



1

Introduction

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Thought experiments, modal judgment, counterfactual reasoning. All of these activities, so central to philosophical inquiry, involve the ‘propositional imagination’, the capacity we exploit when we imagine that there is an evil genius, that everyone is color-blind, or that Holmes had a bad habit. Philosophy would be unrecognizable if we extracted all the parts that depend on the imagination. So too, everyday life would be unrecognizable if we excised imaginative activities. The imagination undoubtedly played an essential role in the growth of civilization, since the imagination is involved in hypothetical reasoning and planning. It’s likely that small-group social life depends heavily on the imagination as well. For our capacity to understand others relies on our ability to deploy the propositional imagination. Indeed, the propositional imagination is implicated in such a vast and fundamental set of practical and philosophical endeavors that it’s a wonder that the topic lay dormant for most of the twentieth century. Before the 1980s, there seems to have been no systematic tradition of work on cognitive accounts of the propositional imagination.

Over the last two decades, there has finally been a concerted research effort to develop a cognitive account of the propositional imagination (e.g. Carruthers 2002; Currie 1995, 1998; Currie and Ravenscroft 2002; Goldman 1989, 1992; Gordon and Barker 1994; Harris 2000; Harris and Kavanaugh 1993; Jarrold *et al.* 1994; Leslie 1987, 1994; Lillard 1994; Nichols 2004*a*, forthcoming; Nichols and Stich 2000; Perner 1991; Perner *et al.* 1994).¹ This volume capitalizes on this new work, by extending the theoretical picture of the propositional imagination and exploring the implications of cognitive accounts of the imagination. The volume also investigates broader philosophical issues surrounding the propositional imagination. In this Introduction, I will provide a general overview

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¹ Much of this work is expressly aimed at explaining *pretend play*. But in most cases, the accounts of pretense include a cognitive account of the propositional imagination. This is no surprise, of course, since most theorists in this area maintain that in pretend play, the child carries out scenarios that are developed in her imagination.

of the central issues in recent discussions of the propositional imagination, followed by brief summaries of the chapters in the volume.

1. PROPOSITIONAL IMAGINATION IN PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy and the propositional imagination are intimately connected. But as an explicit *topic* in philosophy, there are three especially prominent discussions of the propositional imagination in contemporary work.

1.1. Imagination and modality

It's an old idea in philosophy that the imagination reveals possibilities. By the time of his *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739), Hume tells us that it is an 'establish'd maxim' that '*whatever the mind clearly conceives, includes the idea of possible existence, or in other words, nothing we imagine is absolutely impossible*' (1. 2. 2. 8). The idea is old, but it continues to ring through the corridors of philosophy departments. In his influential discussion of this maxim, Stephen Yablo maintains that philosophers have not found any 'seriously alternative basis for possibility theses' (1993: 2). If the imagination doesn't tell us what things are possible, then it's not clear what else would.

Because he was an empiricist, Hume's notion of 'imagination' is naturally interpreted as *imagistic*, since on his view all ideas are copied from the impressions. Some philosophers might thus maintain that since imagining is imagistic, it is an entirely distinct faculty of *conceiving* that informs us about possibility. However, from the perspective of recent discussions of propositional imagination, this seems largely a terminological dispute. For contemporary accounts of the propositional imagination are (or can be) neutral on the vehicle of the imagination. As we'll see below, contemporary cognitive accounts of the imagination tend *not* to treat the imagination as imagistic. And indeed, on Yablo's notion of imagination, sensory-like images are not required (1993: 27 n. 55). In fact, Yablo explicitly characterizes conceiving in terms of propositional imagining (1993: 29; see also Chalmers 2002).

Philosophers also maintain that imaginative activities provide the basis for *impossibility* theses. For instance, some philosophers suggest that we cannot imagine that $2 + 3 = 7$, and that this provides a basis for expressing the view that it is impossible that $2 + 3 = 7$ (e.g. Blackburn 1993; Craig 1975). More generally, philosophers working on modality often invoke the imagination as a crucial tool for modal argumentation (Lewis 1986; Rosen 1990; Sidelle 2002).

Philosophers have, of course, challenged the use of the imagination to establish modal theses. For example, Christopher Hill criticizes philosophical arguments that move from facts about what we can imagine or conceive to conclusions about the possibility that there could be zombies who are physically identical

to us (Hill 1997). And Wright questions how we can be warranted in drawing conclusions about impossibility on the basis of our own imaginative limitations, since it seems a ‘tendentious step to inflate our imaginative limitations into a metaphysical discovery’ (Wright 1980: 90). These issues about the relation between imagination and modality continue to occupy a central place in philosophical debates (e.g. Gendler and Hawthorne 2002).

