

## *Research Proposal*

### *Analytical Phenomenology: Experience, Imagination and Normativity*

#### **§1. Summary**

The present research project concentrates on three classical themes from the phenomenological tradition: experience, imagination and normativity. It addresses the chosen topics in a systematic rather than purely historical way. In doing so it contemplates results obtained both within recent analytical philosophy and phenomenology.

The project is conceived as a point of departure for further projects in the same line. It is intended to serve as a basis for the establishment of a research group in collaboration with other swiss as well as european universities.

By establishing a research group in analytical phenomenology one wishes to answer to the growing need of a philosophical inquiry responsive both, to the descriptive richness of traditional phenomenology and to the argumentative standards of analytical philosophy.

At the centre of the present research project is the notion of experience. This notion is not studied in general. Rather, two precise aspects of certain experiences are studied: first, the question as to what role imagination plays in relation to aesthetic experience and second, the question as to what gives to some of our experiences, mainly judgements, a normative character.

Each aspect needs to be looked at in its own right. One needs to start by describing and classifying different types of imagination, by clarifying the content of those experiences and by specifying the role they play in relation to some other experiences, such as the interpretation of symbols or the perception of artworks and music as expressive of emotions. The main attention will be focussed on imaginative ways in which we experience objects aesthetically.

Aesthetic experience is generally considered as involving the sensitivity to a specific kind of value. But what exactly does it mean for an experience to be responsive to values or norms? The second part of the project deals at the outset with the general question of the content of normative judgements and of the metaphysical status of values in general. It will turn out that central to the metaphysics of norms is the notion of strong reason. In order for it to play a role in our experience of the world, reasons ought to be psychologically poised for behavior and epistemologically suited to serve as a justification for the claim of rationality on the side of the subject accepting them.

Now, is there any specific set of reasons with respect to aesthetic value and how do experiential imaginings contribute to it? The core thesis to be scrutinized is that enhancing one's view(s) of the world is served particularly well by the kinds of imaginative experiences involved in aesthetic responses.

#### **§2. Research Plan**

##### **§2.1. State of Research**

###### **§2.1.1. Aesthetic Imagination**

*Aesthetic experiences.* The philosophical investigation of the nature of aesthetic value and aesthetic experience has witnessed something of a revival in recent years with the publication of several important and influential studies (e.g., Budd [1995]; Goldman [1995]; Levinson [1992a] and [1992b]; Walton [1993]). One long-standing but still commonly accepted idea is that aesthetic responses involve two specific elements. The first is constituted by the actual experience of or engagement with the object in question; while the second consists in an emotional response which accompanies, or is based on, the experience or engagement and manifests the evaluation of the object. The evaluative element of

aesthetic experience is clearly non-imaginative, since it amounts to nothing but an emotional reaction which is - like any other kind of emotional feeling - triggered by a suitable representation of an object. Hence, the following presentation will focus entirely on the first element of aesthetic experience.

*Kinds of content.* One very important part of our engagement with art is concerned with the recognition of the content of artworks. There are three senses in which such works can be representational, or at least 'present' us with something external to them. First, they can possess representationality in that they have a linguistic or symbolic meaning, which needs to be understood or interpreted by us. Second, artworks can represent in a sensory manner, that is, in a manner which is inseparably linked to one of our senses and the properties that it detects. And third, there is the expressiveness of artworks which is very similar to representationality in that it also involves the 'portrayal' of something external to the art, namely an emotion. Indeed, some of the accounts of expressiveness seem to imply that expression is just a special form of representation (cf. Budd [1995]: p. 132). It is important to note that most artworks combine two or three of the different ways of 'presenting' something, as examples of pictures and poems illustrate.

*Depiction.* The debate about how artworks or similar objects can represent something in a sensory manner concentrates almost exclusively on the pictorial representation of two-dimensional objects. Hence, only theories of depiction will be presented in this section. A theory of depiction is generally expected to answer the question (among others) of how pictorial representation differs from other forms of representation, in particular linguistic ones (Soldati 1996). The different accounts that have been put forward are often divided into two groups, depending on whether they do, or do not, maintain that the answer to the question has to be stated in terms of the experiences by means of which we typically recognize something as a depiction. According to *non-experiential accounts*, the status of an object as a picture is solely due to the fact that it stands in a certain, mind-independent relation to what it depicts. Following this proposal, whether something is a picture does not depend on us and our experiences. The two classical non-experiential accounts make reference to the relations of resemblance and convention, respectively. While the first states that something is a depiction just in case it visually resembles what it depicts, the second claims that pictures are linked to their objects in virtue of conventions similar to those that govern the use of words (Gombrich [1960]; Goodman [1976]). In contrast, *experiential theories* claim that something counts as a picture because we normally experience it as one. The property of being a picture is thus conceived of as mind-dependent. It is common to identify three main variants of the experiential approach (Hopkins [1998]). According to the first, we undergo an illusion of really seeing the person or scenery portrayed while looking at a picture (Gombrich [1960]). The second account characterises the pictorial experience as the recognition of a visual resemblance between the picture and what it depicts (Budd [1993]; Hopkins [1998]; Hyman [2000]). The third account is based on the idea that, since pictorial experience involves the visual awareness of something 'absent' (i.e., what is depicted), it has to involve some form of visual imagining which is usually described as "imagining seeing" the depicted entities. (Budd [1992]; Hopkins [1998]).

