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Abstract	<p>Among the many objects of interest of cultural psychology is imagination. Imagination is a higher function of the mind—that is, it requires the mediation of internalized cultural means. As such, it is both deeply cultural in nature, as well as unique in the way it is experienced by a given person, in a specific time and place. Altogether, it plays a major role in individual and collective change. However, like many other higher functions, it cannot be studied directly: One cannot observe what or how someone is imagining. This is where psychologists have either the choice to give up, or to devise alternative ways to access to imagination. The first part of this chapter defines imagination as sociocultural process. In the second part, it examines the methods that have been used, or could be used, to study imagination, especially the case studies, projective tests, laboratory studies, introspection, autoanalysis, autoethnography, observation, and everyday life enquiry. In the third part, this chapter proposes a synthetic analysis of these techniques, highlighting the specific perspectives they allow for studying imagination. Finally, the chapter suggests that such exploration might offer new keys for the study of higher psychological function, that is, for culture in mind and mind in culture.</p>	
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Chapter 8

Studying Higher Mental Functions: The Example of Imagination

Tania Zittoun

Among the many objects of interest of cultural psychology is imagination. Imagination is a higher function of the mind, it is deeply cultural in nature, unique in the way it is experienced by a given person in a given time and place, and it plays a major role in individual and collective change. However, like many others higher functions, it cannot be studied directly: One cannot observe what or how someone is imagining. This is where psychologists have either the choice to give up, or to devise alternative ways to access to imagination. In this chapter, I have first quickly defined the imagination as sociocultural process. On this basis, I then reviewed some studies allowing studying the phenomenon of imagination. Doing so, I hope to highlight, third, some of the methodological perspectives by which we can document imagination as complex psychological phenomena, and thus enrich theories of human experience.

Imagination as Sociocultural Phenomena

Imagination is the process by which our stream of thought disengages from the here and now of our immediate, or “proximal” experience, in the shared, or “paramount reality” (Zittoun and Gillespie 2015a). Imagination can be triggered by boredom, such as one is daydreaming in the classroom, when facing a rupture in everyday life which calls for new solutions, such as the perspective of a geographical relocation, or by various cultural means, such as watching a movie. Imagination can be described as a “loop” of consciousness that allows exploring distal experiences in which the rules of physical time and of causality do not apply—imagining being on a sunny beach when we are in snowy town, imagining how daily life would be on an island or on Mars, or enjoying traveling back in time to undo past events. Hence, using resources from present and past experiences, such as one’s actual trips, symbolic resources such as magazine and films, as well as diverse cultural and

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30 social representations, now recombined in new fashions, imagination allows us to
31 explore the past, the future, or alternative realities.

32 Thus defined as a loop, imagination groups diverse phenomena often treated
33 distinctly, such as dreaming, daydreaming or mind-wandering, fantasizing,
34 engaging in an aesthetic experience, anticipating, regretting, planning, playing, or
35 experiencing culture (Singer and Singer 2005; Singer 2000, 2014). These phe-
36 nomena can be described as variations of the loop of imagination, which can be
37 depicted in a three-dimensional space. The first dimension represents the time
38 orientation of the imagining (whether it is about personal or collective past, in the
39 present, or about the future—often moving through these); the second dimension
40 designates the generality of the ideas involved (is it about fixing a chair, or about
41 how to make the world a better place); and the third dimension designates the
42 plausibility or implausibility of the imagination, in relation to the social and
43 material rules of the paramount reality (Zittoun and Gillespie 2015a). Of course,
44 imagination can be more or less active, deliberate, or conscious on any of the
45 aspects just described.

46 Finally, the loop of imagination ends when the focus of consciousness is
47 reengaged in the proximal experience. There, imagination has various outcomes,
48 from the simple pleasure of having been disengaged from a given situation
49 (Oppenheim 2012), to the complex emotional experiences that it may provoke; it
50 produces new or alternative representations, which then might pave the way to
51 concrete actions, to personal choices, or to personal or collective creations, from a
52 new dish to a new political regime (Vygotsky 1994). In that sense, because it is a
53 semiotic process, allowed by our experienced of the world, culturally guided and
54 constrained, and for its consequences in ontogenesis, microgenesis, and socio-
55 genesis, imagination is sociocultural in nature (Vygotsky 1994, 1997; Zittoun and
56 Gillespie 2015a). Imagination is indeed a core feed-forward process in human life,
57 in interactions and in the social world (Valsiner 2014a).

58 **Studying Imagination: Observation, Introspection,** 59 **and AutoEthnography**

60 Although many social groups have, over the ages, systematically cultivated the
61 power of mind and imagination, our Occidental history is one of trying to restrain,
62 or at least, concentrate imagination in some domains of social and private life only.
63 Social scientists have, often for good reasons, great mistrust for imagination, which,
64 with passion and fears, can lead to the most dramatic collective movements (Le Bon
65 2013; Moscovici 1976). For the rest, imagination has generally been tolerated in
66 children and artists or in art-related activities, and otherwise, considered as confined
67 to the madman and the deviant. In adult life, it is mainly creativity that has socially
68 acknowledged outcomes, which is the object of attention (Glăveanu et al. 2015).
69 Interestingly, in the past 150 years in psychology, it is often scientists with an



70 interest for the arts—whether painting or literature—who also tried to give a more
71 central place to imagination, from Hermann Rorschach to Sigmund Freud and Lev
72 Vygotsky.

