his theory of mental episodes in general. One of these has already been acknowledged by Hume himself, namely that it seems possible to have simple ideas (e.g., the one of 'the missing shade of blue') without having had before the corresponding simple impression (see Hume (1739): 1.1.1.10). The universality of his copy principle becomes therefore questionable, even in its restriction to simple ideas and im-

¹⁰Note that this fact is not directly subjectively accessible (see the passage from Hume (1739): 1.3.5.3 quoted above).

It is interesting to ask whether the also postulated and subjectively salient difference in vivacity between memories and imaginings might be said to indirectly reflect this difference of how the two kinds of episodes are taken to relate back to the original perceptions.

¹¹I assume here that our perceptions are simple – that is, for instance, of a single colour and no other sensible quality – only in rare and artificial circumstances. Perhaps there may also be simple instances of imagining, in which case Hume's conception would have to be slightly modified as to allow for simple ideas of the imagination as well.

pressions.

Another objection targets the fact that the differences in vivacity – and hence the resulting differences between mental episodes – are taken by Hume to be quantitative, and not qualitative. This contradicts the observation that perceptions, judgements, memories, imaginings, and so on, differ in kind, and not merely in degree. They differ, for instance, in whether they are sensory or intellectual, in whether they involve a cognitive attitude (i.e., whether they involve the claim that things are as they present them to be), in whether they possess an epistemic function, or in whether they provide us with reasons for belief, or are responsive to them (see Dorsch (2009) and (2013)). These differences are not only subjectively salient; they also distinguish the episodes concerned qualitatively, and not merely quantitatively (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 2.1f.).

Furthermore, it should be explained why some ideas (i.e., judgemental thoughts and conscious memories) are more vivid than others (i.e., imaginings) to such an extent that the former, but not the latter, have an impact on what we believe about the world in a way very similar to that of impressions. Especially Hume's discussion of episodic memories reveals that he himself struggled more or less explicitly with this problem. While generally assuming them to be ideas (see, e.g., Hume (1739): 1.1.1.4 and 1.1.3.1), he then moves them sometimes closer to impressions to account for the perception-like impact on belief. Thus, when trying to distinguish them from imaginings, Hume locates memories 'betwixt an impression and an idea', to reflect the fact that their vivacity is in between those of perceptions and imaginings (ibid.: 1.1.3.1). And when trying to specify why memories have the same power as perceptions to give rise to beliefs, Hume even speaks of them as 'impression[s] of the memory' (ibid.: 1.3.5.1) – though not without seemingly relativising this statement shortly afterwards by apparently reintroducing the contrast between perceptions and memories:

To believe is [...] to feel an immediate impression of the senses, or a repetition of that impression in the memory. (Ibid.: 1.3.5.8)

If 'repetition of an impression' is understood here as meaning the literal reoccurrence of the original impression, the explanation of the memories' impact on beliefs has the price of rendering them indistinguishable from perceptions. But if it is instead taken to denote, in accordance to the copy principle, the less vivid representation of a perception, the initial problem of accounting for the memories' perception-like link to belief reoccurs. This illustrates that Hume has difficulties to accommodate the fact that memories are very similar to perceptions in their epistemic function, while also holding on to their differences in vivacity and immediacy – that is, their differences in how they present us with objects.

Finally, the first characterisation of the difference between impressions and ideas is in tension with the second one precisely because of this aspect of Hume's conception of vivacity (and despite the explanatory link between the two mentioned above). For treating ideas as copies of impressions in the sense just specified means treating the two as being different in kind. Hence, it clashes with the claim that the only difference between the copies and what they are copies of is one of vivacity (ibid.: 1.1.1.3). In fact, this inconsistency seems already to be inherent to the copy principle itself, given that its second clause postulates a resemblance in all respects except vivacity (i.e., a difference in degree), while the third clause puts forward the idea of a representational link (i.e., a difference in kind).

Now, Hume's theory of the mind is subject not only to general challenges to his theory of mental episodes. Some objections are also more specifically related to the particular incorporation

of imaginings in his overall view of the mind. Hume claims that episodes of imagining are causal reproductions and therefore representations of their cognitive counterparts. In addition to the difficulties already mentioned, this thesis is problematic for at least two reasons.

The first is that it is unclear how to avoid the conclusion that all imaginings (just like all thoughts or judgements) involve some sensory or affective element, given that they are or include copies of perceptions with sensory or affective qualities. This idea makes sense in the case of affectively imagining a pain or of sensorily imagining something red: the character of the first episode contains some element of painfulness, and the second some quality of reddishness.¹² But we can suppose (or, more generally, think) that an object is a certain way without any sensory or affective element involved. The underlying problem is, again, that Hume's theory cannot properly accommodate the distinction between sensory, affective and intellectual episodes, especially given that this distinction is one in kind.

