



**HAL**  
open science

# Pictorial Experience, Imagining from the Inside, and Imaginative Penetration

Fabian Dorsch

► **To cite this version:**

Fabian Dorsch. Pictorial Experience, Imagining from the Inside, and Imaginative Penetration . Analysis. Claves de Pensamiento Contemporáneo, 2016, 19 (8), pp.1 - 34. 10.5281/zenodo.1295676 . hal-01820592

**HAL Id: hal-01820592**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01820592v1>**

Submitted on 21 Jun 2018

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# Pictorial Experience, Imagining from the Inside, and Imaginative Penetration

FABIAN DORSCH

**RESUMEN:** In pictorial experience, we are normally aware of the visible features of two distinct sets of objects: the depicting surface and the depicted entities. Imagination-based accounts of pictorial experience maintain that our awareness of the depicted (e.g., of a landscape or a man) is essentially imaginative. My main aim in this paper is to provide a specific objection to imagination-based accounts. More specifically, I argue that they are unable to account for the fact that the kind of awareness, which is exemplified by our awareness of the depicted scene involved in our non-illusionistic pictorial experience of a two-dimensional picture, could not be instantiated without the simultaneous perceptual awareness of some marked surface.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Non-illusionistic Awareness; Simultaneous Awareness, Two-dimensional Pictures; Kendall Walton; Roger Scruton

**HISTORIAL DEL ARTÍCULO:** Recibido: 26-septiembre-2016 | Aceptado: 12-diciembre-2016

## INTRODUCTION

In pictorial experience, we are normally aware of the visible features of two distinct sets of objects: the depicting surface and the depicted entities. For instance, we are both aware of the painted marks which Leonardo left on the canvas of his *Last Supper*, and of the position and posture of the thirteen men seated around the table. Similarly, when we are looking at Vermeer's *View of Delft*, we are normally aware of the colours, sizes and shapes not only of certain patches of paint, but also of certain buildings in the city of Delft of around 1661. In each case, our awareness of the material picture is clearly perceptual: we have to look at the canvas and see the marks on it in order to



Fabian Dorsch (✉)  
Universität Freiburg, Suiza  
fabian.dorsch@unifr.ch

ANALYSIS | Vol. 19, Nº 8 (2016), pp. 1-34

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1295676

ARTICULO

have any pictorial experience at all (Hopkins 1998, p. 17; Wollheim 2003, p. 131). What is controversial, however, is how we are aware of what is depicted.

*Imagination-based accounts* of pictorial experience have in common that they maintain that this awareness of the depicted (e.g., of the thirteen men at the table, or of the fact that one of them has dark hair) is essentially imaginative.<sup>1</sup> The various accounts may differ in how they conceive of the kind of imagining involved and its relationship to the perceptual awareness of the depicting surface.<sup>2</sup> But they agree on the basic tenet that pictorial experience is a matter of perception as well as imagination. My main aim in this paper is to object to imagination-based accounts by arguing that they are unable to account for the —still to be specified— dependence of our awareness of the depicted scene on our awareness of the depicting surface.<sup>3</sup>

The sustainability of imagination-based accounts is relevant not only for the on-going debate on the nature of pictorial experience, but also for the

<sup>1</sup> When I speak of «being aware of the depicted, or of what is depicted», I do not mean to refer to an awareness which presents the respective entities as depicted, but rather to an awareness of some entities and their features, which just happen to be depicted by the picture in question. Accordingly, the conceptualization of this kind of awareness in thought need —and should— not involve the use of concepts referring to the relation of depiction. This is compatible with the fact that the resulting thoughts may have to involve some operator qualifying the kind of commitment involved (e.g., «fictionally» or «in the picture/the depicted situation»; Scruton 1974, p. 118). I say a bit more about the nature of this commitment further below (see, e.g., n. 11).

<sup>2</sup> Among the proponents of an imagination-based account are Scruton (1974) Walton (1990, p. 293ff.; 2002), O'Shaughnessy (2000, p. 364ff.) and, plausibly, Stock (2008). Note that taking pictorial experience to be merely necessarily caused by or associated with imagining, rather than being constituted by it, does not amount to endorsing an imagination-based account of imagining in the sense defined here.