73 Beyond the scarcity of empirical work, the redefinition of imagination proposed
74 above allows to turn to various lines of studies that have examined one or the other
75 of its occurrences: fantasy, daydream, memory, and experiencing or creating arts. In
76 what follows, I identify some of the main methodological strategies that have been
77 chosen to document these phenomena: case studies, the standardized approaches of
78 projective tests and laboratory procedures, introspection in autoanalysis and auto-
79 ethnography, and observation, before turning to more open approaches.

80 *Case Studies*

81 A first range of studies that have documented inner lives and imagination are case
82 studies of people considered as mad or deviant. Pierre Janet's substantial study of a
83 woman suffering from delirium is a paradigmatic case of idiographic science, by
84 which the French psychologist could develop many aspects of his theory of the
85 automatism of mind (Janet 2003, 2005; Zittoun 2008). Freud's case studies of men
86 and women haunted by non-real experiences became classic in the clinical literature
87 and have been widely discussed (Freud 2001c). In such case studies, adults mainly
88 talk in the therapeutic setting or are observed as they act in surprising ways.
89 Similarly, case studies of children have been undertaken; here the emphasis is on
90 talking and the observation of play, seen as a royal road to the unconscious since
91 Melanie Klein and Anna Freud. Inviting children to play, it is their unfolding of
92 imagination that is observed, and acted upon, by therapists. In these lines of studies,
93 Winnicott's transcripts of psychotherapeutic treatment with adults and children
94 (Winnicott 1994, 1996), or Diatkine and Simon's description of the evolution of the
95 cure of a little girl (Diatkine and Simon 2005), give full access to the richness and
96 complication of a person's fantasmatic life, through their plays, fears, anxieties,
97 dreams, daydreams, reveries, transference relations, memories, and hopes. In other
98 words, such case studies reveal the many facets of the work of imagination, and
99 "pathological cases" illuminate more common experiences. Hence, Jerome Singer,
100 a specialist of daydreaming and imagination, similarly based his first studies on
101 psychotherapeutic sessions (Singer 2005, 1976/2014). Here, language and obser-
102 vation are seen as access to the imagination, with arrangements of the setting to
103 facilitate such externalization. In any case, such studies allow both for developing
104 hypothesis on the experiential material used in imagining—memories of emo-
105 tionally loaded event, important relationships, social norms, and discourses—and
106 for developing hypothesis about the processes involved in their development,
107 unfolding, and outcomes.



Projective Tests

Against idiographic science, imagination has also been studied through more systematic, differential, or nomothetic approaches—studies attempting to systematize the collection of data about something per definition highly variable. On the one hand, an often forgotten route to imagination has been open by projective tests. In a surprising 1898 paper, American psychologist George Dearborn wonders how to capture in a systematic way the sorts of imagining in which people engage when they see shapes in the clouds. He thus devises a series of inkblots and invites people to tell what they see. The great diversity of replies is a first disconcerting:

Why one subject should see in a blot a “cabbage head” and the next an “animal with his mouth open,” or why a professor should be reminded by a blot of “half a sweet pea blossom” and his wife of a “snake coiled round a stick,” of course no one can at present pretend to explain. There is a temptation in such cases of association as these to call the results the choice of chance, but this means too little-or too much (Dearborn 1898, p. 190).

Interestingly, Dearborn continues:

it is clear that, as a general principle, the experience, and especially the early experience, of the subject has important influence. For example, study of the records shows that subject H., a purely domestic woman, is reminded most often of domestic objects; while subject O., who is an artist and student of mythology, sees in the blots many picturesque and fanciful things. The difference between the imaginations of the country and city bred is clear (Dearborn 1898, p. 190).

This beginning of this analysis of people’s cultural resources for imagining however is not pursued much. The study of imagination has then followed different routes, whether authors were searching for general principles underlying psychological processes, or individual specificities (Sharp 1899).

On the one hand, projective techniques were further explored toward a differential approach. In France, after a first series of interviews with artists (Passy and Binet 1894), Alfred Binet with Victor Henri proposed a series of completion and projective tests to have access to people’s involuntary and voluntary imagination—people had to continue the beginning of a melody line or a sentence, or to comment on an ink shape—with the goal of developing a differential psychology (Binet and Henri 1895, pp. 443–445). Swiss psychologist Alfred Rorschach developed the inkblot technique further and more systematically, as a technique to evaluate people’s personality (Chabert and Anzieu 2005, p. 15). However, as Rorschach notes, most people who have to comment of the ink shape think that the task is about imagination (Rorschach 1987, p. 3). As a result, authors discussed on whether creative or surprising answers should be read as indications of creativity and vivid imagination, or, departing from the average, as pathology (Rorschach 1987; Schachtel 2013, p. 65). Note that this line of uses of projective test has been pursued in clinical practice, where projective tests are still often as offering an access to children and adults inner lives (Chabert and Anzieu 2005).