*Interpretation.* Artworks represent not only in a sensory manner, but may also have linguistic or symbolic content. Some are even purely linguistic representations, such as most pieces of literature. There is a specific discussion in recent aesthetics which concerns the actual grasp of the particular linguistic or symbolic meaning of an artwork and which suggests a particular way in which imagining may be involved. One major feature of representational artworks is that they often are elliptical, or involve representational parts that are ambiguous in meaning. But it is widely accepted that reference to the artistic context of the work at the time of its creation, or reference to some theoretical frameworks and insights, often cannot fully complement the ellipses or resolve the ambiguities (# ref.). Hence, it has been claimed that taking into account what the artist or an 'implied' or 'hypothetical' artist (Iseminger [1992; 1996]; Levinson [1992c]) intended the work to mean helps to remove the elliptic or ambiguous character of the work. And these intentions are usually characterized as those that - on the basis of the

nature of the work, the artistic context and, if appropriate, evidence about the actual artist's intentions - make most sense of the artwork, or offer the richest and most rewarding aesthetic experience of it.

*Expression.* We often experience artworks as expressive of emotions (and perhaps other, comparable 'inner states', such as moods or qualities of character). However, since we obviously do not take the respective aesthetic objects to have minds, and also normally ascribe emotions and their expressions only to animate beings, the question arises why we make an exception in the case of works of music and the like. The recent debate focuses on experiential accounts. There are mainly three ways in which the experience of musical expressivity has been conceived of. First, the arousal and the projection theories claim that the expressiveness of artworks is simply due to the fact that they arouse the respective emotions in their audiences (Matravers [1991]; Ridley [1995]; Wollheim [1980]). Second, resemblance theories maintain that the sounds of the music are experienced either as resembling the expressive bodily behaviour of human beings (Davies [1980] and [1994]; Kivy [1989]), or as resembling the way how it typically feels like to experience the expressed emotion (Budd [1995]). Third, many theories of musical expressiveness have, as a consequence, instead focussed on imaginative experiences of music. Their common key idea is that our recognition of musical expressiveness involves imagining the experience of feeling the expressed emotion (Budd [1995]; Levinson [1996]; Trivedi [2001]; Walton [1988]). The debate about imaginative ways of recognising musical expressiveness is still very much developing. However, one major insight which seems to become clearer and clearer is that pieces of music can be experienced as expressive of emotions in many different ways (Budd [1995]; Levinson [1996]; Trivedi [2001]).

*Personal involvement.* But imagining plays a role not only in understanding what artworks represent or express; we also engage with them in a more personal and involving way (and the more subjective engagement is typically not easily separable from the more objective understanding). Many of these forms of engagement appear to involve some kind of imagining. Contemporary discussions about empathy or identification with a person seem to agree that it is a matter, in one way or another, of imagining oneself to be in the position of that person - even more so when that person is only fictional (Goldie [2002]; Soldati [2002]; Bodrozic [1999; 2003]). Recent discussions in aesthetics, however, have mainly concentrated on another - and seemingly paradoxical - way in which we relate to artworks: namely, by having emotions. The paradox of fictional emotions arises because, on the one hand, having an emotion seems to presuppose (at least in most cases) having a belief in the *existence* of its respective object; while, on the other hand, we seem to feel emotions towards fictional people or events, of which we believe that they do *not* exist (Bodrozic [2003]). One option is to postulate some kind of irrationality on the part of the people who experience emotions towards fictional characters or events (Radford [1975]; Carroll [1990]; Lamarque [1981]; Neill [1993]; Yanal [1994]). The main - and currently orthodox - alternative is to develop an account in terms of imagining. The core idea of this theory is that the representations which trigger, or are part of, our emotional responses towards fictional characters and events are imaginings, and not beliefs. (Walton [1990; 1997]; Currie [1990; 1997]).