<sup>3</sup> Particular imagination-based accounts have been criticized for other reasons which I do not intend to rehearse here again (Budd 1992; Hopkins 1998, ch. 1; Wollheim 1998, 2003; Stock 2008; Dorsch 2012). Additionally, a full dismissal of the imagination-based approach has also to undermine the various motivations put forward in favour of its endorsement (Scruton 1974, ch. 109; Walton 1990, chs. 1 and 8; O'Shaughnessy 2003, p. 349; Stock 2008). But pursuing this task requires more space than this article could offer and therefore has to wait for another occasion.

characterisation of imagining. Our basic recognition of what pictures depict is essentially passive. When we are looking at da Vinci's or Vermeer's painting and experience them as depicting anything at all, we cannot help but to experience them as depicting thirteen men sitting at a table, or a row of buildings beyond a river.<sup>4</sup> Hence, if an imagination-based account of pictorial experience turns out to be true, the *Agency Account* of imagining —according to which episodes of imagining are essentially instances of mental agency in such a way as to give us (some) substantial control over what they represent (Dorsch 2009, 2012)<sup>5</sup>— comes under threat (O'Shaughnessy 2003, ch. 11; Stock 2008, p. 376f.). As a consequence, this article forms part of the wider project of defending the Agency Account by removing a particular objection to the latter, namely that it cannot accommodate the supposedly imaginative character of pictorial experience. Indeed, if it can be shown that the imagination-based approach is misguided, it actually becomes an advantage for a theory of imagining if it is able —like the Agency Account (Dorsch 2012, Part IV)— to predict and explain the non-imaginativeness of pictorial experience.

In the next section of this article, I clarify and argue for the claim that the non-illusionistic awareness of what two-dimensional pictures depict depends on the simultaneous awareness of some suitable depicting surface.

<sup>4</sup> Even ambiguous pictures (such as the duck-rabbit figure) are no exception, as we can choose only which of the available pictorial aspects we pay attention to (e.g., whether we experience it as a picture of a duck or as a picture of a rabbit), but not which alternatives are available to us in the first place (e.g., whether we can experience the figure as a picture of a horse).

<sup>5</sup> Although somewhat similar, Scruton's claim that imagining is essentially subject to the will (1974, ch. 7) is in fact weaker in that it requires merely that voluntary control is in principle possible and thus allows for passive instances of imagining. By contrast, the Agency Account maintains that imagining is always and intrinsically an action, in the same sense —and for the same reason— that walking or jumping is always and intrinsically an action. One difficulty for Scruton's weaker view on the relationship between imagining and agency is to spell out what «in principle» means; and another to explain how one and the same event (e.g., the formation of a visual image, or the occurrence of a bodily movement) can sometimes be active, and sometimes be passive, while avoiding the implausible view that whether something is an action depends solely on its contingent causal origin.

The two main ways in which imagination-based accounts may attempt to explain this dependence —namely either in terms of imagining from the inside and *de re* imagining, or in terms of imaginative penetration through seeing something under an imaginatively employed concept— are discussed and criticised in the following two sections. My main focus is thereby on the accounts of Kendall Walton and Roger Scruton, but I also say something about the views of Brian O'Shaughnessy and Kathleen Stock. The concluding section is very briefly devoted to sketching an alternative, perception-based account of pictorial experience, which explains the dependence between the two kinds of awareness by reference to a dependence between two corresponding kinds of experienced objective appearances.

### THE DEPENDENCE THESIS

The question of the nature of our awareness of the depicted scene is intimately related to the explanation of its relationship to our awareness of the depicting surface. Any satisfactory answer to the first is constrained by a satisfactory proposal concerning the second. One important fact thereby to be explained is the dependence of our awareness of the depicted on our awareness of the picture (though not necessarily vice versa). More precisely:

(DEP) The kind of awareness exemplified by our awareness of the depicted scene involved in our non-illusionistic pictorial experience of a two-dimensional picture could not be instantiated without the simultaneous perceptual<sup>6</sup> awareness of some marked surface.

The round-about way of formulating (DEP) in terms of kinds of awareness is partly required because of the fact that we may have a pictorial experience without actually looking at a picture —for instance, when we hallucinate a picture. The restriction to non-illusionistic experiences, on the other hand, is

<sup>6</sup> I argue elsewhere (Dorsch 2013) that we cannot have a pictorial experience on the basis of recalling a marked surface (rather than, say, recalling a perception-based pictorial experience had in the past). But nothing in what follows depends on whether the dependence base is limited just to perception, or instead to perception plus perceptual memory.

needed to accommodate the fact that there are two phenomenologically — and, hence, essentially— distinct ways of being aware of the scene depicted by a two-dimensional picture (Lopes 2005, ch. 1).

