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Imagination and the Distorting Power of Emotion

In real life, emotions can distort practical reasoning, typically in ways that it is difficult to realise at the time, or to envisage and plan for in advance. This feature of real life emotional experience raises difficulties for imagining such experiences through centrally imagining, or imagining 'from the inside'. I argue instead for the important psychological role played by another kind of imagining: imagining from an external perspective. This external perspective can draw on the dramatic irony involved in imagining these typical cases, where one knows outside the scope of the imagining what one does not know as part of the content of what one imagines: namely, that the imagined emotion is distorting one's reasoning. Moreover, imagining from an external perspective allows one to evaluate the imagined events in a way that imagining from the inside does not.

I

In real life, emotions have the power to distort practical reasoning in a variety of ways. Emotions can distort practical reasoning by distorting perception. For example, when we are afraid, things can look more frightening than they in fact are. Emotions can distort practical reasoning by investing other reasons (such as beliefs and desires) with more power than authority. For example, when we are angry, we can want to do someone harm more than we ought to. And emotions can distort practical reasoning by 'skewing the epistemic landscape' of our justifications. For example, when we are sexually jealous, our beliefs about our partner's infidelities can seem to be justified when they are not.[1]

When emotions distort practical reasoning, they typically do so in ways that it is difficult either to realise at the time, or to envisage and plan for in advance. One example should suffice. You are making plans for a job interview. You

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[1] For detailed discussion, see, for example, Elster (1999a, b); Pears (1984); Ross & Nisbett (1991); Zillman & Cantor (1976); Goldie (2004a, b).

know that one of the panel members is a particularly aggressive and unpleasant man, who is bound to ask endless questions which are designed to show off his own knowledge and not to test yours. Beforehand, cool calm reasoning shows you the right way forward: you plan not to let him annoy you because you are determined to get the job. However, when it comes to the heat of the actual moment you become angry, and the man's manner, his voice, his line of questioning, his whole character, put your back up much more than you expected. And suddenly, to your later chagrin, what seems to you to be more important than anything else is to make sure that this man doesn't get in the last word. Thus, in the grip of anger, you do what seems to you *at the time* to be the most important thing, but what you knew beforehand to be precisely *not* the right thing to do. Thinking about examples like this one, and others which exemplify other ways in which emotion distorts practical reasoning, led me to wondering what is going on when we deliberate and make plans in advance of an emotional experience by imagining ourselves in that situation, and whether, and in what ways, we can imagine the distorting power of emotion. And this in turn led me to thinking more generally about what exactly the role is of emotion in experiential imagination and in imagined practical reasoning.

Experiential imagining is taken paradigmatically to be imagining 'from the inside', where you imagine from the inside yourself in some situation undergoing some experience, or where you imagine from the inside someone else undergoing that experience. There has been much discussion in philosophy and in psychology about the role of this kind of imagining in explaining our ability to predict what people will think, feel and do. Sometimes called simulation, sometimes co-cognition, sometimes central imagining, sometimes empathy, sometimes putting yourself in the other's shoes, its exact nature is hotly debated, but many philosophers and psychologists emphasise its great importance.[2] One of the conclusions I draw from this paper is that the importance of this kind of experiential imagining is overemphasised, whilst another kind of experiential imagining is under-emphasised or even ignored. In this other kind of imagining, if I am trying to imagine what I will think, feel and do in the interview, I imagine the events unfolding not from the inside, but from an external perspective, where I myself am part of the content of what I imagine. And the same kind of imagining can be deployed when I am trying to imagine someone else in a similar situation. Imagining from an external perspective is, I will argue, particularly important and natural when we set out to imagine the distorting power of emotion.

I will begin with the more general line of enquiry, considering the role of emotion in experiential imagining. I will then turn to the more specific questions concerning the distorting power of emotion, and the difficulties that imagining the distorting power of emotion presents for experiential imagining from the inside.

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[2] See, for example, Collingwood (1946), Currie & Ravenscroft (2002), Heal (1998, 2000), Wollheim (1974, 1984), Harris (2000).