On the other hand, in England, Frederic Bartlett, knowing the work reported above, developed an inkblot test where people were asked to describe what they



151 were seeing when shown as series of abstract figures. As Dearborn, Bartlett finds
152 the diversity of answers striking:

153 What to one was a ‘camel’ (blot 2) to another was a ‘tortoise’; to another a ‘dog worrying a
154 table-cloth’; to another ‘two dead ducks and an ostrich’; to another an ‘octopus’; to another
155 ‘a baby in a cot with a doll falling out’; to another a ‘picture of Sohrab and Rostum in a
156 book of Arnold’s poems.’ The uninitiated would hardly suspect that the following are all
157 attempts to describe the same object... (Bartlett 1916, p. 254)

158 In his commentary, Bartlett refers to studies proposing typologies of people
159 according to their answers; yet, as he elegantly formulates, “separation into types,
160 though it is of considerable practical value, solves no theoretical problem” (Bartlett
161 1916, p. 255), What he rather suggests is to engage in a developmental under-
162 standing of how people, through their trajectories of what we could call sociali-
163 zation—experience and learning—come to develop certain experiences and
164 memories which they then use when imagining. This interesting genetic route has to
165 my knowledge not been pursued with such techniques. However, it is true that
166 accessing to imagination through projective test only gives access to the part
167 triggered by the material—whether it is to engage into interpersonal comparison or
168 an understanding of underlying processes.

169 *Dream Laboratory Studies*

170 Also attempting to develop systematic approaches, further from the psychoanalytic
171 tradition and more inspired by the natural sciences, experimental and cognitive
172 psychologists have also been interested in variations of imagination. Research on
173 dreams has defined a methodological paradigm, consisting in having participants
174 sleeping in a laboratory, and being awoken on specific phases of their sleep, a few
175 times a night; they are then interviewed about their dreams following a standard
176 procedure—similar techniques have been defined for adults as well as for children
177 (Foulkes 1999; Hobson 2002; Hobson et al. 2000). Such studies have led to strong
178 opposition on the nature of the material used in dreaming—mundane traces of the
179 previous-day experiences (Hobson 2002), or older memories and experiences,
180 internalized social and cultural norms and discourses (Freud 2001a; Nathan 2011)?
181 Also, they have allowed to make hypothesis on the underlying processes, and their
182 development (Foulkes 1999). Whether these narrated dreams can be considered as
183 the dream itself or, precisely, as narration which transforms the dream experience
184 into a text, is a matter of discussion since Freud (1999).

185 Avoiding this problem, some recent studies directly enquire neurological acti-
186 vation; hence, studies suggest that the patterns of neurological work are very similar
187 in dreaming and in mind-wandering (the label used for designating daydreaming in
188 the current neuroscientific literature) (Fox et al. 2013). Avoiding the risk of natu-
189 ralization of a psychological process, Paul Harris has on the other side worked
190 experimentally to explore some of the properties of imagination in children as they

191 engaged in systematic tasks—yet emphasizing what participates to logical reason-
192 ing, rather than the uniqueness of disengaging from reality (Harris 2000). Here,
193 of course, the material for imaging is of little relevance.

194 *Introspection*

195 On a different, yet complementary route, most researchers have realized, at some
196 point, that self-knowledge might be a key process in understanding other minds. It
197 has led to the whole tradition of introspection, which can be more or less
198 self-directed, or addressed to, or guided by someone else, with all its variations and
199 the debates it raises (Clegg 2013). Introspection is the process by which one
200 examines his or her own thoughts. The history of self-observation methods has been
201 done elsewhere, and here, I have focused on some aspects which are of relevance
202 for imagination in psychology. To be short, Wundt is often considered as one of the
203 authors that has asked his participants to use introspection to respond to his tasks;
204 however, recent historiography shows that he actually trained people to translate
205 simple perceptions (inner-perception) (Brock 2013; Danziger 2001). Introspection
206 was nevertheless also used to give access to more complex states of mind states of
207 mind, for instance in the USA, where William James was calling upon his own
208 experience. If it is true that introspection was put in crises by the criticisms issued
209 from behaviorism, which pursued however different goals (Danziger 1980, p. 255),
210 it remained quite present in France. There, in effect, introspection was supported in
211 psychology through philosophy, as the influence of the phenomenology of Husserl
212 remained very strong (for an overview see Brinkmann 2013). It became notably a
213 source of inspiration to Jean-Paul Sartre's enquiry, including his work on imagi-
214 nation (Sartre 1940, 1989). In more modern versions, phenomenology inspired the
215 development of technique for eliciting the other's introspection, used mainly in the
216 analysis of activity at work ("explicitation" in French) (Vermersch 2009).