1.2. Imaginative resistance

The next issue also traces a history to Hume. ‘On the Standard of Taste’ concludes with a series of philosophically dense paragraphs in which Hume raises problems in the space now known as ‘imaginative resistance’. In a key passage, Hume writes: ‘where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation; this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments’ (paragraph 32). The idea seems to be that when I read a poem that makes pronouncements that run deeply against my own moral values, I can’t bring myself to share the reactions; moreover, I shouldn’t try to do so.

Richard Moran (1994) and Kendall Walton (1990, 1994) resurrected Hume’s issues in the context of the aesthetics of fiction. In his illuminating discussion of the issue, Moran sets the problem as follows:

If the story tells us that Duncan was *not* in fact murdered on Macbeth’s orders, then *that* is what we accept and imagine as fictionally true. . . . However, suppose the facts of the murder remain as they are in fact presented in the play, but it is prescribed in this alternate fiction that this was unfortunate only for having interfered with Macbeth’s sleep that night. (Moran 1994: 95)

In the former case, in which the story says that Duncan wasn’t murdered, we happily go along; but in the latter case, Moran suggests, we would not accept it as true in the fictional world that murdering one’s guest is morally okay. In most cases, it seems, we imagine whatever the fiction directs us to imagine, and we also accept it as fictionally true. But in cases of moral depravity, we often refuse to let our imaginations and judgments of fictional truth follow. Thus, the problem of imaginative resistance (see also Gendler 2000: 55).

Fictional truths, according to Walton’s prominent account, are defined by prescriptions to imagine (Walton 1990). So, it is fictionally true that Othello is jealous just because the play prescribes that we imagine this. If we adopt this view of fiction, it’s clear that there are importantly different issues implicated in the discussion of imaginative resistance (see e.g. Walton 1994; Weatherston 2004). One question concerns why we refuse to accept some things as fictionally true. That is, we seem to reject the idea that we *ought* to imagine that murdering Duncan was okay (even if the play said so). A different question concerns why we in fact seem to find ourselves unable to imagine that Duncan’s murder was okay.

The first puzzle, about the fiction, and the second puzzle, about the psychology, are at least partly independent. But both involve considerations about the propositional imagination.

The issue of imaginative resistance has sparked much debate, especially since Tamar Gendler's 'The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance' (Gendler 2000).² Although the discussion of imaginative resistance arose in the context of the aesthetics of fiction, once the puzzles about fiction and psychology are distinguished, it becomes clear that the psychological puzzle exceeds the boundaries of fiction. The fact that we seem to resist imagining certain contents applies even when we aren't consuming fiction. It is a more general, striking, fact about our minds that the imagination rebels against certain contents.

1.3. Imagination and emotion

As with imaginative resistance, philosophical discussion about imagination and emotions arose in the context of the aesthetics of fiction (Radford 1975; Walton 1978). Discussions have largely focused on the 'paradox of fiction', which is generated by a triad of *prima facie* plausible claims:

- a. We often feel emotions for fictional characters (e.g. I pity Anna Karenina).
- b. To feel emotions for something, you have to believe it exists.
- c. We don't believe in the existence of characters that we know are fictional (e.g. I don't believe Anna Karenina exists).

In the enormous literature on the topic, philosophers have denied each of these claims. While some treatments of the paradox do not invoke considerations about the imagination, the imagination has been a persistent player in these discussions.

The central questions are the following:

- (i) Are the affective responses to fiction caused by imaginative activities, and if so, how does the imagination generate these effects? (See e.g. Carroll 1990, 1998; Copland 2004; Currie 1995; Feagin 1996; Meskin and Weinberg 2003; Walton 1997).
- (ii) Under what conditions (if any) is it rational to have affective responses to imaginative activities concerning fictions? (Cf. Livingstone and Mele 1997; Radford 1975; Walton 1990).
- (iii) Do the affective responses to fiction count as instances of genuine emotions like pity and indignation, or are we imagining that we have those emotions, as part of a broader game of make-believe? For example, do we literally feel pity when reading *Anna Karenina*, or do we imagine, as part of a broader game of make-believe, that we feel pity? (e.g. Carroll 1990; Currie

² Recent discussions include the following: Currie and Ravenscroft 2002; Matravers 2003; Nichols 2004a; Weatherston 2004; Yablo 2002.