In most cases, our awareness of the depicted is non-illusionistic: it differs phenomenologically from seeing the scene face to face and, as a result, does not give rise to belief in the presence of the depicted in our actual environment. This happens whenever we experience a picture for what it is and are simultaneously aware of both its marked surface and the depicted scene.<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that, in such cases, not only the whole pictorial experience, but also the involved awareness of the depicted is phenomenologically different from ordinary perception (Lopes 2005, p. 42). If the latter were exactly like a face to face perception of the depicted, it would incline us to believe in the real existence of the depicted —an inclination which the additional perception of the marked surface would not suffice to cancel out.

But sometimes, our awareness of what is depicted is illusionistic: it is phenomenologically indistinguishable from seeing the scene face to face and inclines us to believe that the depicted is really there before our eyes. This happens whenever we are completely unaware of the depicting surface and thus suffer a (quasi-)perceptual illusion of the presence of the depicted entities in our actual environment. There is a certain vantage point inside Sant'Ignazio in Rome (marked on its floor) from which it looks as if the church really possesses a splendid dome with a skylight. But, in fact, the spectator is looking merely at a ceiling fresco by Andrea Pozzo —a perfect

<sup>7</sup> In fact, Lopes identifies two ways in which a pictorial experience of a two-dimensional picture can be non-illusionistic: either by making us merely aware of (some of) the properties of the depicting surface («surface seeing»; 2005, p. 36), or by also making us aware of (some of) those properties as being responsible for the presence of depiction and the occurrence of pictorial experience («design seeing»; 2005, p. 28). The first kind of awareness is more fundamental in that it is presupposed by the second kind of awareness (2005, p. 128): we cannot see some properties as responsible for something else without seeing the properties in the first place. In what follows, I focus on the fact that all non-illusionistic pictorial experiences involve surface perception and do not further distinguish them in respect of whether they make us also aware of the surfaces' specific contribution to depiction.

trompe-l'oeil relative to that point of view. The resulting (quasi-)perceptual experience of the dome does not involve any perception of the flat surface on which it is painted.

It is perhaps controversial whether the illusionistic awareness of what a two-dimensional picture depicts is indeed an instance of pictorial experience. But this issue is irrelevant for current purposes, since the imagination-based account of pictorial experience concentrates on the non-illusionistic awareness of the depicted, given that the illusionistic one is clearly (quasi-)perceptual, rather than imaginative. More generally, given that non-illusionistic and illusionistic experiences of pictures involve different kinds of awareness with respect to what is depicted, the possibility or nature of the second kind of experience has no bearing on the issue of whether the first kind depends on surface perception. In short, illusionistic pictorial experience does not constitute a counterexample to (DEP).<sup>8</sup> This concerns not only perfect trompe-l'oeils, but also what Lopes calls «actualist» pictures (2005, p. 42f.): marked surfaces which depict themselves, or at least a type of marked surface which they themselves instantiate, and the perception of which is trivially subjectively indiscriminable from —since identical with— the awareness of what they depict.

The truth of (DEP) is, first of all, indicated by the fact that, if we fail or stop to see the marked surface of a two-dimensional picture (and do not at the same time start to see another suitable surface), we also fail or stop to be non-illusionistically aware of the depicted entities. Subtract the perceptual awareness of the surface of Vermeer's painting from a pictorial experience of it, and the non-illusionistic awareness of Delft and its appearance gets lost as well (or perhaps transforms into an illusionistic awareness). This just shows

<sup>8</sup> The same is true of our pictorial experiences of three-dimensional pictures —if there are any. While it is doubtful that non-abstract sculptures depict (Hopkins 2004), the account of pictorial experience sketched in the concluding section of this article suggests that three-dimensional holograms are (immaterial) pictures, given that they make an objective appearance accessible to vision without themselves instantiating this appearance. But they do not pose a challenge for (DEP) because the awareness of the depicted involved is phenomenologically just like face to face perception.

that our non-illusionistic awareness of a depicted scene depends for its existence on the simultaneous occurrence of a perceptual awareness of some marked surface.