*Walton's theory.* Walton's accounts of depiction, musical expressiveness and personal involvement are particularly important, not only because his work (especially Walton (1990)) in aesthetics has almost singlehandedly revived the interest in the relationship between aesthetic experience and imagining, but also because he attempts to provide a theory that unifies the different ways in which we engage with - primarily representational - art in terms of imagining. Walton distinguishes as well between the experience of the content of an artwork and the more personal involvement with it and what it represents. His treatment of the issues presented above shows that, for him, the experience of the content consists of four elements: (i) experiencing the properties of the works by means of which it represents or expresses something; (ii) imagining the content; (iii) imagining experiencing, or having certain epistemic access to, the content; and (iv) imagining that one's non-imaginative experience (i) is

one's imaginative form of access (iii). Personal involvement, on the other hand, happens for Walton on the basis of this complex experience. Depending on the kind of involvement, it consists of emotional feeling triggered by the experience of the content of the work, or of further imaginings that relate the appreciating subject to the artwork or its content. The last two aspects (iii) and (iv) of the experience of the content of artworks, as well as the nature of the personal involvement with them, manifest one key idea of Walton's theory, namely that we imagine something about ourselves - as well as about the characters and events portrayed - when we experience works aesthetically. This approach has the advantage that it gives a good explanation of why aesthetic appreciation is not so much a matter of passive and impersonal contemplation, but of active and personal participation. But it also allows Walton to formulate his envisaged comprehensive theory. For what unifies the different forms of engaging with art is, first, that they involve the same kinds of imaginative experience and, second, that our imaginative participation should in each case be determined in the same manner - namely by the nature of the work, as experienced in (i), and the respective conventions that govern the creation and the appreciation of a work of that kind (e.g., a depiction, or a drama). However, it has been criticized that Walton does not further elucidate the nature of the imaginative experiences (iii) and (iv), and neither the nature of the required artistic conventions - which becomes especially problematic with regard to his accounts of depiction and musical expressivity (Budd [1992]; Levinson [1996a] and [1996b]).

### **§2.1.2.**                    *Normativity and Normative Judgements*

The topic of *normativity* and *normative judgements* marks an interface of many different research areas. "Oughts" and values are of concern not just to aesthetics, (meta-)ethics and disciplines dealing with practical deliberation in general; "oughts" and values are also to be encountered in subjects that belong to what might be called "theoretical reasoning" such as logic, epistemology or scientific methodology. Since in the present case there isn't anything like a uniform research field, the presentation of the state of research will proceed by focusing on four systematic questions to which answers in the different disciplines have been provided. The four questions that have received most attention are the following: a) Semantic question: What content or meaning do normative judgements such as "X is valuable" or "X ought to be done" have and can such judgements be true or false? b) Metaphysical question: Are there any facts which normative judgements are about, and if so, what constitutes these facts? c) Practical/Psychological question: How can the special motivational force that normative judgements have with respect to reasoning and action be explained? d) Epistemological question: How can normative judgements be justified and how is it that we have access to and come by knowledge of normative contents? Any of these questions has received various answers, and the answers come in different versions under different labels, depending on the perspective of the discipline which they have been provided from. The main positions taken with respect to a question in one discipline, though, will have recognisable counterparts in the other disciplines, provided the question has been addressed there.

*Semantic.* There are basically three positions that can be found in the literature with respect to the semantic question. Defenders of the cognitivist or descriptivist view claim that normative judgements are truth-apt because they are representational devices that are used to describe or convey information about the world. They will be true or false according to whether they inform or misinform us about the world (e.g. Smith [1994; 2000]; Jackson [1997; 2000]; Railton [1986; 1998]; Brink [1989]; Korsgaard [1996]; Nagel [1986; 1997]; Mackie [1977]; McDowell [1985]; Wiggins [1993]). Defenders of the noncognitivist or expressivist view, on the other hand, deny that normative judgements are truth-apt because they think that such judgements aren't used to represent aspects of the world but rather to express attitudes of appreciation and disapproval, like desire and aversion (Hare [1952; 1989]; Gibbard [1990]; Blackburn [1984; 1994]). Finally, the deflationist view claims that normative judgements are truth-apt, but not because of their representational character. According to the deflationist, normative

judgements are true in virtue of their logical or syntactical form and the way we use them in certain inferences. The deflationist position about normative judgements is tied to a deflationist view of meanings, or of facts, or both (Horwich [1992; 1998]; Field [2001]; Wright [1992]; Skorupski [2000; 2002]).

*Metaphysics.* The metaphysical question concerns the nature of normative facts or properties (Husserl [1993]). The answer to the metaphysical question is independent of the answer one has given to the semantic question. So it is compatible with being a descriptivist with regard to normative judgements either to hold that there are no normative facts and properties—in that case all normative judgements will be false (Mackie [1977])—or else to hold that normative facts and properties exist—so at least some of the normative judgements will turn out to be true (Smith [1994]). And it is compatible with being an expressivist with regard to normative judgements either to hold that there are normative facts (Gibbard [2002]) or that there aren't any such facts (Gibbard [1990]). But typically, someone with expressivist or deflationist inclinations as regards normative judgements will have an antirealist attitude towards normative facts and properties (Hare [1952; 1989]; Blackburn [1984; 1994]; Horwich [1992; 1998]; Field [2001]; Skorupski [2000; 2002]). Conversely, if one is a descriptivist about normative judgements, one will typically embrace a realist attitude towards normative facts and properties. Such a realism about normative facts and properties appears in two different forms. Naturalist realists hold that there are normative properties but that they are really something else, i.e. that they can be reduced to natural properties which we need anyway to account for the physical phenomena in the world (Smith [1994; 2000]; Lewis [2000]; Railton [1986; 1998]; Brink [1989]). This is in sharp contrast to how nonnaturalist realists conceive of normative facts and properties. For nonnaturalist realists take normative properties to be *sui generis* properties that resist any reduction to more basic natural or scientific facts (Nagel [1997]; Darwall [1986]; McDowell [1985]; Wiggins [1993]).