*Introduction*

5

1997; Friend 2003; Lamarque 1981; Moran 1994; Neill 1991; Walton 1978, 1990).

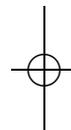
Although the philosophical issues about imagination and the emotions took soil in the aesthetics of fiction, as with imaginative resistance, the psychological phenomena exceed the boundaries of aesthetics. For the imagination seems to drive affective responses even when there is no associated fiction. Many of the same questions arise when we detach from fiction: How does the imagination cause affective responses in everyday life? Under what conditions is it rational to have those affective responses from the imagination? And are the affective responses we have to imagination (outside the context of fiction) instances of genuine emotions?

2. PRECURSORS TO A COGNITIVE ACCOUNT OF THE PROPOSITIONAL IMAGINATION

To evaluate how the propositional imagination does and should function in philosophy, it would obviously be beneficial to draw on cognitive characterizations of the capacity. But until recently, there was little to draw from. Why did it take so long for philosophers and psychologists to devote themselves to a cognitive account of the imagination? A large part of the explanation is the massive influence of behaviorism in psychology and philosophy of mind throughout the twentieth century. Indeed, in the analytic philosophical tradition, perhaps the best-known discussion of the imagination is in Ryle's manifesto of logical behaviorism, *The Concept of Mind*. Not surprisingly, Ryle doesn't give a cognitively rich accounting. Rather, he chides, 'If we are asked whether imagining is a cognitive or a noncognitive activity, our proper policy is to ignore the question. "Cognitive" belongs to the vocabulary of examination papers' (Ryle 1949: 258).

The reemergence of the representational theory of mind (e.g. Fodor 1975) provided the intellectual backdrop for cognitivist accounts of imagination. According to the representational theory of mind, beliefs (among other mental states) are internal representations. To believe that p is to have a representation token with the content p stored in some functionally appropriate way in the mind. This broad view of cognition underpinned the early cognitivist accounts of the imagination. In these early accounts authors often adverted explicitly to prior research that defends a representationalist approach to the mind (see e.g. Leslie 1987: 414, 424; Morton 1980: 64–5).

A second important background assumption is that beliefs and desires are distinct kinds of mental states, and what distinguishes them is not the *content* of the mental state, but rather the *functional role* the two states play. That is, beliefs and desires have different causal interactions with stimuli, behavior, and other mental states. So, if we allow that the desire that p is a representation stored in the



mind, this representation exhibits a significantly different functional profile from the belief that p , despite the fact that they both represent the same content. These differences in functional role are what make *belief* and *desire* different kinds of mental state.

3. CENTRAL FACTS ABOUT THE PROPOSITIONAL IMAGINATION

The background assumptions about representations and functional roles set the stage for the development of cognitive accounts of the imagination. In addition to these high-level theoretical assumptions, there are several central facts about the propositional imagination that have shaped nearly all of the theorizing in the recent literature. Here is a brief overview.

3.1. Early emergence of the imagination

Before their second birthday, most children engage in pretend play. Consider, for instance, the common childhood activity of pretending to talk on a phone using a banana as a prop (Leslie 1987). In these instances, children seem to distinguish what's imagined from what's real; even when they are pretending that the banana is a telephone, they don't seem to think that the banana really *is* a telephone (Leslie 1987). Two-year-old children certainly don't seem to confuse bananas with telephones, and a bit later, when it's easier to test them, it becomes quite clear that children do indeed distinguish what is imagined from what is real. For instance, in one experiment, children were told about two individuals, one of whom has a cookie and one of whom pretends to have a cookie. Even 3-year-olds were more likely to say that the person who was merely pretending to have a cookie couldn't see it or touch it (Wellman and Estes 1986). In a different paradigm, researchers found that children distinguished between what the experimenter was pretending an object to be (e.g. a telephone) and what it really was (a pen) (Flavell *et al.* 1987; see also Harris *et al.* 1994).