The second reason for being uneasy about the proposed claim about imaginings is that it can at best play only a minor role in an account of imagining. That imaginings are dependent on perceptions in the way described is not distinctive of them within Hume's theory. For the same is said to be true of episodes of memory, thought and judgement. This leads back to the worry that, ultimately, reference to degrees in vivacity is his only means to establish differences among mental episodes, while the more fundamental or significant ones of these are in fact differences in kind. Moreover, even if Hume's copy principle is read in such a way as to describe a qualitative difference between impressions and ideas, it does not suffice to strictly distinguish imaginings from other kinds of ideas, such as judgemental or mnemonic ones. Hume's *conception* of imaginings therefore does not – and also was probably not intended by him to – provide the resources to formulate a proper *theory* of imaginings, given that it does not really treat them as a distinct kind of mental phenomena.

But there is another aspect to the idea of understanding imaginings as causal reproductions of cognitions which renders this idea relatively unimportant for theories of imagining. One particular thing to note about Hume's characterisation of imaginative episodes as representationally and causally depending on cognitive ones is that the two postulated dependence relations concern different cognitive relata. According to Hume's copy principle, while the (complex) imaginings are said to represent corresponding (complex) perceptions, they are taken to causally depend on the prior occurrence of simple elements of those perceptions. An episode of visualising a red cube, for example, is assumed to reproduce an episode of seeing a red cube, without having to be caused by such a perceptual episode. Instead, the occurrence of this episode of visualising is understood as requiring only the prior occurrence of an episode of seeing something red and an episode of seeing something cubic (or something with even simpler shapes).

Hume's assumption of such a difference in cognitive relata is indeed well justified. We can visualise aliens without ever having seen any; we can imagine how a papaya fruit might taste without ever having eaten one; and we can suppose that Timbuktu is the capital of Mali without ever having judged or even thought about this state of affairs. Still, we need to have seen, tasted or thought about *something* in order to be able to imagine aliens, the taste of papayas, or the possibility of Timbuktu being the capital of Mali: we cannot imagine something out of nothing. What this indicates is that the *causal* dependence of imaginings and cognitions can actually be traced back to – or is in fact part of – the *semantic* dependence of imaginings on cognitions. But other mental phe-

12 Though neither suffices to qualify the episode as a genuine experience of pain or redness, given that they do not present these qualities as actually being instantiated (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 10.1, 11.5 and 14.3; as well as Dorsch (2010a) and (2013)).

nomena – such as desires, intentions, emotions, or memories – also depend for their semantics powers on causally prior perceptions or judgements. But given that their causal dependence on cognitions is not distinctive of imaginings, it cannot help to clarify the sense in which imaginings – but not, say, desires or emotions – may count as recreations of cognitions. Elaborating on this point in a bit more detail will reveal what is really wrong with Hume's conception of the recreative character of the imagination

3. Causal and Semantic Dependence

According to the idea of a semantic dependence of imaginings on cognitions, our semantic power to imagine something depends on our sensory and conceptual representational capacities, which we can again acquire only by perceiving and cognising the world. Currie and Ravenscroft (2002: 18f.), among others, have noted that we cannot use natural kind or name-like concepts in intellectual imagining if we do not already have beliefs involving those concepts, or at least had judgements or beliefs involving them in the past. The idea is that intellectual imaginings cannot stand in the kind of relations to the environment or the community which are commonly assumed to be required for the fixation of the reference – and, hence, also for the acquisition – of such concepts.¹³ For example, that we intellectually imagine that there is water in London – and not that there is twater in Tlondon – needs to be explained in terms of the fact that we have been in the past in cognitive contact with water (i.e., H₂O) and the city London – and not with their twins twater (i.e., XYZ) and Tlondon in another possible world – in such a way as to require the two respective concepts. But this cognitive contact and the subsequent acquisition of the concepts arguably require the perception-based formation of judgemental thoughts or beliefs about water and London. More generally, we cannot use any concepts while intellectually imagining something, which we did not already acquire in the past during certain perception-based instances of judging or believing. Accordingly, intellectual imaginings presuppose both perceptual and intellectual cognitions.

Something similar seems to be true of sensory imaginings and their semantic power. It might perhaps be possible to visualise a shade of blue without having seen it before – for instance, by interpolating what the hue is like from closely resembling shades of blue that we did see in the past (see section 5). But it seems to be impossible to visualise that ‘missing’ shade of blue without having had any perceptual exposure to other (blue) hues – or, at least, to some other perceivable features of whichever kind. A congenitally blind person may be able to sensorily imagine the bluishness of an object by evoking tactile or olfactory representations (e.g., of coolness, smoothness or freshness). But he will presumably be unable to imagine it visually, and able to imagine it in a different sensory modality only because he has had respective experiences in that modality in the past.¹⁴ That is, in sensory or affective imagination, we could not combine sensory or affective representational elements concerned with basic features (simple colours, tastes, pains, etc.) if we did not already experience them as part of some prior perceptions, sensations, feelings, and so on.