*Psychological.* It seems to be a psychological fact that someone who is convinced that doing X is right, e.g., also feels compelled to do X (given he is also in a position to do it and absent weakness of will or depression or some other such explanation). At least it would be very irritating if he claimed utter indifference to actually doing X after announcing his conviction—that would reveal him as a liar. This internal connection between normative judgements and motivations poses a practical/psychological constraint on any proper account of normative judgement. There have been two strategies to deal with this constraint. Those who accept it try to offer a plausible psychological account of normative judgements according to which these judgements have a strong motivational force. Expressivists have the advantage here that they already regard such judgements as expressing motivational attitudes as desire and aversion, and so their account automatically fits the psychological constraint (Hare [1952; 1989]; Gibbard [1990; 2002]; Hawthorne [2002]; Blackburn [1994]). For descriptivists who accept the psychological constraint, however, it will be more difficult to meet the constraint. If our ordinary intentional explanations of actions in terms of beliefs and desires are true no truth-apt state can motivate an action on its own. So either the descriptivist has to explain what is so special about normative judgements such that they automatically trigger a corresponding motivational state and thereby determine the relevant action (Smith [1994; 2000]). Or the descriptivist rejects the standard belief-desire explanations and offers a new account of truth-apt states that can motivate actions on their own (McDowell [1985]; Wiggins [1993]). Another strategy for the descriptivist to deal with the psychological constraint is simply to reject it. But then he will somehow have to explain away the appearance of its plausibility (Railton [1986; 1998; 2000]; Sturgeon [1985]; Brink [1989]).

*Epistemological.* The epistemological question concerns the connection between normativity and reason. If X ought to be done, believed, or felt then this implies that there is a strong reason to do, believe, or feel X. The explanation of our access to normative contents will therefore come down to an account of our access to reasons. For an expressivist about normative judgements e.g., these reasons are

provided by our attitudes of approval and disapproval, and so explaining our access to reasons will amount to explaining how we come to have these attitudes and what our capacity to perceive and to conform to them consists in (Gibbard [1990]). In general, the explanation of our capacity to perceive and to conform to reasons will vary depending on which position one has chosen with respect to the semantic and the metaphysical question (Gibbard [1990]; Raz [2000]; Hookway [2000]; Railton [2000]; Korsgaard [1996]; Burge [1996]; Skorupski [2000; 2002]). As regards the part of the epistemological question that concerns the justification of normative contents three answers have been advanced. It has been claimed that the reasons normative contents provide us with need no further justification; after all, reasons are there—and as rational beings we are just responsive to them—what more of a justification could be required (Nagel [1986]; Railton [1986]; Brink [1989])? In opposition to this it has been held that the justification of such reasons lies in the fact that we need them to guide our action and theoretical deliberation (Korsgaard [1996]). But more recently even a stronger reply has been defended than the first one: It has been argued that such reasons not just need not be justified but that simply cannot be further justified (Nagel [1997]; Raz [2000]; Wright [2001]).

## **§2.2.** *Own Research*

Soldati has done research in different areas of analytic phenomenology (e.g. Soldati [1994]; [1996a]; [1999]; [2000a]). More specifically, he has dealt with the status of norms in relation to the debate about psychologism in Soldati [1994]. He has dealt with justification in relation to desires and emotions in Soldati [2000c]. He has discussed issues related to personal involvement, empathy and simulation in Soldati [2002a] and [forthcoming/a]. He has discussed problems related to pictorial and non pictorial representation in Soldati [1996] and has analysed the experiential content of understanding linguistic symbols in Soldati [forthcoming]. Finally, he has worked at length on the import of subjective mental states in the setting of epistemic projects bound by rationality and logical normativity (Soldati [1998a/unpublished]).

Bodrozic's Master's thesis is an inquiry into the nature of belief and belief content. There he attempted to vindicate our practice of explaining action and behaviour in terms of beliefs and desires by defending a representational account of belief content.

In his PhD Thesis on Fictional Discourse and Belief Attribution he tries to supplement the account given in his Master's thesis by a theory of belief attribution. The underlying assumption is that the semantics of belief attributions has to be given in terms of mechanisms of make-believe. To argue for this assumption he first sets out to defend a version of the pretence account of fictional discourse presented in Walton [1990]. He argues that this account best explains how we use to talk about fiction. After that he attempts to show that the very same pragmatic and semantic mechanisms involved in fictional discourse are also involved in our everyday practice of attributing beliefs to each other. A further psychological claim that is defended in the Thesis is that our practice of attributing beliefs to each other presupposes a capacity to simulate the cognitive states of each other. This capacity allows us to imagine how the world presents itself from the perspective of someone else.