3.2. It's possible to imagine that p and believe that p simultaneously

Typically we regard imagination as departing from belief. We imagine things that we don't believe. One might thus be tempted to assume that it's impossible for a person to imagine and believe the same thing at the same time. In contemporary work on the imagination, this assumption is largely rejected, both by the philosophers and the psychologists. For instance, Walton writes: 'imagining something is entirely compatible with knowing it to be true' (Walton 1990: 13). In psychology, a nice example of this comes from an experiment of Alan Leslie's (1994). An experimenter plays a tea-party game with young children. The experimenter pretends to fill a cup with tea, then proceeds deliberately to overturn the

cup. The children now imagine that the cup is empty, and they also, of course, believe that the cup is empty.

3.3. Imagination and belief generate different action tendencies

When children engage in pretend play, they carry out behavioral sequences that conform in important ways to the actions they would perform if they really had the beliefs. For example, if the child believed Grandma was on the phone, she really would talk to her. Nonetheless, there are important behavioral discontinuities. When pretending that mud globs are delicious pies, even hungry children don't eat the 'pies'. Moreover, as adults, when we consume fiction, daydream, or fantasize, we don't typically produce actions that would be produced if we believed what we are imagining.

3.4. Intentions direct the imagination

Just as imagination and belief produce different kinds of outputs, so too they are generated by different kinds of inputs. Belief is not at the whim of our intentions, but imagination is. We typically decide when to engage in an imaginative episode, and in many ways we can also control the particular contents that we imagine. As a result, we can fill out an imaginative episode in all kinds of surprising ways.

3.5. Imagination exhibits inferential orderliness

Although the imagination is flexible in some ways, it's fairly rigid and predictable in other ways. In particular, when people engage in imaginative activities, they often follow orderly inference chains. When I read that Wilbur is a pig, I infer (in imagination) that Wilbur is a mammal. When I hear that Hamlet is a prince, I infer (in imagination) that he is not a member of the hoi polloi. These inferences track the kinds of inferences that I would have if I really believed that Wilbur was a pig and Hamlet was a prince.³ Such orderly inferences emerge on the scene very early in childhood. In one study, the experimenter introduces 2-year-old children to several toy animals including 'Larry Lamb', and tells them that the animals are going outside to play. The experimenter designates part of the table top as 'outside', points to a smaller part of this area, and says, 'Look, there's a muddy puddle here.' Then the experimenter takes Larry Lamb and makes him roll over and over in this area. The children are asked, 'What has happened? What has happened to Larry?' Nearly all of the children indicated that Larry got muddy. Here then, they are apparently drawing inferences over the contents of what they are pretending,

³ Of course, there are many exceptions to this, some of which are to be explained by the fact (noted in 3.4) that intentions can direct (and redirect) the contents of our imaginings.

and the inferences parallel the inferences that the children would draw if they had the corresponding beliefs (Leslie 1994; see also Harris *et al.* 1994).

3.6. The imagination activates affective systems

It is common wisdom in psychology that imagining scenarios can have significant affective consequences, and different affective consequences follow from imagining different scenarios. Indeed, one traditional experimental technique for inducing affect is precisely to have subjects imagine scenarios that are expected to produce particular kinds of affective responses (Izard 1991: 172). Furthermore, the research suggests that the affective response to imagining a scenario closely tracks the affective response that would occur if the subject came to believe that the scenario was real (for reviews see e.g. Harris 2000; Lang 1984).

4. CONVERGENCES

Among cognitive scientists and philosophers of psychology, there is a growing consensus about a basic account of the imagination that answers to the central facts above. There are, of course, important disagreements (see section 5), but most people working in this area agree on several substantive claims about the nature of the imagination (Carruthers 2002; Currie and Ravenscroft 2002; Goldman 1989; Gordon and Barker 1994; Harris 2000; Morton 1980; Nichols and Stich 2003).⁴

First, recent cognitive accounts of the propositional imagination adopt a representational approach. To believe that p is to have a ‘belief’ representation with the content p . Analogously, to imagine that Macbeth is ambitious is to have an ‘imaginational’ representation with the content *Macbeth is ambitious*.