II

Some kinds of psychological state have counterparts in imagination with which they share, more or less, the same character (Budd, 1989, Currie & Ravenscroft 2002). For example, the counterpart of believing is belief-like imagining or supposing, and the counterpart of seeing is visualising or imagining seeing. Some other kinds of state do not have imaginative counterparts. Being drunk is an example. If you try to imagine being drunk, perhaps the best you can do is to imagine *that* you are drunk, and then engage in a kind of pretence in imagination, imagining behaving as if you are drunk.

What are the conceptual and psychological limitations on imaginative counterparts? Psychological limitations may well vary across individuals, as well as varying in ways that depend on the extent to which the will is involved in the imagining; for example, there may be a difference between, on the one hand, carefully trying to deploy one's experiential imagination in planning a complex series of actions, and, on the other hand, letting one's imagination have free rein, as one does when daydreaming. But, for the moment, let me leave to one side psychological limitations and consider limitations of a more conceptual variety, bearing in mind all the time that my concern at this point is with experiential imagining, rather than propositional imagining, and in particular with experiential imagining from the inside.[3] I will first focus on imagining oneself from the inside, and turn later to imagining others in this way.

I cannot experientially imagine from the inside being unconscious any more than I can in real life experience being unconscious. This is a conceptual limitation on experiential imagining and not a psychological one. Equally, it is not possible that the content of what I imagine should include something of which, in the imaginative process, I am not aware; for example, I cannot experientially imagine myself, from the inside, with someone, unperceived by me, creeping up behind me in order to surprise me.

There are other kinds of conceptual limitations that apply to real life psychological states that can equally be read across to their imaginative counterparts. Can I imagine having a false belief? I can of course imagine having a belief that I know, outside the scope what is imagined, to be false. This is just supposing. But, with the knowledge of the belief's falsity within the scope of what I imagine, the answer would seem to be no: I cannot imagine having a belief that I know, as part of what I imagine, to be false. So the conceptual limitation that applies to a real life mental state type, in this case the limitation to belief that was illuminated by Moore's Paradox (Moore, 1942), also applies to the imaginative counterpart of belief. And there are others. Maybe I cannot imagine trying to do what I know to be impossible. Maybe I cannot imagine desiring something that does not strike me in any way to be desirable: if, as Elisabeth Anscombe and others have suggested, in real life I cannot desire a saucer of mud if there is nothing desirable

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about it for me, then the same limitation will apply to imagining desiring a saucer of mud; it is, indeed, an interesting and revealing exercise to try to do so.[4]

To the extent that each of these real life conceptual limitations is disputed or accepted, so the limitations of their imaginative counterparts ought to be disputed or accepted. But let me leave to one side the questions that arise about these particular kinds of states and their imaginative counterparts, interesting as they may be, and turn to what concerns me here — emotion. Does emotion have an imaginative counterpart, and if so, what kinds of conceptual limitations are there on imagining an emotional experience?

III

In a recent book, Greg Currie and Ian Ravenscoft have argued that emotion has no imaginative counterpart, and that, uniquely, imagination is what they call 'transparent' to emotion. This is what they say: 'emotions are peculiar states in that they are, so to speak, their own counterparts. In imagination we do not take on another's belief or desire; we take on a belief-like or a desire-like imagining that corresponds to those beliefs and desires. But when I put myself imaginatively in the position of someone being threatened, it is genuine fear I come to experience, not an imagination-based substitute for fear' (2002, p. 159). In this respect, Currie and Ravenscroft say, this unique transparency of emotion distinguishes it from, for example, pain: if I imagine feeling pain, I do not as a result actually feel pain. They suggest that this capacity, to have real emotions in response to imagined situations, evolved partly because of its role in planning: they say, 'Having a system of emotional responses poised to respond to what I imagine is a capacity we would expect to find in creatures able to choose between alternatives' (2002, p. 197). And, they add, the capacity also plays a role in our ability to predict what others will think, feel and do.

There is a lot I agree with here. I agree that our experiential imaginings can give rise to real emotions. So, for example, if someone imagines house prices falling dramatically, then, if she is a house-owner with a large mortgage, she might come actually to feel fear at what she imagines. Moreover, I welcome the thought that these emotions are not to be dismissed as what Currie used to call quasi-emotions; rather, they are real emotions that are directed towards what is imagined.