Beside his research on the attribution of beliefs to each other, Bodrozic has also shown interest in the semantics and epistemology of first person thoughts and self-attributions of beliefs. From the perspective defended in his PhD Thesis such thoughts and attributions form a special class of attitudes since obviously their employment doesn't require any simulational capacity or mechanisms of pretense. In Bodrozic [forthcoming] he explores one important feature by which these thoughts and attributions have been characterised (Soldati [1998]). This feature, the immunity to reference through misidentification, marks the special epistemological relation that we have to ourselves and to the contents of our thoughts.

After finishing his MA studies at the University of Tübingen, Dorsch went to University College London to work with Prof. Malcolm Budd on a MPhil dissertation about the nature of aesthetic experience (which he completed successfully in 2000) and since then with Prof. Michael Martin on his

PhD thesis about the nature of imagining (which he will finish by the end of 2003). Dorsch's recent research has concentrated on experience, aesthetic experience and imagining.

According to Dorsch (2000) experiences can be understood as mental episodes (e.g., judgements, perceptions, imaginings, feelings or sensations) which can be kept in the current "span of attention" by having been transformed into a full-blown, occurrent memory, or by being subject to a more short-term form of retention (Husserl (1996)). One important consequence of the restrictions on our ability to keep things within the scope of attention and memory is that our experiences of objects are usually limited and fragmentary as well. In case of aesthetic experience it is crucial to provide a satisfactory theory of this special kind of response on the basis of a theory of aesthetic value. Dorsch's research in this field has focussed on the theories of Hume (1993) and Kant (1993b), as well as on their contemporary legacy in analytic philosophy. The analysis of aesthetic value revealed the following three important features. First, the aesthetic merit of objects is response-dependent. Second, aesthetic merit is nevertheless intersubjective in so far it is not determined solely by the aesthetic response of a single subject (Budd (1999); Dorsch (2000)). And third, the aesthetic value of an object depends, more precisely, primarily on the intrinsic value of the experience that it offers (Budd 1995); Levinson (1996c)). In the last two and a half years, Dorsch's main research interest has been to find out how our imagination works and what relevance it has for our lives and, in particular, for our engagement with art. Accordingly, the principle issue with which Dorsch is currently dealing in his work about imagination is whether it is possible to provide a unified theory of imagining (Dorsch [2002b]).

### **§2.3.**      *Research Plan*

#### **§2.3.1.**              *Aesthetic experiences*

The main aim of this part of the research project is to investigate the various roles that imagining plays in aesthetic experience, as well as the extent to which it may be possible to identify common elements among them. The project is not concerned with the role of imagination in aesthetics in general and therefore leaves aside issues such as the metaphysics of imaginary or fictional entities, or the importance of imagining for creativity. Instead, it concentrates on imaginative ways in which we *experience* objects aesthetically. And as such, it constitutes a continuation of previous research into the more general nature of both aesthetic experience and imagining (cf. section 2.2.). The project is divided into three parts. The first concerns the characterisation of two specific kinds of imaginative experiences, namely seeing an aspect and experiential imagining. The second part uses the results of the first in order to illuminate the different ways in which we imaginatively experience artworks. And the third and last part deals with the issue of whether there is some unity to be found in the various forms of imaginative engagement with art.

1. The first part will consist in the investigation of two different kinds of imaginative experience, namely *seeing an aspect* and *experiential imagining*. One aim of this first part will be to show that the kind of experience, which is often described as "seeing an aspect", is partly imaginative. Paradigm examples of aspect perception are recognising a line-drawing as a depiction of a cube, or seeing either a duck or a rabbit in the drawing made famous by Wittgenstein. The task here will be two-fold. The idea is, first, to argue that seeing an aspect involves mental activity and, second, to show that this mental activity determines some aspect of the content of the experience in question and is hence indeed a form of imagining. To achieve this double aim, it will be necessary to get a better grasp of the nature of the experience of seeing an aspect, in particular in the light of relevant research (Budd [1989]; Scruton [1974]). Another aim of this first part is to investigate which different forms experiential imagining (i.e., imagining what it is like to undergo a certain experience) can take, and how each of them relates to more basic kinds of imagining, such as visualising and supposing. Instances of experiential imagining - such as imagining riding a horse, or imagining Napoleon's first encounter with the Great Pyramids - can differ

both in which experience is imagined, and in what (if anything) is imagined about the bearer of that experience. What is of interest here is primarily the scope and nature of the latter possibility of variation, with respect to which a whole set of questions has to be addressed: (i) what is the difference (if any) between imagining oneself in the position of another person, empathizing with her (i.e., imagining being in her position and having her personal point of view, feelings and thoughts), and imaginatively identifying oneself with her; (ii) whether all cases of experiential imagining involve imagining something about oneself (Walton (1990); Velleman (1996)); (iii) how - and to which extent - it is possible to imagine the seeming impossibility of being identical with someone else (Wollheim (1984)); Velleman (1996)); (iv) whether it makes a difference whether the person one imagines is real or fictional; (v) whether we can imaginatively identify with other things than human beings; (vi) and what the theories of simulation, as they have recently been developed in the philosophy of mind, can contribute to the discussion (Currie (2002); Davies (1995)). Answers to these questions will then hopefully shed light on the relationships in which experiential imagining stands to both sensory and intellectual imagining (Hopkins (1995)).