217 *Autoanalysis*

218 Beyond classic introspection, two variations are worth mentioning here. First,
219 autoanalysis is one of the specific techniques of access to imagination. The notion
220 of "autoanalysis" stems from psychoanalysis; it designates a modality of observa-
221 tion of one's own psychic life, while admitting its unconscious underpinnings. For
222 that discipline, Freud's autoanalysis at the end of the nineteenth century is con-
223 sidered as foundational. It is through his introspective work, a year-long systematic
224 observation and analysis of his inner life—reactions to others, lapsus, emotional
225 states, and more importantly, dreams—together with his theoretical work and data
226 coming from his patient that Freud elaborated the *Interpretation of dreams* (Freud
227 2001b) and all his theoretical work to come. Some commentators have noted that

228 this autoanalysis was not the product of a lonely, magically inspired mind; rather, it
 229 was also addressed to a friend, through a long correspondence with Wilhelm Fliess
 230 (Bonnet 2010; Roudinesco and Plon 2011, pp. 117–121). According to Bonnet,
 231 autoanalysis, which demands an attention to one’s inner life, fantasies, daydreams,
 232 emotional reactions to people and situations, and dreams, can be done alone. It can
 233 be practiced while walking or gardening, even though it is ideally done while
 234 writing, and with the distant supervision of someone else (Bonnet 2010). For some
 235 other authors, autoanalysis can be properly conducted only when someone had
 236 experience of a psychoanalytical treatment beforehand. In any case, its main out-
 237 comes are it invites to recognize the plurivocity of the mind, the many contradictory
 238 motives which can inhabit a person, and the plurality or lives coexisting in her body
 239 and mind. Interestingly, Sartre himself seems to have used the occasion of writing
 240 on Freud’s autoanalysis to have stimulated his own introspective work, which
 241 would, a few later, bring him to his own autobiographical writing (Pontalis 1984).
 242 In his own writing, clinical psychologist Jerome Singer reports his introspective
 243 analysis—quite close to autoanalysis—to propose developmental hypothesis on
 244 imagination (Singer and Singer 1992). The few instances of autoanalytical work
 245 hence suggest the importance of such approach for the study of the development,
 246 the resources, and the outcomes of imagination.

247 *Autoethnography*

248 Second, in social sciences, the notion of “autoethnography” was developed to
 249 account for the experience of the researchers in the construction of social facts and
 250 observations, a century after Freud, in the 80s of the 20’s century. If autoanalysis is
 251 based on the hypothesis of a researcher’s unconscious or inner life, autoethnog-
 252 raphy is based on the fact that the researcher participates to the construction of the
 253 social reality in which he or she is engaged, and that this situation also constitutes
 254 personal experiences which are worth examining. Ellis thus writes that autoeth-
 255 nography combines autobiography and ethnography:

256 When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about
 257 epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by
 258 possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences,
 259 autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze
 260 these experiences. (Ellis et al. 2010, paragr. 8).

261 Its aim is, through appropriate and skillful use of the written form, to bring the
 262 reader to experience the quality of the situation or event they want to transmit, while
 263 also engaging with existing theories and observations in the social sciences, (Ellis
 264 et al. 2010; Wall 2006). Because of its openness to diverse aspects of social,
 265 cultural, or institutional settings and the researcher’s experiences in it, whatever his
 266 or her gender, belonging or body-ability, such method can give access to a wide

267 range of experiences. In fact, it seems that autoethnography has mainly examined
268 the researcher's experience in work situation, migration, wars, social injustice,
269 health issues—but not the actual experience of imagining.

270 *Observation*

271 A last methodological route is that of observation, which has also long being used
272 to study fantasy and imagination: observation of children's play in therapeutic
273 setting in the laboratory or in daily situation; observation of early interaction in
274 everyday and laboratory situation; observation of people's reactions to images and
275 films, again in different situations (Blumer and Hauser 1933; Hedegaard and Fleer
276 2013; Miller et al. 1993; Nelson 2006; Singer and Singer 1992, 2005; Taylor 1999;
277 Trevarthen 2012a, b). However, because imagination is often considered as
278 something internal in adults, it has less been addressed through such means. Adults
279 are mostly asked to verbalize their experience, in natural or more research situa-
280 tions. Adults have been trained into quasi-experimental tasks in daily life, or to
281 report on their daily experiences about daydreaming (Pereira and Diriwächter
282 2008); authors and artists have been interviewed about their imagination
283 (Oppenheim 2012; Passy and Binet 1894); and adults have been interviewed on the
284 basis of their filmed activity of painting, music playing, or martial art practice (Diep
285 2011; Gfeller 2015), using a technique inspired by “clinic of activity” (Clot and
286 Kostulski 2011). These studies have allowed identifying many variations of
287 imagination in play, imaginary companions, and daydreaming; they allow both not
288 only to identify types and differences (e.g., in ages, gender), but also to give access
289 to processes. The last series of studies mentioned—combining observations and
290 different techniques of guided introspection—gave access to new and overlooked
291 aspects of imagination, such as its embodied nature or its outcomes. We will come
292 back to these approaches combining perspectives below.