Imaginational states are contentful representations, but they are not distinguished from beliefs by their contents. Rather, and this is the second point of agreement, imaginational representations are distinguished from belief representations by their *functional roles*. Just as desires are distinguished from beliefs by their pattern of causal interaction, so too imaginings are distinguished from beliefs by their pattern of causal interaction. The appeal to a distinction at the level of function rather than content can accommodate the fact that it’s possible to believe and imagine the same thing (as noted in 3.2). Further, the central facts reviewed in section 3 provide us with some of the critical functional differences between believing and imagining. The inputs to the imagination are at the whim

⁴ One major theorist who doesn’t fit quite so well is Alan Leslie. Leslie was a pioneer in the subject, and several of the key ideas in the consensus view were promoted by him (Leslie 1987, 1994). However, he maintains that all imaginings are really beliefs in which the concept *pretend* is implicated. Thus, his theory bears a complicated relationship to the consensus view (see e.g. Nichols and Stich 2000).

of intention, but this is not the case for belief, and the imagination and belief make different causal contributions to action tendencies (3.3 and 3.4). These are major differences in the causal roles of imaginational representations and belief representations. In addition, though this is somewhat less explicit, most theorists assume that the capacity for propositional imagination is a basic part of human psychology. This makes sense of the early emergence of pretend play and the early ability to distinguish fantasy and reality (3.1). It also accommodates the presumption that imagining cannot be reduced to other mental states like believing or desiring.

The third important point of agreement is that imaginational representations interact with some of the same mental mechanisms that belief representations interact with, and these shared mechanisms treat imaginational representations and belief representations in much the same ways. That is, imagining and believing have shared pathways in the mind, and those pathways process imaginational input and belief input in similar ways. For instance, most theorists maintain that our inferential mechanisms process input both from beliefs and from the imagination. Further, most theorists maintain that some affective systems can be activated both by beliefs and by imaginational representations. The consensus view holds that the shared mechanisms will treat the imaginational representation p and the belief representation p in much the same way. This then makes sense of the fact that we see inferential orderliness in imagination (3.5) and that we see similar affective responses to believing that p and imagining that p (3.6).

5. DIVERGENCES

The areas of agreement listed above suggest an impressive degree of convergence in theorizing about the imagination. Of course, there are also important areas of disagreement. Perhaps the most important fault line is the dispute over the existence of ‘pretend desires’.

For those familiar with the debates over ‘simulation theory’ (e.g. Davies and Stone 1995*a, b*), it will be evident that the above celebration of unity tells no more than half of the story. According to one influential version of simulation theory (Goldman 1989; Gordon 1986), when I predict another’s behavior, I don’t exploit a specialized body of knowledge about psychology; rather, I insert ‘pretend’ versions of the target’s beliefs and desires into my practical reasoning mechanism, which then generates a ‘pretend’ decision which I use to predict the decision of the target. Thus, for this version of simulation theory, one important notion is ‘pretend belief’ (e.g. Goldman 1989; Gordon 1986) or ‘belief-like imaginings’ (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002), and something like the notion of ‘pretend belief’ fits fairly well into most contemporary cognitive accounts of the imagination. However, many simulation theorists also defend the existence of pretend *desires* or desire-like imaginings—imaginational states that are related to



real desires in much the way that pretend beliefs are related to real beliefs (Currie 1995; Currie and Ravenscroft 2002; Goldman 1989; Gordon 1986; Gordon and Barker 1994). On that topic, there is serious disagreement.

If there are pretend desires, this counts as a profound addition to the architecture of the imagination as set out in section 4. It also greatly expands the available resources for explaining the phenomena surrounding the imagination. So the stakes in this debate are very high. Advocates of pretend desires invoke them to explain pretend play behavior (Gordon and Barker 1994), emotional responses to fiction (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002), and imaginative resistance (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002). Most centrally, however, advocates of pretend desires maintain that such states play a crucial role in the prediction and explanation of others' behavior (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002; Goldman 1989; Gordon 1986). When we try to predict or explain the behavior of a target, we must accommodate her differing mental states in some way. Our predictions will often go wrong if we are insensitive to the different beliefs and desires of the target. It is widely agreed that one often accommodates the target's discrepant belief that p by imagining that p . However, how do we accommodate the target's discrepant desire that q ? According to many simulation theorists, we do this by taking on the pretend desire that q . In parallel with the case of pretend belief, the pretend desires get processed much like real desires. This explains how we succeed at predicting and explaining the behavior of those with discrepant desires.

On the other side of the theoretical divide, skeptics about pretend desires maintain that pretend desires play no role in predicting behavior (or anything else) (e.g. Carruthers 2003; Nichols 2004*b*; Nichols and Stich 2003; Weinberg and Meskin 2005). These theorists maintain that there are several ways in which a predictor can accommodate another's discrepant desire. For instance, I can believe that the person has a certain desire, I can imagine that the person has the desire, I can imagine that *I* have the desire. But none of this requires having pretend desires.