2. The second part of the research project aims at clarifying the nature of the different ways in which we imaginatively engage with objects in aesthetic contexts.

2.1. **Depiction.** The goal of this section is to show that the two most promising theories of depiction - which are formulated in terms of experienced resemblance and imagining, respectively - can, when combined in a single account, elucidate the nature of pictorial experience, even though they fail to do so on their own. As already mentioned above, each of the two theories faces two main challenges. The idea that pictures look like what they depict seems to reach its limits when applied to schematic, distorted, exaggerated or multi-perspectival depictions, and can also not explain how we experience pictorial depth; while the idea that pictorial experience involves imagining seeing the depicted entities remains at best unilluminating and at worst mysterious, since the nature of the imaginative experience has been so far not further elucidated, and it is unclear how it is determined that a given picture represents a certain object, and not another. But, as it will be argued, the four problems may be solved when the two theories are united. The key move will be to demonstrate that the recognition of pictorial depth is in fact an instance of seeing an aspect (tackling the second problem in the list above). This will then - in the light of the results of the analysis of aspect perception - allow the identification of the experience of seeing pictorial depth as the imaginative aspect of pictorial experience (the third problem). Furthermore, the idea will be put forward that the experienced visual resemblance determines which objects are depicted by a given picture (fourth problem). And it will be suggested that the problems stemming from the lack of a high degree of outline resemblance may be solved by substituting this kind of resemblance with a kind of perceivable structural similarity. In the end, it will also be interesting to see whether the theory developed in this section can be applied to other kinds of sensory representation, such as sculptural or musical ones.

2.2. **Interpretation.** This section aims at elucidating the ways in which imagining is involved in the interpretative understanding of the meaning of artworks and their parts. The inquiry into the nature of interpretation will thereby focus on the role of imagining in the two last of the three steps described above. For the first step - the initial experience of the symbols (not yet recognised as symbols) - is either pictorial in nature and hence has already been discussed, or consists simply in the normal, non-imaginative perception of the material qualities of objects (e.g., the marks on a page of a book). With respect to the recognition of symbols as meaningful (the second step), the main question will be whether it involves (again) a special kind of aspect perception. A positive answer seems to be plausible in particular in the case of linguistic symbols, since experiencing letters as making up words appears to be an example of experiencing objects as grouped together in a certain way. Grasping the particular meaning of symbols (the third step), on the other hand, might be explained in terms of experiential

imagining. The chief issue to be addressed here is whether the construction of 'hypothetical' intentions can be analysed as intellectually or experientially imagining something about an 'implied' artist - and if so, what the exact nature of that imaginative experience is like.

**2.3. Expression.** The main task in this section will be to apply the insights from the analysis of experiential imagining to the multiplicity of imaginative experiences that have been proposed as elucidations of how we experience music as expressive of emotions. The following four questions will be thereby of particular interest: (i) whether there are really experiences of the kinds described; if so, (ii), whether they should indeed be understood as experiences of musical expressiveness; (iii) whether they - as sometimes suggested (Budd (1995); Trivedi (2001)) - presuppose an experience of resemblance between the sound of the music, on the one hand, and human expressive behaviour or the feeling of the respective emotion, on the other; and (iv) whether there is some relation of dependence between the abstractness of music and its capacity to express emotions. The resulting account of the various ways in which music can be said to be expressive might then furthermore be applied to other expressive artforms.

**2.4. Personal involvement.** The discussion of the ways in which we personally engage with artworks will deal with many smaller and mostly unrelated issues. One is whether the emotional responses that we experience towards fictional characters and events constitute full-blown emotions, or only 'quasi-emotions'; another whether their postulation really solves the puzzle of fictional emotions. It will likewise be discussed - on the basis of both the section on imagining having experiences and the debate about fictional emotions - to which extent the notion of experiential imagining can explain our talk of 'entering' the fictional worlds of artworks, or of 'empathizing' and 'identifying' with characters in such worlds, given that they do not exist. And finally, it will be important to clarify whether imaginatively supplementing the fictional worlds portrayed by artworks could ever count as an appropriate response to them.

3. The third part of the research project finally addresses the question of whether there is a common element or structure to the various roles, that imagining plays in aesthetic experience and which have been discussed in the previous part.