Furthermore, (DEP) entails that our non-illusionistic awareness of the depicted entities cannot be constituted by a self-sufficient mental episode, such as an episode of perceiving, recalling, imagining or thinking. In particular, as part of being aware of the depicted appearance of Delft, we neither see, visualise or recall that appearance, nor have a self-sufficient thought about it (Scruton (1974), p. 109ff and 118ff). Of course, we can enjoy such episodes in addition to our pictorial experience (e.g., when we look at the painting while being near Delft, or when our pictorial experience prompts us to have thoughts about Delft). Moreover, the episodes listed may be involved more indirectly in the occurrence of our pictorial experience —for instance, if the latter exemplifies a kind of experience that would result if one of those episodes and a non-pictorial experience of the painting's surface would interpenetrate each other. Indeed, as will become clear in due course, proponents of an imagination-based account should —and some actually do— argue for such an interpenetration between perception and imagination.

Given the noted entailment, the truth of (DEP) is also evidenced by the fact that the simultaneous occurrence of a perception of a surface and another self-sufficient mental episode never suffices to give rise to pictorial experience. Making use of an example put forward by Robert Hopkins (1998, p. 22), actors asked to interact with a blue screen<sup>9</sup> as if it were a window onto a wrecked spaceship may find it easier to fulfil their task in a convincing manner when they start to imagine certain things —such as visualising the ship at the respective location of the screen, intellectually imagining that the resulting visual image is part of a perception of the ship, intellectually imagining that they see the ship or, indeed, intellectually imagining that their perception of the screen is identical with a perception of the ship. But none

<sup>9</sup> Note that the example works with any kind of marked surface —even a surface that includes a depiction of a spacecraft. In the latter case, the actors' engagement in their imaginative project might bring it about that they begin to have a pictorial experience. But this experience would involve their imagining merely as one of its causes, and not as one of its constituents.

of these or other independent episodes of imagining will turn their perceptual experience of the screen into a pictorial experience of the screen as depicting a wrecked spacecraft (Budd 1992a; Hopkins 1998, p. 20ff; Wollheim 2003, p. 145ff; Stock 2008, p. 367f). Similar considerations apply to perceptions, memories or thoughts. But if no self-sufficient mental episode representing some scene is able to generate a non-illusionistic pictorial experience of that scene as depicted when combined with the perception of a suitably marked surface, our non-illusionistic awareness of what two-dimensional pictures depict has to be dependent on some other element. And the most natural and plausible candidate for this dependence base is the awareness of the depicting surface.

Finally, the acceptance of (DEP) is part of many of the recently developed accounts of pictorial experience. There is much disagreement about the nature of pictorial experience and, in particular, the relationship between our perceptual awareness of the surface and our additional awareness of the depicted entities (Hopkins 2010). These two dimensions of awareness have been said to be embodied by two simultaneous experiences with a single content each (Lopes 2005, p. ch. 1), or by a single experience with two discrete contents or aspects of content (Wollheim 1989), or by a single experience with a complex, but uniform content from which the two dimensions can just be abstracted (Walton 1990; Hopkins 1998, 2010).<sup>10</sup> There is neither the need, nor of course the space to settle this debate here. Instead, it suffices to highlight the fact that the main proponents of each of these views accept (DEP).

Richard Wollheim has argued that the two dimensions of awareness involved in non-illusionistic pictorial experience interpenetrate each other (Wollheim 1989, ch. 2). Others have accepted the truth of his interpenetration claim (or something very much like it); and it has served them as one of their main motivations for taking pictorial experience to consist in a single

<sup>10</sup> I ignore the view according to which the two kinds of awareness occur sequentially rather than simultaneously. Gombrich's version of this view (1960) has been convincingly criticised by Wollheim (1987, p. 76f), Budd (1992b, p. 261ff) and Hopkins (1998, p. 18).

experience unifying the two dimensions of awareness. The philosophers concerned do not necessarily agree on what the assumed interpenetration specifically consists in, or on how much of interest we can say about it. But they minimally share the opinion that the interpenetration implies a mutual influence between the two dimensions of awareness, such that they become dependent on, and inseparable from, each other (Wollheim 1989, p. 46f; Walton 1990, p. 295; Hopkins 1998, ch. 1.4). In section IV below, I discuss how imagination-based accounts may understand this interpenetration.