Each side in this debate holds a well-entrenched position, and the issue continues to be an important rift among prevailing theories of the propositional imagination. Nonetheless, it shouldn't obscure the widespread agreement that has been reached about the architecture of the imagination.

6. A GUIDE TO THE VOLUME

6.1. The nature of the imagination

The essays in Part I focus on basic questions about the nature of the propositional imagination.

The central concern of the chapter by Timothy Schroeder and Carl Matheson (Chapter 2) is to explain how imaginative episodes (including experiences of fiction) generate such strong responses. They begin by noting that most

*Introduction*

11

philosophers working on the imagination maintain that imagining is what Schroeder and Matheson call a Distinct Cognitive Attitude (DCA), which is similar to belief in some respects but not others. Schroeder and Matheson agree with this consensus, and more specifically with the view that the DCA produces the striking emotional responses that the imagination engenders. However, they maintain that the consensus view lacks a key line of support—theorists have not provided evidence of a causal pathway from the stimulus to the DCA of imagining to the felt response. Schroeder and Matheson argue that this pathway can be shown by looking to neuroscience. Neuroscientific work indicates that imaginary stimuli lead to emotional effects via the same kinds of causal pathways that generate emotion from ‘real’ stimuli.

Alvin Goldman (Chapter 3) also considers how imagination generates emotion. He distinguishes ‘supposition-imagination’ (S-imagination) from ‘enactment-imagination’ (E-imagination). The former kind of imagination involves entertaining or supposing various hypothetical scenarios. With E-imagination, on the other hand, one tries to create a kind of facsimile of a mental state. Thus, one might try to create a perception-like state as in visual imagination or motoric imagination. Goldman argues that this much richer form of imagination generates typical emotional reactions to fiction. Indeed, Goldman maintains that emotional reactions to fiction are generated in several different ways, including a process in which we E-imagine being a hypothetical reader or observer of fact.

In his chapter Adam Morton (Chapter 4) takes up the surprisingly delicate question of imaginative accuracy. In particular, he tries to determine the ways in which we can make mistakes when using the imagination to capture another person’s mental states. One might err by failing to represent the things or propositions that the other person is actually thinking about. But one might err in a different way by failing to imagine appropriately the other person’s *perspective*. For instance, one’s imaginative activity might fail to adjust for the way the other person mentally locates herself in space or time. Morton argues that when we engage in the complex activity of embedded imaginations, as when we imagine another person imagining something, we are actually less likely to make mistakes. For in these cases, Morton maintains, there is less chance of making an error with respect to the other’s perspective.

A great deal of work in developmental psychology shows that even young children understand the difference between the real world and the merely imaginary. In their contribution, Deena Skolnick and Paul Bloom (Chapter 5) argue that children don’t merely lump all imaginary contents into a single fictional world. Rather, children, like adults, apparently distinguish the world of SpongeBob from the world of Batman. Children also think that within a fictional world, the characters believe that the other characters are real. As Skolnick and Bloom point out, this raises a number of interesting and unexplored questions about the intuitive relationships among fictional worlds and between those worlds and the real world.



6.2. Pretence

In part II, the chapters address pretence in children and adults. Peter Carruthers (Chapter 6) explores the motivation for pretend play. It's well known that children engage in imaginative activities and pretend play from a young age. But why do they carry out behavior corresponding to what transpires in their imagination? Carruthers distinguishes two somewhat different phenomena that need explaining. First, children carry out only some of the things they imagine. Second, Carruthers maintains that childhood pretend play exhibits a salient patterning: viz. children tend to pretend to be or do things that they find valuable or admirable in real life. Carruthers argues that when we imagine an action, the contents of this imagining will be processed by mechanisms that generate desires and emotions, and this will affect one's motivations about the execution of the action. The child will be most strongly motivated to carry out the actions associated with *positive* emotional reactions. This would explain why children carry out only some of the scenarios they imagine and also why children's pretend behaviors pattern as they do. For children will be most inclined to carry out the behaviors that would (in reality) generate positive reactions in them.

Pretence clearly plays an important role in the lives of children. In his contribution, Gregory Currie (Chapter 7) maintains that pretence also plays an important role in adult communication. In particular, irony implicates pretence. In some cases of irony, for instance, the ironist is pretending to state something, and she means to draw attention to her reservations about the statement. Currie defends the pretence theory of irony against a range of objections, and goes on to argue that even the most prominent rival to pretence theory, the 'echoic theory' of irony, is defective unless it makes recourse to pretence.