To summarise, both our sensory and our intellectual capacities to imagine something depend on our perceptual and conceptual capacities. Since we acquire the latter by cognitively interacting with aspects of the world (including, say, abstraction from sensory input, or conceptual analysis and

¹³ See the extensive debates started by Putnam (1975) and Burge (1979).

¹⁴ See Thomas (1999) for apparent empirical evidence to the effect that congenitally blind people can enjoy a kind of sensory imagining that comes very close to visual imagery; and Scruton (1974: 104) for the more orthodox opinion that such people cannot visualise anything.

construction), it follows that imaginings depend on cognitions for their presentational power. It is important to note that what is at issue here is not the (non-accidental) veridicality of sensory imaginings, but their possibility. If I ask you to sensorily imagine the taste of a Rambutan (which you have never tasted, but know to be an exotic fruit), it is highly likely that you will be able to conform to my request – for instance, by combining or otherwise relying on your episodic memories of the taste of other exotic fruits. But it is highly unlikely that there will be a match between how your gustatory imagining represents the taste of the Rambutan to be and how it really is like. None the less, your ability to gustatorily imagine the taste of a Rambutan presupposes in part some past gustatory – or perhaps also other – experiences, on which you rely in your imaginative activity for their semantic power. Besides, their semantic dependence on cognitions is clearly an important fact about imaginings. For instance, it explains why we are, in many ways, limited in what we can imagine – notably in that we can sensorily imagine only perceivable items and features, and imaginatively refer to real individuals or natural kinds only if we stand in the right cognitive relation to them (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 2.3 and 7.1).

None the less, that the acquisition and employment of semantic capacities presupposes suitable prior cognitions is not distinctive of imaginings. For many non-imaginative forms of representation – such as our power to desire or remember something, or to present it in an emotionally loaded manner, say – are semantically dependent on cognitions as well. For instance, what is true of intellectually imagining water to smell of roses or of visualising a red cube is also true of desiring water to smell of roses or of visually recalling a red cube: all these representations require having previously believed something about water or seen something red. At least, there is no reason to assume that the standard externalist arguments do not apply equally to imaginative and non-imaginative representations. However, since their semantic connection does not link imaginings to specific cognitive counterparts (e.g., there are many ways of acquiring a concept, or of combining past experiences) and, in close relation, since many other representational mental episodes rely for their semantic power on previously acquired perceptual and conceptual capacities, the claim that imaginings are semantically dependent on cognitions cannot contribute to an account of what distinguishes imaginings from other types of mental representation.

The relative insignificance of the semantic dependence of imaginings on cognitions transfers directly to the causal dependence between the two kinds of mental state. For the two kinds of dependence are inseparably linked – or, indeed, identical. The examples put forward in the last section have shown that instances of imagining need not have cognitive causal predecessors with the same content and the same mode of representation (e.g., visual, tactile, conceptual, etc.). We can visualise a unicorn without ever having seen one. Instead, imaginings are causally dependent on those cognitions that ensure the availability of the relevant semantic capacities: the causal chain leading to the occurrence of a particular instance of imagining includes the cognitive episodes which have been crucial – though merely contingently so – in the provision of the necessary means for sensory or intellectual representation. In other words, some of our past cognitive episodes are among the causes of our present imaginative episodes in so far as the cognitions have been, in part, causally responsible for the acquisition and, hence, employment of the relevant representational capacities. Our previous perceptions of white horses and of horns have caused us to be able to visually represent a white horse with a horn, which is again the semantic capacity that we employ whenever we visualise a unicorn.

So, Hume was right in claiming that imaginings are causally dependent on cognitions – namely to the extent to which they are semantically dependent on the latter. But since many non-imaginative representations are as well causally dependent on perceptions and judgements for their

semantic power, this claim cannot be used to elucidate his idea that is distinctive of imaginings that they are recreations of cognitions. Before turning to the question of whether the representational element of Hume's conception is more suited for this task, I discuss another alternative proposal, namely that of understanding imaginings as simulations of cognitions.

4. A Simulationist Conception

Although we should not conceive of imaginations as recreations in causal or semantic terms, we may still be able to do so in simulationist terms. This is precisely what Currie and Ravenscroft propose in their book *The Recreative Mind*. Their account of the imagination as a recreative capacity contains four central elements.

First, they highlight some similarities between imaginings -- which they also call 'states of recreative imagination' (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11) -- and cognitions, primarily with regard to the way in which the two kinds of representations may be integrated into a system of causally or rationally related mental representations. The underlying assumption is that what matters for the role of representations in inferential patterns (in the case of intellectual representations) or similar sensory processing mechanisms (in the case of visual and other sensory representations) is solely the content of the representations, and not their attitude or other features. Hence, given that imaginings and cognitions may share their contents, they can figure in the same type of inferences and mechanisms -- whether these are real or 'online' when cognitions are concerned, or merely hypothetical or 'offline' when imaginings are concerned (see Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): e.g., 49, 81, 93f. and 100; see also Currie (2000): 176).