What I disagree with is the claim that emotion has no imaginative counterpart. For it seems possible for me, for example, to imagine something threatening, and to imagine feeling afraid of the threatening thing that I imagine, where the imagined fear is part of the *content* of what I imagine, and not a response *to* what I imagine.[5] I agree with Richard Wollheim here. He says the following about sexual arousal, making it clear that he believes that the same remarks apply to the

[4] Anscombe (1958). For discussion, see Velleman (1992) and Blackburn (2002).

[5] See Moran (1994). Currie and Ravenscroft say that the real emotion can 'occur within the scope of an imaginative project' (2002: 96). However, it is a rather misleading way of putting it, for the emotion

emotions: 'I shall use the familiar phenomenon of the erotic daydream… Let us suppose that I centrally imagine myself [that is, that I imagine myself from the inside] engaged in some sexual activity with a strange figure, or a close friend. As I do so, I centrally imagine myself becoming excited over what occurs between us. … And as I centrally imagine myself becoming excited, so I become excited' (Wollheim, 1984, pp. 81–2). So Wollheim holds both that we can have real emotions as a result of what we imagine, and that we can have imagined emotions. If this is right, the imagined emotions, unlike the real ones, will be part of the content of what is imagined.

Why might one reject the possibility that emotions can have imaginative counterparts? After all, the possibility is not obviously open to the kind of conceptual limitations that I was canvassing earlier. One reason might be grounded in a misconception of what a real life emotional experience is, and thus in what its imaginative counterpart might be like.

A real life emotional experience involves perceptions, thoughts and feelings, typically directed towards the object of the emotion. Recognition that one is having an emotional experience is not a necessary part of every such experience. So, if an emotional experience were to have an imaginative counterpart, then we would expect it to involve *imagined* perceptions, thoughts and feelings, typically directed towards the *imagined* object. And this, I suggest, is precisely the correct picture (Goldie, 2000). If you imagine being woken up in the middle of the night by a gang of burglars breaking down your front door with axes, your imagining this — your imagined perceptions, thoughts and feelings with the right emotionally-laden content — just is your imagined fearful experience. Imagining being afraid is not something over and above the imagined fearful experience, as if there were two distinct imaginings: first, imagining a fearful thing; and then secondly, imagining feeling fear. Rather, imagining being afraid just is imagining having a fearful experience, and imagining having a fearful experience just is having imagined perceptions, thoughts and feelings, typically directed towards the imagined object. Currie and Ravenscroft, whilst rightly admitting these kinds of imaginings (2002: 96), wrongly deny that they *are* the imagined emotional experience, and thus wrongly claim that emotion is unique in not having a counterpart in imagination.[6]

There is a further reason for accepting that emotions have imaginative counterparts. In respect of some imaginative projects it is necessary that an imagined emotional experience features in imagined practical reasoning, and thus in imagined action, as it would if I were to ask you to imagine what you would decide to do, and what you would do, if you saw and heard those burglars breaking down your front door. Currie and Ravenscroft rightly emphasise the role of emotional

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— the real fear about falling house prices for example — is not part of the *content* of what is imagined.

[6] It might be asked whether this kind of example generalises to all emotions (thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this). Could I not imagine from the inside having a joyful experience, not by imagining having certain perceptions, thoughts and feelings, but simply by imagining behaving in a joyful way? However, imagining behaving in a joyful way would seem to be the counterpart of pretending to be joyful, rather than the counterpart of being joyful.

response in planning, but surely in such cases the emotion has to be part of the content of what is imagined, logically and temporally prior to the imagined decision and the imagined action, for it to be able to play this role. What they call the 'generated' real life emotion (2002: 96) cannot play this role.

IV

The next question is just how these imagined emotional experiences feature in imagined practical reasoning and imagined action. Here we come back to the conceptual limitations that apply to real life psychological states, and that can be read across to their imaginative counterparts.

Real life emotion shares two features with real life perception. First, real life emotion, like real life perception, represents the world as being a certain way, and can thus be correct or incorrect. Secondly, these states, with representational content, have what John Skorupski calls 'normative impulse'[7]: we typically take the world to be the way the perception or the emotion represents it to be, unless we have reason to think otherwise; in other words, we typically take the states to be correct — we typically trust them.