293 *Everyday Life Enquiry*

294 Data do not need to be always strictly designed or created; often, it can simply be
295 found where it stands. Coming back to more anthropological approaches, or simply,
296 to the fact that the source of our theoretical amazement is in the world that surround
297 us (Brinkmann 2012, 2014a; Cohen and Taylor 1992), imagination can also be
298 studied in everyday life. In effect, our theoretical work has allowed us to redefine
299 imagination as the process of uncoupling from the here and now experience, to
300 engage in a distal sphere of experience, with the use of diverse resources; as looping
301 away, imagination always comes back to the ongoing situation, the imagining
302 person's experience having temporarily been enriched. On this basis, instances of
303 imagination become visible in many daily situations. We thus have documented



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304 people making decisions in their daily lives, children playing, or solving tasks at
305 school, adults in prison, adultery couples; as data, we have used documentary film,
306 self-writings (diaries, letters); instances documented through clinic of activity as
307 well as diverse research interviews; and secondary analysis (Gillespie 2010;
308 Gillespie et al. 2008; Gillespie and Zittoun 2010a; Zittoun et al. 2012; Zittoun and
309 de Saint-Laurent 2015; Zittoun and Gillespie 2012, 2015a). We have also con-
310 sidered drawings, paintings, musical pieces, poems, sculpture and films, media
311 documents, both as triggers of imagination or as outcomes of other people’s
312 imagining (Gillespie and Zittoun, in press; Zittoun and Gillespie 2014, 2015a).
313 Finally, we relied on our own experience, as former children, adults, parents,
314 researchers, art spectators, and so on, which we analyzed reflectively, in an
315 approach inspired by the two traditions of introspection described above.

316 Doing so, we did more than simply pile up evidence; our methodological ecumenism
317 has an epistemological grounding. We follow thus as a pragmatist tradition
318 initiated in early psychology and sociology (Freud 1963, 2001b, 2004; James 1890;
319 Schuetz 1944, 1945), interestingly pursued by other researchers interested in our
320 capacity to “escape” from the present (Cohen and Taylor 1976/1992), and recently
321 re-theorized (Brinkmann 2012, 2014a, b; Brinkmann and Tanggaard 2010;
322 Jacobsen et al. 2014; Zittoun et al. 2013, Chap. 12).

323 *What Now?*

324 These main methodological routes are not the only ones that can be devised for the
325 study of imagination. They reflect theories or implicit assumptions about the nature
326 of the phenomena pertaining to imagination—whether it is an expression of an
327 internal disposition, caused by various factors, or whether it is a social and cultural
328 phenomenon; whether it is a rough, primitive, and anecdotic process meant to lead
329 to rationality, or whether it has a value on its own; and whether it is the expressions
330 of predefined given, or whether it is a dynamic developing through the life course,
331 with the rest of the psychological life. They have contributed to the understanding
332 of imagination, at times keeping close to the researcher’s ideas, sometimes open to
333 the surprise of other people’s experience. But how can we move through this
334 diversity and reflect on methods beyond the case of imagination?

335 **Perspectives in Methodology**

336 Studies in imagination are grounded in different theoretical and epistemological
337 traditions. This, as a consequence, brings them to privilege often one perspective
338 only on the phenomenon at hand. Adopting a more analytical stance will allow for a
339 more complex view of imagination through the combination of various perspectives
340 (Flick 1992; Gillespie and Cornish 2014; Zittoun and Gillespie 2015b). If

341 imagination is always a very personal and a private phenomenon, it can be docu-
 342 mented from different perspectives. Classically, it can be documented from the
 343 person's perspective, or from the observer's perspective; yet each of these per-
 344 spectives can be more or less reflexive (Brinkmann 2013; Gillespie and Zittoun
 345 2010b). In addition, the clinical tradition has taught us that the observer is mostly
 346 affected by the participant's experience and invites us to consider such intersub-
 347 jective experiences (Abbey and Zittoun 2010). Finally, theoretical elaboration
 348 demands the examination of these different levels of experiences in light of con-
 349 ceptual work (Valsiner 2014b, c; Valsiner et al. 2009). It is these different per-
 350 spectives that I will now examine in turn, trying to highlight how these contribute to
 351 the understanding of imagination as a higher psychological function. These dif-
 352 ferent perspectives and their relation are summarized in Table 8.1.

353 The first line focuses on the *first person perspective*, which is that of the
 354 researcher, or in some cases, that of a person, engaged in her experience as it goes.