Second, they take these causal and rational similarities to enable imaginings to 'simulate' or 'to mimic, and relative to certain purposes, to substitute for perceptions, beliefs, decisions, and experiences of movements': imaginings can take over the role of cognitions in certain mental processes, such as reasoning or the processing of visual information -- only, again, with the proviso that the processes involving imaginings run 'offline' rather than 'online' as the processes involving cognitions (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 11; 49).¹⁵ One particular consequence of this is that we are able to engage in what Currie and Ravenscroft call 'perspective-shifting' and what they are mainly concerned with in their book: namely our ability 'to put ourselves in the place of another, or in the place of our own future, past, or counterfactual self' (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 8f.; see also Goldie (2000): 194ff.).

Third, they assume that the relation of simulation entails not only a partial and, presumably, symmetric similarity in causal or rational role, but also some kind of 'asymmetric dependence' (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 49). Although they are not entirely clear about it, Currie and Ravenscroft seem to have in mind a constitutive or conceptual dependence of imaginings on cognitions. They maintain that imaginings are 'parasitic' on cognitions and are 'adequately describable only by reference to some counterpart', that is, perception, belief, and so on (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 19; 32; see also Currie (2001): 254).¹⁶ They also claim that the dependence in question -- as

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

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

well as the resulting relation of simulation – holds only in one direction: imaginings are dependent on and simulate cognitions, but not the other way round (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 18f.; 49).

Fourth, they link up these first three elements when they write that 'to say that imagination *simulates* this other thing [i.e., cognition] [...] implies likeness, and asymmetric dependence' (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 49). In other words, the fact that imaginings are simulations of cognitions (i.e., can stand in for them in inferences and similar mental processes) entails that imaginings are both similar to and dependent on cognitions. Simulation entails similarity in so far as imaginings can stand in for cognitions only because they share their contents and, hence, their informational and inferential roles with the latter. And simulation entails an asymmetric dependence because simulation is an asymmetric relation: 'when *A* simulates *B*, *B* does not simulate *A*' (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 49). Hence, Currie and Ravenscroft embrace the view that imaginings are indeed recreations of imaginings: their account claims that imaginings are both similar to and constitutively and asymmetrically dependent on cognitions; and it claims that both aspects are non-accidentally linked to each other in virtue of being required or implied by the status of imaginings as simulations.¹⁷

Currie and Ravenscroft argue in detail for the similarity claim and the thesis that imagining is central to perspective-shifting (Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): sec. 1.3f., and chs. 3ff.). They also provide substantial support for the idea that imaginings are semantically dependent on imaginings (see section 3). For the sake of argument, I assume here that Currie and Ravenscroft are right about all. My focus is instead on their idea of an asymmetric dependence, and on the fact that they do not spend much time on elucidating or supporting this idea. In particular, not much is said on the concrete nature of this dependence, and on how it is linked to the similarity in representational and rational features. The only claims that Currie and Ravenscroft explicitly argue for in relation to their postulation of an asymmetric dependence are, indeed the claim that imaginings depend on cognitions for their semantic power, and the claim that imaginings and cognitions may enter the same types of inferential or informational processes (see Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): sec. 1.3., especially pp. 11ff. and 18f.; as well as p. 49). But neither can help to establish their idea of an asymmetric dependence.

The main problem with understanding simulation in terms of semantic dependence is, however, that the former – but not the latter – concerns pairs of intellectual counterparts. The supposition that there is water in London is said to simulate the belief (or judgemental thought) that there is water in London. If the two episodes would not share their content (i.e., the proposition that there is water in London) and their mode of representation (i.e., their intellectual or conceptual character), they would not share their inferential role. By contrast, in order to be able to intellectually imagine that there is water in London, it is not required to have (had) the belief that there is water in London. All that is needed are some prior water-belief and some prior London-belief. Hence, the semantic dependence cannot be central to the constitutive or conceptual 'asymmetric dependence' that Currie and Ravenscroft postulate in their simulationist account of imagining.

Their similarity claim with respect to the shared informational or rational role, on the other hand, is just a consequence of their observation that imaginings and cognitions share their contents,

17 There is an interesting difference between Humean and simulationist accounts. Humeans take the fact that imaginings are asymmetrically (i.e., representationally and perhaps also causally) dependent on cognitions to be basic and use it to explain the fact that the two types of mental representation share many important features, such as their contents. By contrast, simulationists assume that imaginings count asymmetrically as simulations of cognitions because they share relevant features with them, such as their contents. They thus offer a radically different approach to the non-arbitrariness of the link between asymmetric dependence and resemblance.

as well as their assumption that all what matters for inferential and similar processes is content. But given that sharing a content is a symmetric relation, the similarity claim cannot help to shed light on the nature of the assumed asymmetric dependence relation, either. So we still have no answer what kind of asymmetric dependence is supposed to be involved in simulation, and why it is supposed to be non-arbitrarily linked to the fact that imaginings resemble cognitions. But without such an answer, Currie's and Ravenscroft's conception of the imagination as a recreative capacity remains unclear. Moreover, it is still unexplained why imaginings are similar to cognitions in their content and role and, hence, suitable for simulation in the first place.