**3.1. Walton's theory.** *The first section assesses Walton's general theory of the appreciation of artworks* by falling back on the results of the preceding discussions. One aim is to show that, while his conception of imaginative personal involvement is (more or less) successful, his accounts of both depiction and musical expressivity capture only part of the truth and have to be complemented by additional theories. More important, however, will be the argument for the conclusion that Walton fails to provide a unifying account of our rich engagement with art. For his view about the special imaginative experiences involved in aesthetic responses seems unsatisfactory in its characterisation of these experiences, because it implausibly maintains that imagining something about oneself is the basic form of engagement and does not really further illuminate the relevant kinds of imagining. And in addition, his view seems too ambitious in its claim that the imaginative experiences he has in mind are ubiquitous in aesthetic experience.

**3.2. Imagining and aesthetic value.** The last section will put forward an alternative perspective on what the different roles of imagining in aesthetic experience may have in common. It seems that one of art's most important functions is to open up new perspectives on reality and to provide us with new possibilities for thought and action. One particular source of aesthetic merit of this sort consists in the fact that artworks can communicate complex experiences and insights in such a specifically effective way, that we tend to treat them as unique in the sense that we do not think that a potential replacement could offer us a comparable experience (Budd (1995); Levinson (1992a)). For instance, our experiences of tragedies allow us to gain insight into important aspects of the human condition, which

are otherwise not easily accessible to us, or which we would prefer to avoid in real life (Schier (1986)). Now, the research project will conclude with the investigation of the way in which both the experiences of seeing an aspect and, in particular, the experiential imaginings can contribute to this kind of aesthetic value. The core thesis to be scrutinized is that enhancing one's view(s) of the world by grasping the significance and character of an experience, which one does not really undergo oneself, is served particularly well by the kinds of imaginativ experiences involved in aesthetic responses.

### **§2.3.2.** *Normativity and Normative Judgements*

The main aim of this part of the project is to offer a unifying account of normativity and normative judgements that provides plausible answers to the semantic, metaphysical, epistemological and psychological question. The account to be proposed is descriptivist in perspective. It tries to explore with which metaphysical, psychological and epistemological commitments this descriptivist perspective is most plausibly combined with.

1. The first part of the project focuses on the division between normative and non-normative judgements. The aim is to show that much less judgements are normative in nature than is usually supposed (Dorsch [2000]). It is commonly assumed that certain aesthetic judgements like "This sculpture is malformed" or semantic judgements like "'+' means PLUS" or medical judgements like "She is sick" are normative. That is because such judgements indicate that something is taken to be as it is supposed to be or not to be. The reason why these judgements are capable to do this is usually traced back to the fact that they contain the evaluative or normative notions "malformed", "means" and "sick" (Kripke [1982]; Peacocke [1992]; Millikan [1984; 1993]; Davidson [1984]; Boghossian [1989]; Brandom [1994]). But it is not clear at all wherein the normativity, the prescriptive character of these notions lies. That an expression means what it does just seems to be a matter of how it is used or to what it corresponds, that someone is sick just seems to have to do with its physical constitution, and similarly with the sculpture's malformation. These all are purely factual matters (Dretske [2000]; Horwich [1998]; Papineau [1999]). That we ought to mean PLUS by '+' has nothing to do with the notion's meaning what it does but with our purpose in using it with that meaning to successfully communicate with others. The hope is that the normativity of all such judgements containing purportedly normative notions can be systematically derived from a small range of basic values and the prescriptions associated with them. Thereby the range of explananda which have to be dealt with in the remaining parts of the project is supposed to be reduced.

2. The second part is devoted to the semantic question. There is one especially compelling line of reasoning which favours a descriptivist answer to this question besides the fact that in everyday discourse we take normative judgements to be true or false. The argument is that it is hard to make sense of our discourse about what we ought to do if we don't take our normative judgements to be truth-apt. What could be the point of trying to convince each other in cases of disagreement, and how else could we explain the impression of fallibility and the feeling of uncertainty, if there is nothing to be wrong about? Expressivists have difficulties to explain this fact whereas on a descriptivist account this is what one would expect (Dorsch [2000]). Another task of this part beside providing an argument for descriptivism is to offer an account of the truth conditions of normative judgements. Roughly, a judgement of the form "X ought to be done" is true if there is a strong reason to do X. Of course now it has to be said what a strong reason is supposed to be. To say what constitutes a strong reason will be essential to answering the metaphysical question. Before answering this question though, one task that remains to be done in this second part of the project is to defend the descriptivist position against objections, most notably Moore's Open Question Argument.