Thus an untypical case in perception would be where, in the Müller-Lyer illusion, one sees the two the lines as being of different lengths whilst also believing them to be of the same length. And an untypical case in emotion would be the one discussed by David Hume, of the man suspended from a high tower in an iron cage: he is afraid he will fall whilst also believing that he is not in danger.[8] But in the typical real life case, one takes one's emotion to be 'correct': if one feels disgust at a log for example, then one also takes oneself to be correct in ascribing the property of being disgusting to the log, as well as further properties that, in turn, justify the ascription of the property of being disgusting — its being covered in crawling white maggots say (Goldie, 2004a, b).

So the same principles should be able to be read across to imagining an emotional experience, according to which it will be typical in imagination to take one's emotion to be correct: to take it that the world — the imagined world here rather than the real world of course — is the way the imagined emotion represents it to be. For example, it will be a typical case if one imagines feeling disgust towards a log and takes it that this emotion is correct — that the imagined log does have the property of being disgusting. And it will be untypical to imagine having an emotional experience but also at the same time to imagine believing that the imagined emotion is not correct. An example of an untypical case would be someone who knows that she has a disposition to fear spiders, and she imagines herself seeing a spider in the bathroom and feeling afraid of it, and also imagines believing, as part of the content of what she imagines, that there is nothing about the spider to be frightened of — it being a spider of the variety found in Britain. The typical case in imagination should thus be where the imagined

[7] Skorupski (2000, p. 125). Thanks to Sabine Döring here for clearing up a confusion on my part.

[8] Hume (1978, p. 148), and, for discussion, Goldie (2000, pp. 76–7).

emotion has 'normative impulse' in imagined practical reasoning, just as this is the typical case in real life, and the knowledge that the emotion is not correct should be kept out of the picture.

But how can we imagine experiencing an emotion that we know, outside the scope of our imagining, to be incorrect, whilst keeping it as a typical case, with normative impulse, inside the scope of our imagining?

V

Like alcohol or drugs, emotions in real life can distort practical reasoning, but they do so in different ways. For, unlike drink and drugs, emotional experience itself features as reason-giving in practical reasoning. My being drunk does not itself give me a reason to decide to stay at the party longer than I should, whereas my being afraid can give me a reason to run across the car park late at night. In perceiving the man over there to be threatening (he looks like a mugger to me), I take my fear to be correct and to be justified, and so I consider myself to have good reason to run, looking over my shoulder as I go.

Now let us assume that in this real life case I am a timorous sort of person, and that there really is no danger; the man is really quite harmless, and he only seems threatening to me because I am so timorous. My perception is distorted and my epistemic landscape is skewed (Goldie, 2004a). But, this being the typical case, I do not realise that my practical reasoning is being distorted by my fear: from the inside, and at the time, I consider my fear to be correct and to be justified — I consider my reasoning to be good, and I consider my reasons to be good. Of course, I might realise later that it was just silly old nervous me, but at the time it didn't seem like that. My action — my running across the car park whilst looking over my shoulder — was done for reasons, and these reasons seemed to me at the time to be good ones.

Now, let us turn to imagining myself in that situation. Can I imagine myself from the inside, reasoning about what I ought to do in this situation, and then imagine doing what I imagine deciding to do, whilst knowing, outside the scope of what I imagine, that this is not what I ought to do and that I am only reasoning like this because I am a timorous person?

Of course, it would be easy for me to make a prediction of my action here without using my imagination; all I need to know is that I am a timorous person, disposed to do things such as take harmless-looking people in car parks to be muggers. But what concerns me here is whether I can imagine the emotional experience in the right way, from the inside. Can I imagine, in the right way, the distorting power of emotion?

The question is important not only because much recent work is being done in philosophy and psychology on the role of this kind of imagining in prediction and planning. The question also has implications for how we ourselves go about planning what to do in emotional situations. To go back to my example at the beginning of this paper, you have a job interview coming up, and you try to imagine yourself being asked aggressive questions by that man on the interview panel

whom you don't like. Can such an imaginative project result in an accurate prediction of how emotion will distort your reasoning?