In an earlier paper, Currie seems to suggest that simulation is not a matter of an asymmetric dependence, after all -- For instance, when he writes that 'imaginings are essentially simulative states – states which mirror some of the features of other mental states, of which they can be regarded as counterparts' (Currie (2000): 176; see also 180). On this reading, simulationism would not go beyond the similarity claim and its consequences: imaginings would count as simulations of cognitions simply in virtue of being able to figure in the same inferences or similar mental processes, due to the fact that both kinds of mental state can represent the same things in the same way. Furthermore, the asymmetric dependence would turn out to be completely independent of the similarity in informational and inferential role and would presumably consist in nothing more than the semantic dependence of imaginings on cognitions. However, this would mean that imaginings are not really recreative states in the sense untangled here, which includes not only the similarity claim, but also the dependence claim. More important, treating simulation as a matter of similarity alone would contradict Currie's and Ravenscroft's statement – already quoted earlier – that simulation 'implies [...] asymmetric dependence' (see Currie & Ravenscroft (2002): 49; see also 18f.).

Their comments about perspective-shifting, too, do not introduce other considerations that might further illuminate – or even speak in favour of – their endorsement of the idea of a pairwise asymmetric dependence of imaginings on their cognitive counterparts. It might be suggested that Currie and Ravenscroft's true intention is to identify imaginings with precisely those mental episodes that are essential to simulation in the sense of perspective-shifting. But there are three problems with this proposal. First, it would fail to establish the desired asymmetric dependence of imaginings on cognitions. Second, it would permit for an account of imaginings in more fundamental terms – say, by reference to the idea that they, and only they, are voluntary with respect to what they represent, and to the idea that perspective-shifting requires mental representations which are voluntary in this respect. Third, the proposed characterisation of imaginings is wrong in assuming that whichever mental episode or state is necessary for perspective-shifting is also imaginative. Imagining being in the position of someone else and simulating their state of mind would be impossible without some beliefs about the other perspective (e.g., about the respective person's situation, mental states or character traits), as well as the desire or intention to simulate occupying that perspective.

The proposal might be strengthened by adding the idea that imaginings are to be defined by their unique role in perspective-shifting. For example, they might be identified with precisely those episodes that constitute the adoption of a perspective distinct from our actual one – rather than merely enabling such an adoption, as the underlying beliefs and desires do. However, this new suggestion does not really tell us anything about the distinctive nature of imaginings, other than perhaps that they are all concerned with our possible – rather than our actual – occupation of a perspective.¹⁸ Consequently, the proposal to characterise imaginings in terms of their unique role in

18 It does not matter for this characterisation of imaginings whether the perspective, that we merely possibly adopt, is actually occupied by someone else, or was or will be by our own past or future self. It is true that perspective-

perspective-shifting implies the view that what is distinctive about imaginings is that they are concerned with something merely possible. But this is in tension with the fact that we can imagine impossibilities, such as 5 plus 7 equalling 13, water being identical with CO₂ (see Gendler (2006) and Weinberg and Meskin (2006)), or something's being a Devil's tuning fork or an impossible (or infinite) staircase.¹⁹

5. The Neo-Humeanist Conception

In this final section, I would like to return to Hume's idea that imaginings are representations of cognitions and present a neo-Humean understanding of this idea that departs from Hume's own conception by dropping the notion of imaginings as causal reproductions similar to photocopies or photographs and replacing it with the notion of imaginings as representations more akin to paintings.²⁰

The main motivation for conceiving of the asymmetric dependence of recreative imaginings just in terms of a representational dependence, and not also in terms of a causal dependence, is that it promises to be more illuminating about the nature of imaginings than Hume's causal-representational approach. I have argued elsewhere that the assumption of a representational dependence is more resourceful than the assumption of a causal dependence with respect to the explanation of central features of imaginings – such as their lack of a perceptual character or judgement attitude, or their diminished vivacity (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 3.2 and 10.4). But the purely representational approach also helps to avoid many of the problems and objections that Hume's conception of imaginings faces, in part because of its assumption of a causal dependence. Moreover, while most types of mental representation are causally and semantically dependent on perceptions and judgements, there are not many types which can be plausibly said to be representationally dependent on cognitions – perhaps, indeed, only imaginings and memories. Hence, the focus on representational dependence is better positioned to make sense of the idea that it is distinctive of imaginings that they are recreations of cognitions.