3. The third part of the project deals with the metaphysical question, more specifically, with explaining what strong reasons are. The basic idea is that a strong reason is provided by what one would desire under cognitively favourable conditions. This idea can be specified and interpreted in different ways (e.g. Smith [1994; 2000]; Railton [1986; 1998]), each interpretation having different consequences with regard to the epistemological and the psychological issues. The main task of this third part will be to compare the different interpretations and to determine on independent grounds which one is the most acceptable. If possible, the account should respect various constraints, among them that reasons have to be of explanatory relevance (Harman [1977]), that they must not be "queer" properties or facts (Mackie [1977]), and that they must somehow supervene on natural facts. Central to the emerging account will be the notion of receptivity. Receptivity is a cognitive capacity which is sensitive to the deficits an individual suffers in a given situation and which determines the desires of the individual relative to the detected deficits. Since in a cognitively favourable situation the range of deficits will be rather diminished there will only be a limited number of corresponding desires that can be triggered. This account seems perfectly compatible with a naturalist view of the world so far. Whether it really is compatible will evolve in connection with the epistemological question. But before the epistemological question can be dealt with the psychological issue will have to be addressed first.

4. In the fourth part an answer to the psychological question is attempted. The main problem with a descriptivist account of normative judgements derives from Hume's observation that a belief cannot determine an action on its own, but that it has to be supported by a desire which is completely distinct from the belief. This observation may be generalised to all descriptive and volitional attitudes. From Hume's generalised observation, together with the common sense assumption that normative judgements have an immediate motivational force it could be concluded, as the expressivist does, that normative judgements aren't descriptive attitudes. Assuming this argument to be sound, the descriptivist has to make a decision: either he has to reject the Humean theory of motivation or he has to give up the assumption that there is an immediate internal connection between normative judgements and motivation for action. Which alternative has to be chosen will depend on one's theory of belief and desire or descriptive and motivational attitudes in general. The main task of this fourth part is to explore alternative belief theories on the one hand and desire theories on the other. If one chooses to give up Hume's standard theory of motivation (Nagel [1970]; McDowell [1981]; Platts [1981]; Smith [1994]), one will have to say how descriptive attitudes can determine volitional attitudes and thereby motivational states after all. The difficulty is to explain how and why a belief about what one has a strong reason to do can determine a corresponding desire that is completely distinct from the belief. If on the other hand one chooses to give up the internal link between normative judgements and motivational force (Railton [1986]; Brink [1989]), one will have to give an account of the relation between such beliefs and motivational states that explains why the link seems *prima facie* so compelling. This strategy will focus on the psychological mechanisms and our capacity of reasonable choice in cases where "oughts" are clearly resistible. It is suggested that the notion of receptivity developed in the third part can play an illuminating role in both accounts seeking the first or the second strategy.

5. The fifth and final part addresses the epistemological question. Here the first task is to give an account of the epistemic responsiveness of rational beings to reason. Rational beings have a capacity to perceive reasons and to conform to them. It will have to be determined whether the capacity to perceive reasons is active and spontaneous, say, or rather passive and reactive (Dorsch [2003]). A major issue in this discussion will also be whether the model of perception is adequate for capturing our relation to strong reasons. For with perception, even under normal conditions brute error is possible whereas our relation to strong reasons doesn't seem to admit of such brute errors. It seems that with strong reasons the questions of means, control and error that bother us in perceptual cases simply don't arise—our relation to strong reasons is much more immediate (Burge [1996]). *Prima facie* this seems to be in conflict with the observation that in many cases the coercive power of reasons is more limited than it is supposed to

be, even absent phenomena like weakness of will (Railton [1998; 2000]). Sometimes we resist our reasons because there are other reasons pulling in a different direction, as it is the case when we find ourselves caught in a dilemma. How one reacts to these observations may be decisive as regards the question whether the proposed account of normativity and normative judgements is compatible with naturalism. For naturalism doesn't seem to admit of such immediate, brute-error immune relations (Burge [1996]; Peacocke [1996]). Another task of this fifth part will be to explore whether we can further justify strong reasons or we are just left with having to confide in them. If we really have immediate, brute-error immune access to reasons it might be surprising to ask for their further justification (Nagel [1986]), since in that case it just seems enough that we are aware of their presence. But even if we don't have this kind of access to a strong reason it could be argued that we are still entitled to them because any further attempt to justify or to refute them would itself have to refer to a strong reason (Nagel [1997]; Wright [2001]).

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#### §2.4. Timetable

Dorsch and Bodrozic will be employed on a 50% basis on the present project. Given the width of project it appears necessary to plan the research over a period of three years. The first two years would be dedicated mainly to the elaboration of the two main aspects of the project, namely aesthetic imagination and normativity. The third year should then exclusively be dedicated to the study of the relationship between the two previous aspects.

<i>months</i>	<i>aesthetic imagination</i>	<i>normativity</i>
1-6	• A e s t h e t i c experiences	• The range of normative judgement
6-12	• Applications Part I: depiction & interpretation	• Semantics of normative judgements
12-18	• Applications Part II: e x p r e s s i o n & personal involvement	• The psychology of normative judgements
18-24	• The Unity of aesthetic imagination	• The epistemology of normative judgement

24-36

How imaginative aesthetic experience determines our sensitivity to values