There are really two questions here in one. The first question is, roughly, whether in such cases imagination is a good guide to real life without prior comparable experience. And the indications are that it is not.[9] But let me put this first question to one side here, as it is the second that interests me. The second question is whether, with prior comparable experience, I can imagine myself engaged in practical reasoning about what I ought to do, and, because of the distorting power of emotion, deciding to do what I know, outside the scope of what I imagine, to be not what I ought to do. Remember here that imagining from the inside involves more than just imagining acting in a certain way; it also involves imagining deliberating, reasoning, acting for reasons, and so on, and this practical reasoning is normative, about what I ought to do, and not just about what I will do.

I think the answer is yes, as a matter of conceptual possibility, I can do this: I can build the distorting power of the emotion into the imagined reasons that feature in the imagined practical reasoning, so that (as it typically should be) the imagined emotional experience has normative impulse. In other words, what I imagine from the inside is the emotion's power being matched by its authority (thus making the experience typical, unlike the spider example), whilst knowing, outside the scope of the imagining, that the emotion is distorting. There seems to be no conceptual barrier to this kind of imagining.[10]

However, whilst admitting the conceptual possibility of imagining from the inside the distorting power of emotion in a way that preserves the normative impulse of emotional experience, I want now to cast some doubt on the psychological facility with which this can be done, especially as part of a consciously controlled imaginative project, such as when I am using my imagination in order to plan or predict what I, or some other person, will think, feel and do. The point requires some background, and will eventually lead me to a discussion of another

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[9] Consider Stanley Milgram's famous obedience experiments (Milgram, 1974). Participants were asked to be 'teachers' and to inflict punishment, which they thought to be electric shocks, on 'learners' when the learners made a mistake in some simple learning task. Before the experiment, participants were asked to predict what they would do, and what they would expect others to do. Each one said, of himself or herself, that he or she would stop inflicting the shocks very early, and the prediction of what others would do was that less than one in a thousand would choose to go the maximum of 450 volts, and that anyone who did so would be a psychopath. In fact, of the 40 subjects of Milgram's original experiment, 65 per cent of participants went to the maximum, and not one stopped before reaching 300 volts. Presumably a reasonable proportion of those attempting to make a prediction did so by trying to imagine the situation. So imagination seemed to be a bad guide to real life without prior comparable experience. Not all subjects who went to the maximum were emotionally affected; however, Milgram made it clear that many were affected. See my discussion of this in Goldie (2000).

[10] Thanks to Berys Gaut here. The point should be made, however, that knowledge gained from 'prior comparable experience' of how I engage in practical reasoning when under the influence of emotion is, in some sense, theoretical knowledge, and it remains unclear how such knowledge can be incorporated in a project of imagining from the inside. The risk is that it turns into imagining behaving in a certain way—imagining behaving in a way that is consistent with having one's practical reasoning distorted by emotion. (Thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this point.) In any event, whether or not imagining this from inside is conceptually possible, such concerns bring out further the psychological importance of the alternative, of imagining from the outside.

kind of experiential imagining of great psychological importance: imagining from an external perspective.

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VI

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In his seminal work on imagining, Richard Wollheim drew on a distinction which goes back to Aristotle, the distinction between two types of audience: the empathetic audience and the sympathetic audience. Observing the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*, the empathetic audience, as contrasted with the sympathetic audience 'must be that part of the audience which feels what Gloucester feels, not that part which feels for Gloucester' (Wollheim, 1974, p. 66). So the empathetic audience, which observes Gloucester enduring his blinding, feels terror, and the sympathetic audience feels pity.

Now let us move the plot forward, both the plot of *King Lear*, and the plot of this paper. Gloucester is now blind and wants to die, and Edgar is telling him that he is on the edge of the cliffs of Dover, and can with one step forward thereby end his life. But in fact Edgar has merely led Gloucester up to a tiny ledge, and not to the cliffs of Dover. Here we have dramatic irony. To appreciate this dramatic irony, the audience has to be both aware of how things seem for Gloucester, and also to be aware of how things, in fact, are. Merely empathising with Gloucester, merely imagining the scene from Gloucester's perspective, cannot yield up any dramatic irony. This is a conceptual limitation on experiential imagining from the inside.