Table 8.1 Perspectives in the study of imagination

Perspective Reflexivity	Direct	Reflexive	Deliberate
First person	I am engrossed in an imaginary experience (possibly externalizing) <i>Daydreaming, imagining, doing arts, etc.</i>	I reflect on my experience and on how it affects or affected me. <i>Autoanalysis, introspection, autoethnography, diary writing, etc.</i>	I look for triggers or resources that can create such imaginary experiences <i>Using resources</i>
Third person	I observe S having an imaginary experience <i>Observation, interviews</i>	I observe S reflecting about his/her experience and how he/she was affected by it <i>Diary analysis, interviews, experimentation</i>	I invite S to reflect about his/her experiences <i>Techniques of elicitation, work clinic, forms of guided introspection, didactic situations</i>
Intersubjective	I interact with S <i>Interaction, collaboration, observation, interviews</i>	I reflect on how interacting with S affects S (transfer) I reflect on how interacting with S affects me (countertransfer) <i>Autoanalysis, introspection, autoethnography, etc.</i>	I reflect on how these mutual interactions construct the interaction (Abbey and Zittoun 2010) <i>Specific attention to the relational modality</i>
Analytical: abduction			I look for what is common in these various experiences, and how this corresponds or not to theoretical constructs



355 Explicitly or not, experience is an important starting point in psychological and
356 social science: it is from our experience of everyday life that we have intuitions,
357 questions, and gaps that we wish to pursue as researchers. Hence, imagination is
358 present in experiences of dreaming, decision making, regretting, or daydreaming.
359 Moving from experiencing imagination to a more reflexive stance demands a
360 phenomenological movement (Brinkmann 2013), which can be done with the use
361 more or less theoretical tools. This understanding of imagination can bring the
362 person/researcher to deliberately provoke further experiences of imagination. In that
363 sense, the first line of the table can be seen as potentially cyclical, where more
364 reflexivity brings to more deliberate and conscious occurrences of imagining.
365 Hence, the person can deliberately manipulate triggers for imagination, use
366 resources, and orient the directions it takes, its outcomes, and their realization.
367 Authors such as Freud (who experienced dreaming, cocaine and hypnosis), Sartre,
368 Singer, and certain ethnographers and sociologists importantly relied on this type of
369 experiences to develop their understanding of imagination.

370 Research starting with an attempt by the researcher to directly access to a *third*
371 *person's perspective*, as in the second line, is the most common in psychology
372 research. Observing people interacting in laboratory situations or in daily life,
373 observing responses in a PET scan, seeing how people react to various stimuli (to
374 words, cards, etc. as in cases of projective test), examining how people are
375 engrossed in TV watching, painting, music playing or as they watch an art piece are
376 such approaches. One can question where lies imagination, and on which basis it is
377 inferred. Here, authors mostly rely on language—observing people talk is often
378 seen as good-enough access to their imagination. But if we admit that imagination
379 is, as any psychological experience, based on the internalization and new synthesis
380 made out of internalized material; that it is affected by the conditions in which it
381 occurs, where for instance an ongoing activity feeds-back in imagination (as in
382 diary writing, or dancing), then we also have to acknowledge that imagination is
383 displayed, or given off, by diverse forms of externalization. The TV viewer
384 engrossed in a film or hiding his head in a pillow (Lembo 2000), the painter moving
385 back a few steps (Glăveanu 2011), the aikidoka slowing down his or practice
386 (Gfeller 2015), physically externalize some aspects of their process of imagining.
387 Such variations have been widely described and analyzed in early infant and triadic
388 interactions (Stern 1998; Trevarthen 2012c); however, we have much less a
389 vocabulary for describing gestures, body postures, and nonverbal forms of externalization in adults. Multimodal studies have engaged in the description of these semiotic forms, but often without questioning the intention to communicate lying in there (Jewitt 2014; Kress 2009). Methodologically, much has to be developed on that line, also, experience shows that it would to gain to be combined with other perspectives.

395 A second common variation of that perspective is these in which the research
396 more actively solicits the work of imagination of the participant. Asking people to
397 realize a boring task and tell what comes to mind, or to report about episodes of
398 mind-wandering (Pereira and Diriwächter 2008), waking up people and ask them to
399 report on dreams (Foulkes 1999; Hobson 2002) are such examples. Here, the data

are generally the discourse of the person who is self-writing or thinking aloud. Here, it might be important to differentiate between the sincerity of an expression and the analytical accuracy of an interpretation (Brinkmann 2013). Imagination is an embodied, multimodal, often inconsistent experience; the very act of turning it into a narrative form flattens it out and submits it to the temporal and logical demands of communicable language. Too often, the researchers consider these reports as good-enough versions of the process of imagination itself, not questioning these process of transformation. Although some verbal expressions are sincere, they are not strictly reflecting—or not transparently translating—psychological process, many of which are not verbal and not fully conscious.

One possible way to overcome this difficulty is combining perspectives. In effect, admitting that imagination is often not conscious or deliberate for a person, yet that it can be visible to a theoretically informed observer that a person is imagining, the combination of inner and outer perspectives may allow to construct or to identify the process of imagination that does, or that did take place. The techniques using commented filmed activities, as in the “work clinic”, or techniques of elicitation, are techniques by which the researcher guides the introspection of the research participant. In terms of data, it allows the research to combine his or her observation—for instance, or a moment of hesitation in painting when the artists seem to explore possible ways to continue (Bertinotti 2014)—with what the person actually can verbalize. The observations themselves can become secondary stimulus to trigger the reflexion of the participant (Clot and Kostulski 2011). Altogether, the process searched can be constructed by triangulation of these diverse perspectives and semiotic modalities (Flick 1992).