Maintaining that imaginings represent cognitions should in fact mean endorsing the view that all instances of imagining are instances of experiential imagining, that is, of imagining experiencing or thinking something (see Walton (1990): ch. 1, and Walton (1997), as well as Dorsch (2010b) and (2011)). The alternative option of treating imaginings as intellectual representations of (i.e., thoughts about) cognitions is evidently untenable because sensory and affective imaginings cannot be reduced to purely intellectual episodes (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 11.3). For example, visualising should be understood as imagining (an episode of) seeing, and not as imagining that one sees (see Martin (2002) and Dorsch (2010b)). Similarly, intellectually imagining that the Earth is flat, say, is not the same as entertaining the (higher-order) thought that one judges or believes that the Earth is flat. In particular, supposing that the Earth is flat does not require the possession or application of the concept of judgement or belief.

But how does the idea that the objects of imaginative representation – that is, what is imagined – are cognitive episodes or states square with the fact that we may visualise landscapes, or

shifting may help us to get clearer about the actual situation of others in this sense. But it always does so, at the basic level, by considering a perspective which we do not actually, but merely possibly adopt.

19 I discuss and reject this 'Modal Account' of imagining in more detail in Dorsch ((2012): sec. 5.4). Note that there are many metaphysical impossibilities that we can perceptually experience or depict in a visual mode (see Macpherson (2010) or the pictures of M. C. Escher) and should therefore also be able to visualise. It is an interesting question whether visualising also allows for illusions like the 'Waterfall illusion' (see Crane (1988)).

20 Compare Dretske's distinction between 'natural' and 'non-natural' meaning in his (1986).

suppose that the Earth is flat? The idea is to distinguish between direct and indirect objects of representation. What imaginings are said to represent directly are cognitions. That is, the representational content of the imaginative episodes consists just of cognitive episodes. But cognitions are themselves representational: they represent landscapes, the flatness of the Earth, and so on. Moreover, cognitive representation is transparent: when we attend to perceptions, we become aware of the perceived objects; and when we attend to judgemental thoughts, we become aware of the proposition thought. Representing a perception or judgement means therefore, in part, representing what is perceived or judged. Accordingly, what neo-Humeans assume is that, by (directly) representing cognitions, imaginings also (indirectly) represent what the cognitions represent. The imaginative mental episodes are understood as ‘inheriting’ the content of their cognitive counterparts in so far as the cognitions are – together with their content – part of the content of the imaginings.²¹

However, conceiving of imaginings as recreations exclusively in terms of a representational dependence, rather than also in terms of a causal dependence, does not suffice to address all the problems for the Humean approach that have been noted in section 2. None the less, the neo-Humean approach to imaginings is open to further improvements, without having to give up on the fundamental idea that imaginings depend on cognitions by being representations of them. Two additional important modifications are, first, the introduction of the qualitative distinction between sensory and intellectual presentations; and second, the substitution of the qualitative differences in attitude and epistemic function for the quantitative difference in vivacity. Hume’s contrast between impressions and ideas is thus replaced by the opposition of cognitions and imaginings, as well as the orthogonal opposition between sensory and intellectual episodes (e.g., being seeings and visualisings, on the one hand, and judgements and suppositions, on the other). These two further modifications suffice to solve several of the difficulties facing Hume’s theory of the mind.

For instance, understanding imaginings as representational recreations can accommodate the fact that the various kinds of cognition and imagining differ in kind from each other, and along the dimensions just outlined. In particular, imaginings inherit their content and mode of representation (e.g., visual or intellectual) from the represented cognitions; while the fact that they are mere representations and not the original explains that they do not inherit the endorsing attitude and epistemic role of cognitions. In comparison, consider the fact that, when we paint a photograph, the painting inherits the visual content and perspectivalness of the photograph, but not the impression of reality inherent to the photograph – that is, the impression of really seeing the appearance of the portrayed, rather than merely a representation of it. It is no accident, for instance, that we show others photographs, not paintings, when trying to find people, or to enable others to visually recognise them.

The neo-Humean conception also avoids any of the problems linked to the introduction of vivacity as an important element in an account of imaginings (or other mental phenomena). Intellectual imaginings do not have to involve any (more or less vivid) sensory elements, since they can now be construed as representations of intellectual cognitions, such as judgemental thoughts or occurrent beliefs. In addition, the neo-Humean approach comes closer than the Humean original to the

21 See Dorsch (2010b) and Dorsch ((2012): sec. 10.4) for a more detailed discussion of how this is supposed to work in the case of visualising. In the case of intellectual imagining, this form of inheritance is likely to be similar to the sort of embedding that may occur in the case of higher-order thought. Thinking that one is thinking that it rains literally includes thinking that it rains. That is, there are two thoughts – and two contents – which are such that one of them contains the other. A similar form of inclusion or overlap can be expected to be present in the case of imagining thinking that it rains, which also entails thinking that it rains (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 9.5).

identification of a distinctive feature of imaginings, which separates them strictly from cognitions and other non-imaginative mental episodes. For while it is said to be constitutive of imaginings that they are representations of cognitions, the same is not true of perceptions, judgemental thoughts, beliefs, bodily sensations, emotions, desires, and so on.