6.3. Imaginative resistance

As noted above, the problem of 'imaginative resistance' has enjoyed considerable attention in recent years. If a story says that mice are super-intelligent, then this is what we imagine and accept as fictionally true; however, if a story says that female infanticide is morally right, we would likely resist imagining and accepting this as fictionally true. The essays in Part III treat a cluster of issues surrounding the problem of imaginative resistance.

Kendall Walton (Chapter 8) argues that it's vital to keep distinct several different issues that get lumped together in discussions of imaginative resistance. In particular, Walton argues that it's easy to confuse the 'imaginative puzzle' with the 'fictionality puzzle'. The fictionality puzzle, which Walton regards as the deepest and most difficult problem here, concerns why it is (apparently) not fictional that female infanticide is morally right, even when the author says so. The imaginative puzzle concerns why we are reluctant or unable to imagine certain things, and Walton argues that this differs from the fictionality puzzle, since

whether something is fictional depends on whether we *ought* to imagine it, not whether we *do* imagine it.

Tamar Szabó Gendler's contribution (Chapter 9) focuses on the imaginative puzzle as inherited from Hume's 'On the Standard of Taste'. Gendler distinguishes between 'can't' and 'won't' solutions to the imaginative puzzle. *Can't* solutions claim that the resistance emerges because there is some barrier to imagining the content; *won't* solutions claim that the resistance emerges because we don't want to imagine the content. Gendler's suggestion is that in the classic cases of resistance (e.g. those discussed by Hume), both kinds of resistance are present. So, for example, if the author asks us to imagine that it's morally permissible to beat one's slaves to death, we won't and can't do it. Gendler goes on to maintain that these cases of imaginative resistance flow from a more general phenomenon of refusing to accept the author's authority. According to Gendler, such breakdowns in authorial authority are typically accompanied by 'pop-out' effects, in which the reader interprets the author as asking her to believe something about the actual world.

Jonathan Weinberg and Aaron Meskin (Chapter 10) explore several different philosophical issues surrounding the imagination: fictionally directed emotions, imaginative resistance, and the supposition/imagination distinction. They defend a shift in methodology for addressing these issues. Rather than relying exclusively on folk psychological and philosophical analysis, Weinberg and Meskin exploit an empirically oriented approach that draws on cognitive accounts of the imagination. Using this method, they argue, leads to novel solutions to the philosophical puzzles about the imagination.

6.4. Imagination and possibility

In Part IV, the essays all explore the relation between imagination and modality. A number of philosophers have maintained that the conceivability of a scenario provides grounds for believing the scenario possible. In his chapter, Christopher Hill (Chapter 11) distinguishes between conceptual possibility and metaphysical possibility. He argues that if we can conceive (in an appropriately coherent way) of its being the case that *p*, this is a good basis for drawing the conclusion that it's *conceptually* possible that *p*, but it is not a good basis for drawing the conclusion that it's *metaphysically* possible that *p*. As a result, Hill maintains, it is a mistake to infer metaphysical conclusions (e.g. property dualism) from facts about what we can conceive. Hill also offers a positive proposal about the proper understanding of metaphysical necessity and possibility. On his account, metaphysical necessities can be reduced to subjunctive conditionals.

In Chapter 12, I attempt to give a naturalistic account of the psychology of modal judgment. Drawing on the use of modals in children, I maintain that a primary function of modal judgment is to represent risks and opportunities. This would obviously be a useful function, and the imagination, I suggest, plays an

important role in generating such modal judgments. Philosophers are interested in more basic modal judgments about ‘absolute impossibility’, which are plausibly delivered by the imagination as well. I argue that contemporary accounts of the imagination can explain why we have the kinds of imaginative failures that underwrite judgments of absolute impossibility.

Roy Sorensen (Chapter 13) explores a more complex form of imagination—meta-conceiving—in which one imagines someone imagining something. Sorensen maintains that meta-conceptions have played an important role in numerous philosophical arguments. He also argues that we can exploit meta-conceiving to undermine the *entailment thesis* that conceivability entails possibility. For the entailment thesis leads, according to Sorensen, to the *meta-entailment thesis* that conceivability of conceivability entails possibility. And it is easy to generate counterexamples to this thesis. This should lead us to be skeptical of the entailment thesis itself.

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Introduction

15

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