Appreciation of the two perspectives is at the heart of dramatic irony. This point is brought out by Hume in his discussion of pity. He remarks, '[H]istorians readily observe of any infant prince, who is captive in the hands of his enemies, that he is more worthy of compassion the less sensible he is of his miserable condition. As we ourselves are here acquainted with the wretched situation of the person, it gives us a lively idea and sensation of sorrow, which is the passion that generally attends it; and this idea becomes still more lively, and the sensation more violent by a contrast with that security and indifference which we observe in the person himself. A contrast of any kind never fails to affect the imagination, especially when presented by the subject; and it is on the imagination that pity entirely depends'.[11]

Whilst appreciation of both perspectives is required for appreciation of dramatic irony, consideration of these examples suggests to me that the naturally dominant perspective is external, and thus sympathetic, rather than from the inside, and thus empathetic. This, I think, is because taking up the empathetic stance requires us, so to speak, to unlearn what we know full well — to unlearn, for example, that the infant prince is in big trouble. Of course, in sympathising with him from an external perspective it is necessary for us to appreciate how it is from the little chap's point of view, but our appreciating this does not require us

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[11] Hume (1978, p. 371). When the child feels fear when she listens to the story of Little Red Riding Hood being fooled by the wolf, her perspective is sympathetic not empathetic: she feels fear *for* the little girl in the story.

to take up that perspective in imagination, and certainly not to maintain it; after all, empathy is not the source of all knowledge of what others are thinking and feeling. It may be psychologically possible to oscillate between taking a sympathetic perspective on the infant prince and, on the other hand, imagining from the inside his experiences in his blissful ignorance, but the dramatic irony draws one towards the former kind of perspective.

Now, parallel to the examples of blinded Gloucester and the infant prince, dramatic irony — or perhaps we might call it ironic distance to remove any implication that we are just concerned with drama — is integral to the kind of cases I have been discussing, in which I imagine myself being influenced in my thoughts, feelings and actions by the distorting power of emotion. I know something outside the scope of my imagining that I do not know as part of the content of what I imagine: namely, that the imagined emotion is distorting my reasoning. My suggestion is this: awareness of the dramatic irony from outside the scope of the imagining draws one away from imagining oneself from the inside or what Wollheim calls central imagining, and towards imagining oneself from an external perspective, so that, in effect, your perspective on your imagined self is sympathetic rather than empathetic.

Imagining from an external perspective in this way is imagining from a perspective, but not from the perspective of any person in the imagined scene (Wollheim 1984; Goldie 2000). I can, for example, imagine myself from an external perspective, with, unseen by me, someone creeping up on me from behind in order to surprise me; I thus feature in the imagined scene just as does the person who is creeping up on me.[12] This kind of imagining, seeing oneself as another, is not only naturally suited to experiential imagining where dramatic irony is involved; it is also naturally suited to experiential memory where dramatic irony is involved.[13] Say I was once the victim of an outrageous confidence trick. I now ask myself: how *did* I fail to notice what it was all about; how *could* I have fallen for it? Now let me try to remember it. I think it is no easy feat to remember this experientially from the inside, ignorant of the trickery, although perhaps this is how it might come back to me in my dreams. The tendency, rather, is for me to imagine it from an external perspective, drawing on the dramatic irony, so that the trickery and my gullibility are, as such, part of what I bring to mind. 'You fool!', I say, as I run through the events in my mind. In remembering what happened in this way, my external perspective expresses my evaluative stance towards the events: with this hindsight, I evaluate what was done to me as a con-trick, and I evaluate myself as a gullible fool.

This example brings out a further fact which is implicit in imagining from an external perspective. This kind of imagining allows evaluation to be built into the perspective in a way that imagining from the inside does not. Indeed,

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[12] My concern here is with the variety of imagining oneself from an external perspective that Wollheim (1984) calls acentral imagining, or imagining oneself from the perspective of no person within the imagined scene. There is another variety which involves imagining oneself from the perspective of another person, so that I feature peripherally, to use Wollheim's term. But see also Footnote 16.

[13] This kind of remembering is discussed in Moran (1994). For detailed discussion, see Goldie (2003).

evaluation was implicit in my earlier examples of blinded Gloucester and of the infant prince. Our feelings of pity for those two souls, from our external perspective, were guided and shaped by our thoughts that their suffering was undeserved. We might otherwise have remained indifferent, or even have felt grim satisfaction at their fate.