Episodic memories may appear to remain problematic, however. They still seem to fall in between perceptions and instances of sensory imagining. While they share their endorsing attitude and epistemic function with the former (e.g., they move and entitle us to first-order beliefs about the actual world), they do not present their objects as being there before us in our environment and, in this respect at least, resemble imaginings more than perceptions.²² This raises again the issue of how they can actually share their attitude and impact on belief with perceptions, despite their lack of the latter's direct connection to reality. And it also generates the question of which set of features is distinctive of imaginings, if it turns out that episodic memories, too, are best treated as representationally dependent on perceptions.

But the neo-Humean approach has the resources to satisfactorily address these two issues, and thus to properly deal with episodic memories (see Martin (2001)). If episodic memories are indeed representations of past perceptions, they inherit the particular content of the latter. That is, they are (indirect) representation of the specific objects and features then perceived and, moreover, represent these objects and features as they were once represented by one's past perception. In this way, episodic memories provide us with access to particular aspects of the past. And this fact may very well explain why they involve, as part of their endorsing attitude, a phenomenologically salient commitment to the past. Moreover, that they are committed to representing things how they actually were can explain why they influence our beliefs in roughly the same way as the original (or similar) perceptions. They still differ from those perceptions in that they do not represent their objects as currently being there before us. Instead, they locate them in our actual past.

The contrast with sensory imaginings can then be established by arguing that the imaginative episodes – although representing some *type* of perception – do not represent *particular* perceptions (see Martin (2001)). This would ensure that imaginings do not bring us into contact with the (present or past) actual world – something which is reflected by the fact that their objects are not given to us as actual, and that they do not show the judgemental attitude and impact on belief that is distinctive of perceptions and memories. The neo-Humeanists may therefore identify the representation of non-particular types of cognition as the distinctive feature of imaginings. This identification does not only suffice to distinguish them from episodic memories and other non-imaginative episodes, but promises also an account of the fact that imaginings intrinsically lack an endorsing attitude and an epistemic role.

Indeed, it should become clear now that separating the representational dependence from the causal one and understanding solely the former as being central to imaginings as recreations has the further advantage of allowing for non-mechanistic interpretations of the assumed representational link between imaginative and cognitive episodes or states. While Hume's empiricist picture of the mind leads him to take imaginings to be causal reproductions of particular cognitions, it is now possible to conceive of them also as intentional or relational representations of types of cognitions. That is, instead of stressing the causal dependence between imaginative and cognitive token episodes, it can be argued that imaginings constitutively depend on types of cognition in the sense that the latter are necessarily part of the representational content of the imaginings (see Peacocke

²² That sensory memories and imaginings differ from perceptions in presenting objects as 'absent' from our environment is described in Dorsch (2010a) and (2013).

(1985), O'Shaughnessy (2000): 365f., or Martin (2002): 404-407).²³

The result are endorsements of neo-Humeanism that maintain, for instance, that visualising amounts to imagining seeing, or that supposing is nothing but imagining judging or believing. In other words, visualising and supposing are assumed to be nothing else than instances of experiential imagining.²⁴ As already mentioned above, the content of the cognition is thereby taken to be embedded – in some form or another – in the content of the imagining. With respect to intellectual imaginings, the conceptual content of the judgement or belief simply constitutes part of the content of the supposition. In the case of sensory imaginations, the situation is a bit more complex since the sensory content of perceptions typically loses some of its aspects (e.g., its immediacy, or its vivacity) when being imaginatively represented (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 3.2, Dorsch (2010b) and Martin (2002)).

Taking imaginings to be dependent on types of cognitions, rather than on tokens, has also the consequence that imagining something does not require any more the prior occurrence, in the same subject, of particular instances of the cognitive types concerned. Hence, the proposal can accommodate the possibility (if it is a genuine one) of, say, the visualisation of a previously unperceived shade of blue: we visualise this colour, not in virtue of having previously seen it, but by imagining having a certain type of perceptual experience (i.e., one of that colour), on the basis of having perceived other hues in the past. In addition, the representational view under discussion does not need to restrict the representational dependence to simple cases or aspects of imaginative representation. For the view can explain why we are able to visualise a unicorn without previously having seen one by reference to the existence of the corresponding type of perception which, after all, could be instantiated if unicorns would exist. Besides, the view is also able to account for the dependence of sensory memories on perceptions in a way that does not render them imaginative (i.e., that does not render their asymmetric dependence on cognitions indistinguishable from that of imaginings). For, as suggested above, it can be argued that, while episodic memories represent and depend on previously existing tokens of experience, sensory imaginings are so related to types of experience (see Martin (2001): 279). What these considerations show is that understanding the asymmetric dependence of imaginings on cognitions in terms of a type-related representational dependence avoids most of the remaining problems facing Hume's causation-centred conception of imaginings.