The third line in the table designates a phenomena often overlooked in research, *intersubjectivity*, as imagination is often considered as private. However, interacting with others is one of the elements both triggering and feeding in imagination. When we interact with others, we of course intentionally verify that they understand us and we try to understand them; but also, we nourish questions about who they are, we think about who they remind us of, we feel toward them, and we read into their nonverbal language (body posture, silences, eye gaze, smell, etc.). This has been addressed differently in various domains in psychology (Grossen 2010; Rommetveit 1985) and has been very called countertransference by the psychoanalytical tradition. Transference is the process by which a patient reactivates memories of parents, friends, real and imaged figures, and projects them on the psychoanalyst. Countertransference is the emotional reactions the analyst has to the patient, what he or she does represents to him or her, how this patient reactivates in him emotional reactions, how she reacts to the projections put unto him or her. Transference and countertransference can thus be seen as the loops of imagination triggered by the relation itself; it is about the dialogicality activated by the intersubjective situation (Grossen 2010; Grossen et al. 2014). As a consequence, researchers who would observe their own imagination activated by interactions could usefully complement studies in which they ask someone else to recall instances of imagining. A closer analysis of how such inner gaze can be combined with the unfolding interactions demands a more microgenetic analysis (Abbey and

445 Zittoun 2010). Hence, Emily Abbey and I proposed to identify three semiotic
446 streams within interactions: first, the “meaning stream,” where each participant tries
447 to understand what the other is talking about, respond, etc.; second, the
448 “sense-feeling stream” where “each person is engaged in sense making, which is
449 directly following the participants’ changing emotional experiences, constantly
450 triggered by the presence and the discourse of the other, or any atmospheric reason”
451 (Abbey and Zittoun 2010, p. 7); and third, the “reflexive stream,” where “each
452 participant can also draw on various other signs to synchronically reflect on the
453 ongoing evolving situation” (Abbey and Zittoun 2010, p. 7). On this basis, the
454 proposition is to focus on moments of breach or rupture, when the reflexive streams
455 identify that these “sense-feeling” does not correspond to what is meant, or that the
456 meaning is unclear, or that there is any other change in the intersubjective dynamic.
457 The methodological proposition was then, rather to “let go,” to precisely focus on
458 such ruptures; for it is in moment of breach of meaning that imagination may unfold
459 (Zittoun and Gillespie 2015a).

460 Finally, the fourth and last line of the table designates the effort of putting any
461 empirical evidence of the kinds seen so far, and others, in dialog with theorization
462—that is, abduction. To understand imagination, theoretical imagination is required,
463 as it is about some phenomena which cannot be seen; and in such darkness, our
464 only light are theoretical tools; yet whatever they illuminate, can transform them in
465 turn (Peirce 1878; Valsiner 2014b, c; Valsiner et al. 2009).

466 From Imagination to Higher Psychological Functions

467 This chapter explored some ways through which imagination has been and can be
468 studied. These ways are diverse and reflect many epistemological and methodo-
469 logical traditions within psychology. This exploration showed some ways through
470 which we can further the study of imagination, but mainly, it is an occasion to
471 reflect on the study of higher mental functions.

472 *Studying Imagination*

473 This rapid overview allows underlining two main aspects for progressing in the
474 study of imagination. Both are based on a theoretical reasoning: on the one hand,
475 imagination is a process, which is nourished by semiotic resources and leads to
476 certain outcomes; and on the other hand, it is multimodal. Imagination can only be
477 inferred on the basis of traces of externalization, and these are multimodal as well.
478 As consequence, imagination can be experienced by a researcher, or observed in
479 others, or as self and other interact. Imagination is best observed when different
480 perspectives are brought together—self and other, inner and outer, first and third, or
481 different semiotic modalities (gesture and language, for instance). More specifically,



482 our small enquiry invites, first, not to limit any enquire to verbal language; second,
483 it privileges a theoretically justified methodological ecumenism; third, it suggests to
484 counterbalance the simplicity of observation or discourse analysis with reflexivity,
485 and more generally, with triangulation of perspectives. But why is that? This is
486 where we have to come back to the more general question of studying higher
487 psychological functions.

488 *Studying Higher Mental Functions*

489 Imagination is here just one case of a complex phenomenon to be studied by
490 cultural psychology seen as general psychology (Valsiner 2014a). Psychology can
491 in effect choose to focus on very specific and local thinking processes, reactions,
492 physiological processes related to human activity; or it can more ambitiously aim at
493 understanding the more complex conduct in which people engage, as they are
494 located in a complex world of culture, in which they find a unique expression—
495 which is the goal of cultural psychology on the twenty-first century.

496 Higher psychological functions designate these human conducts which are only
497 possible as people have internalized the complex semiotic organization of the social
498 and cultural environment and are thus socially situated and culturally mediated.
499 They demand the mastery of a semiotic system to be able to act in, and upon the
500 world, often, through further cultural mediation (e.g., Vygotsky 1994, 2004; THIS
501 VOLUME). Reflex, direct apperception, after-colors effect, rote remembering are
502 not higher functions. Daydreaming about a better life, reading a novel, solving a
503 mathematical operation, remembering a movie, acting in the name of a deity all
504 depend on such higher psychological functions. Although the term has a normative
505 connotation—something is higher than something else—here I use it with care,
506 simply to designate the mediated, distanced nature of the processes involved.