Let us go back to your using your imagination in planning for the job interview, bearing in mind this discussion of dramatic irony and my suggestion that when we are imagining the distorting power of emotion, in those typical cases where the imagined emotion has normative impulse, imagining from an external perspective is psychologically more natural than imagining from the inside. You know that you ought to control your temper, in spite of the aggressive and unpleasant line of questioning which you anticipate from the panel member. You also know that, when it comes to the moment, your back will go up, and you will find yourself doing just what you know you ought not to do. Accepting, as I have done, that this *could* be imagined from the inside, the dramatic irony naturally draws you towards imagining yourself in the interview from an external perspective — perhaps from a sideways-on perspective, as in the famous picture 'When did you last see your father?'[14] What you can then do is imagine yourself, as part of the content of what you imagine, doing what you know, outside the scope of what you imagine, you ought not to do, and doing it for reasons that you know, outside the scope of what you imagine, not to be good ones. You might then exclaim, 'I can just *see* myself behaving stupidly at the interview when that aggressive swine gets going!', and this exclamation expresses the external perspective, the ironic distance, and an evaluation from the advantage of this ironic distance.

This example, and the example of the remembered con-trick, reveal yet another respect in which imagining myself as another, from an external perspective, is at a psychological advantage over imagining myself from the inside: I can readily build in to the content of what I imagine certain facts about my own personality. For example, I can build in the fact that I am a cantankerous person, who is not disposed to remain calm in the face of the questioning that I might expect at this interview. This kind of fact should not typically feature as part of the content of my imagining from the inside, for it is not typical for awareness of one's personality traits to be part of one's experience; if it were (perhaps in the thought 'I am a cantankerous person'), the imagined case would turn into an untypical one, where I know, as part of what I am imagining, that my reasoning is not as it ought to be.

VII

I want to end by considering the merits of imagining others from an external perspective. So far, most of what I have said has concerned imagining oneself. But I said at the outset that imagining from the inside, under the various titles of simulation, co-cognition, empathy, or putting yourself in the other's shoes, is also

[14] The picture is by William Frederick Yeames. Various images of this picture can be seen on the web.

often appealed to as the paradigmatic way in which we are able to predict what others will think, feel and do.

Special difficulties arise if I am trying to imagine you from the inside if you are not relevantly similar to me. In such cases, I need to build in person-specific background facts about you in order accurately to predict what you will think, feel and do[15]: facts about your character and personality traits, and other person-specific background facts — your age, wealth and upbringing, your background emotional dispositions, your moods and state of health. But, as I have just observed in the first-personal case, these facts are not typically part of the content of your practical reasoning, so when I simulate your practical reasoning, how do I adjust for these facts? How do I make my dispositions like yours? This, I have argued elsewhere, has not such an easy answer as is often supposed (Goldie, 2002). Moreover, if you are substantially different in character from me, your motives, which I use as imagined 'inputs' to my imagined reasoning, will come to seem alien when I try to simulate your thinking, and a kind of imaginative resistance is likely to set it; as Tamar Gendler has put it, I am unwilling (but not unable) to take on a perspective on the world that I do not reflectively endorse (Gendler, 2000).

These difficulties of simulation, or imagining another from the inside, fall away if I imagine the other from an external perspective[16]. First, unlike simulation, the way the imagined events unfold can continuously and consciously depend on, or draw on, person-specific background facts about the other person. Secondly, imaginative resistance is not a problem as I am not required to take on someone else's perspective when I am imagining them from an external perspective; indeed, my external perspective can involve a negative evaluation of the other's personality and motives. Thirdly, I can readily draw on dramatic irony. Just as I can see myself behaving stupidly at that interview, for reasons that seemed to me to be good ones at the time, so I can see the other person doing the same thing for reasons that they thought to be good ones at the time. In both cases, drawing on the dramatic irony, I am experientially imagining the distorting power of emotion, but from an external perspective and not from the inside.[17]

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[15] See Heal (1998, 2000), Nichols & Stich (2003), Morton (2003).

[16] Here I might either imagine the other acentrally or peripherally — for this distinction see Footnote 12.

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