Now, as also the analogy with paintings suggests, it might seem most natural to understand the postulated representational link between imaginings and cognitions in intentional terms. After all, we are capable of imagining cognitive episodes which no one ever has actually had (e.g., when imagining the perceptions of the first man on Mars). But that this is not the only option is illustrated by O'Shaughnessy's neo-Humean account, the core idea of which is much closer to Hume's copy principle than any intentionalist neo-Humeanism.²⁵ In O'Shaughnessy's theory, imaginings have similar contents and involve similar types of representation as cognitions because they are

23 The idea of representing types, in contrast to representing tokens, certainly needs further investigation (see Dorsch (2012): sec. 10.4). But that this distinction obtains can be independently illustrated by reference to pictures: while some paintings (e.g., portraits) are of particular people, others are of no particular people at all, although they depict people – or, rather, types of people (e.g., in genre paintings; see Wollheim (2003)).

24 Note that the claim here is not the (relatively uncontroversial claim) that there are instances of experiential imagining, but rather the claim that the basic episodic forms of imagining (i.e., sensory, intellectual and, presumably, also affective imagining) can be reduced to another form of imagining, namely experiential imagining.

25 See Dorsch ((2012): ch. 6) for a more detailed discussion of O'Shaughnessy's view. He hardly ever makes explicit references to the philosophers who have had a (positive or negative) impact on the presentation and content of his own arguments. But he does so in this context – and, of course, to Hume – which suggests that even O'Shaughnessy himself sees himself as standing in the tradition of Hume (see O'Shaughnessy (2000): 365).

‘shadows’ or ‘replicas’ of the ‘cognitive prototypes’ (see O’Shaughnessy (2000): 363ff.). What he has in mind is that imaginings have types of veridical perception or knowledge as their immediate, non-intentional and necessary objects (not unlike sense data in the case of perception) and borrow their world-directed intentionality from those cognitions. This is actually what he means when he speaks of cognitive prototypes for imaginings: the imaginings must not only be described in terms of the prototypes, but are also necessarily modelled upon them, that is, constitutively related to them in the special way described. It is in this sense that we are said to imagine something by representing the relevant ‘cognitive prototype’: that is, visualise a tree by imagining seeing (or ‘seem seeing’) one, or make-believe that the Earth is flat by imagining believing (or ‘seem believing’) the respective proposition (see O’Shaughnessy (2000): 363f.).²⁶

The closeness to Hume’s original account – manifest in the postulation of a genuinely relational, and not merely intentional, link between imaginings and their cognitive counterparts – has the consequence that, for O’Shaughnessy, imaginings of a certain kind (e.g., with a certain content or of a certain type) could not exist if the corresponding kind of perception would not exist (see O’Shaughnessy (2000): 377). It is not clear whether the intentional variant has to embrace this strong constitutive dependence as well – although it might generally be plausible to endorse it in the light of the apparent impossibility of imagining things which we could not perceive or think of. In any case, both the intentional and the relational reading of the claim that imaginings are representations of cognitions differ from Hume’s causal conception in that they do not postulate a relation to tokens of cognition.

What remains to be seen is whether neo-Humeanism is actually true of imaginings, at least of sensory and affective ones. In Dorsch ((2012): sec. 9.5), I argue that it is highly implausible to maintain that the intellectual imagination is recreative in the sense of representing judgemental thoughts or beliefs. Instead, suppositions and other imaginative thoughts are best ‘recreations’ in the much weaker sense of being able to stand in for judgements or beliefs in certain inferential and similar mental processes. Sensory and emotional imaginings, on the other hand, should be treated as instances of experiential imagining that represent types of perception or feeling; or at least so I and others have argued elsewhere (see Peacocke (1985), Martin (2002), Dorsch (2010b) and (2011)). But this view is far from being uncontroversial (see, e.g., Hopkins (1998): ch. 7). However, independently of whether we should adopt the neo-Humeanist approach with respect to sensory and affective imaginings, I hope to have shown in this essay that this approach offers the best way of making sense of the idea that imaginings are recreations of cognitions. In other words, if imaginings are indeed recreations of cognitions, then they are representations of them.²⁷

26 There is at least one good reason to prefer an intentionalist understanding of the representational link between token imaginings and types of cognitions over a relationalist conception: namely the difficulty of rendering intelligible the idea of a genuinely relational form of representation, which has, as one of its constituents or relata, a type of episode, rather than a particular episode. Since there cannot be genuinely relational forms of awareness with purely general contents, the solution has to be something like the proposal to treat the represented prototypes themselves as particulars, rather than as universals (or their nominalist equivalents). But it is unclear how this might be supposed to work (see Dorsch (2012): n. 11, sec. 6.2). Note, however, that O’Shaughnessy clearly speaks of imaginings as ‘representations’ of ‘types’ of cognition – although he acknowledges that the imagining subject is not aware of the meta-representational aspect of imagining, but instead enjoys a mental episode that is, so to speak, transparent to the imagined external objects and their features (see O’Shaughnessy (2000): 364f.).

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