507 Historically, since the origins of psychology as a science, there has been a divide
508 between approaches considering, on the one side, that it is wiser to start to study
509 simple operations and activities in human, and that complex conduct could then be
510 understood through the sum or the recombination of its parts, and approach which,
511 on the other side, considered that it was certainly more accurate to start addressing
512 complex phenomena for their own sake, as these were probably more as the sum of
513 their parts. This divide is also deeply connected with the question, clearly appearing
514 in this chapter, of whether one should first identify phenomena that allow inter-
515 personal comparison, or the understanding of the complex conduct of a single
516 person, as an access to more complex laws (e.g., Sharp 1899). These questions are
517 well-known, but how deeply they have constructed methodologies and hold epis-
518 temologies captive is sometimes forgotten.

519 In this chapter, I have recalled that the same question addressed through different
520 techniques brings about different data—which is redundant—and that these tech-
521 niques reflect assumptions about the nature of the phenomena at hand. Typically, a
522 method that respects the temporality of a phenomenon reflects assumptions on their

developmental nature (Gillespie and Zittoun 2010a). In addition, I wish to underlie the deeper underling epistemological positioning of research implied in different methodologies. Higher psychological phenomena are actually theoretical constructs; people do things, remember, laugh, buy milk or imagine their holidays; psychologists make hypothesis about cultural guidance, structures of recognition, or uses of resources. This is why, epistemologically, the question of how to capture higher psychological phenomena necessarily demands the careful combination of perspectives. Elsewhere, we have shown that understanding how someone experiences the war demands also a careful documentation of how the war occurred around the person even if she could not see it—only elements connected to the paramount reality and its sociogenesis give shape to the ontogenetic conduct (Gillespie and Zittoun 2015a, b). Here, I have suggested that understanding of imagination, as sociocultural process, might require combining four perspectives: that of the one who experiences, that of the one who observes, that of the one who experiences the observation, and that of theories which only gives us the necessary support to hold these together, beyond the obvious.

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Author Query Form

Book ID : **328515_1_En**
 Chapter No.: **8**



Please ensure you fill out your response to the queries raised below and return this form along with your corrections

Dear Author

During the process of typesetting your chapter, the following queries have arisen. Please check your typeset proof carefully against the queries listed below and mark the necessary changes either directly on the proof/online grid or in the ‘Author’s response’ area provided below

Query Refs.	Details Required	Author’s Response
AQ1	Please confirm if the section headings identified are correct.	
AQ2	Please check the clarity of the sentence ‘Hence, Jerome Singer... sessions’.	
AQ3	References Freud (1999), Rommetveit (1985), Singer (1976/2014), Cohen and Taylor (1976) are cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please provide the respective references in the list or delete these citations.	
AQ4	Reference Roudinesco and Plon (2006) has been changed to Roudinesco and Plon (2011), so that this matches the citation. Please check and amend if necessary.	
AQ5	Please check the phrase ‘80s of the 20’s century’ in the sentence ‘Second, in...century’.	

MARKED PROOF

Please correct and return this set

Please use the proof correction marks shown below for all alterations and corrections. If you wish to return your proof by fax you should ensure that all amendments are written clearly in dark ink and are made well within the page margins.

<i>Instruction to printer</i>	<i>Textual mark</i>	<i>Marginal mark</i>
Leave unchanged	... under matter to remain	Ⓟ
Insert in text the matter indicated in the margin	∧	New matter followed by ∧ or ∧ [Ⓢ]
Delete	/ through single character, rule or underline or ┌───┐ through all characters to be deleted	Ⓞ or Ⓞ [Ⓢ]
Substitute character or substitute part of one or more word(s)	/ through letter or ┌───┐ through characters	new character / or new characters /
Change to italics	— under matter to be changed	↵
Change to capitals	≡ under matter to be changed	≡
Change to small capitals	≡ under matter to be changed	≡
Change to bold type	~ under matter to be changed	~
Change to bold italic	≈ under matter to be changed	≈
Change to lower case	Encircle matter to be changed	≡
Change italic to upright type	(As above)	⊕
Change bold to non-bold type	(As above)	⊖
Insert 'superior' character	/ through character or ∧ where required	Υ or Υ under character e.g. Υ or Υ
Insert 'inferior' character	(As above)	∧ over character e.g. ∧
Insert full stop	(As above)	⊙
Insert comma	(As above)	,
Insert single quotation marks	(As above)	Ƴ or ƴ and/or Ƶ or ƶ
Insert double quotation marks	(As above)	ƴ or ƶ and/or Ƶ or Ʒ
Insert hyphen	(As above)	⊥
Start new paragraph	┌	┌
No new paragraph	┐	┐
Transpose	└┐	└┐
Close up	linking ○ characters	Ⓞ
Insert or substitute space between characters or words	/ through character or ∧ where required	Υ
Reduce space between characters or words		↑