On the other hand, Dominic Lopes (2005, p. 128f and 192) —the main recent defender of the view that the two dimensions of awareness pertain to two distinct experiences which together constitute pictorial experience— maintains that we can make sense of the distinctive value of looking at pictures only if we take our non-illusionistic awareness of the depicted scene to be inflected by our perceptual awareness of the depicting surface (cf. also Hopkins 2010, p. 166f). For only then does our awareness of the depicted differ from —or '[go] beyond'— ordinary perception of it, so as to allow for a difference in value between the two kinds of experience (Lopes 2005, p. 192). Now, that our awareness of the depicted scene is inflected by our perception of the depicting surface entails that we are made aware of properties that are to be partly characterised by reference to seen properties of the surface, and which therefore cannot be experienced in the absence of our awareness of the surface (e.g., in illusionistic pictorial experience, or in ordinary perception of the entities that are depicted; Lopes 2005, p. 123f and 128f; Hopkins 2010, p. 155ff). So, the ubiquitous occurrence of inflection ensures the truth of (DEP).<sup>11</sup>

Having established that (DEP) is true, there is a good reason why we should insist on the provision of an explanation of why it is true —a reason which is moreover completely independent of whether one takes our awareness of what is depicted to be imaginative or not. The thought is, simply, that we can account for the symmetric or asymmetric dependence between other kinds of awareness and, hence, should expect the same in the case of

<sup>11</sup> The ubiquity of inflection is also suggested by Podro (1998) and Hopkins (unpublished).

pictorial experience. More generally, that one kinds of awareness depends on another is not to be presumed to be a metaphysically primitive or unexplainable fact.

The fact that shape and surface colour perception cannot occur on their own may serve as a good illustration. We cannot see the shape of a surface without seeing its colour; and vice versa. Now, one central part of the explanation of this mutual dependence between shape and surface colour representations is the fact that the two represented kinds of property cannot be instantiated on their own. No surface can be shaped without being coloured; and vice versa. So, here, the constitutive dependence between the two kinds of perceptual awareness is partly due to the constitutive dependence between the two represented properties. In addition, the two kinds of properties have to be perceivable in the same sensory mode and from exactly the same points of view. This is needed to accommodate, say, the fact that we can perceive the shape of an object without perceiving its weight, or the fact that we can see the colour of the front of an object without seeing the colour of its backside, although in both cases neither kind of property could be instantiated without the other.

But other factors are relevant as well. Seeing the shape of one surface does not depend on seeing the colour of another surface, for instance. Moreover, seeing the shape of a surface does not depend on visualising its colour, but rather on seeing it. Accordingly, the dependence obtains only if the two kinds of awareness are concerned with one and the same surface and involve the same kind of commitment. In the case of surface perception, the shared commitment is (quasi-) judgement-like in nature.<sup>12</sup> This means that the two

<sup>12</sup> When I say that perception (or memory, for that matter) involves a judgement-like commitment, I do not mean to say that perception is a propositional attitude or a form of belief. Rather, involving a judgement-like commitment amounts just to being non-neutral with respect to how things are in the actual world. More generally, the claim that perception, memory, judgement, belief and imagination all involve a claim about how things are in a certain (actual, possible or fiction) situation or world is comparable to the claim that they all involve stative representation (Martin 2003), regard some proposition as true (at least if they are propositional attitudes; Velleman 2000, ch. 11), or involve a world-to-mind direction of fit (Searle 1983, ch.

kinds of awareness are both concerned with the actual world: they are non-neutral about which colour and shape a particular surface actually possesses. In particular, their adequacy is to be assessed in terms of how that surface is actually like. But visualising the shape of a surface, too, depends on a representation of its colour —this time, however, on visualising the surface's colour, and not on seeing it. The relevant difference is that, in contrast to perception, imagination is concerned with objects and their features as part of a possible or fictional situation, and not a real one (Martin 2003; Dorsch 2010a). The constitutive dependence between the visual awareness of the shape of a surface and the visual awareness of its colour therefore requires only that the two elements share the same kind of commitment, but not that this commitment is judgement-like rather than, say, imagination-like.

In a similar vein, any account of pictorial experience should be able to explain why the basic awareness of the depicted scene depends for its occurrence on the perception of the marked surface of the picture. Simply assuming or arguing for the truth of (DEP) is not enough.

However, at least proponents of an imagination-based account cannot account for the dependence involved in pictorial experience in the same way in which the dependence between shape and colour perception has been explained. For seeing the picture differs from imagining the depicted both in its object and in its commitment. While the former is concerned with the actual marks on a real surface, the latter presents us with something else (e.g., a landscape) as part of a possible or fictional situation.<sup>13</sup> Besides, it is far from clear whether there is any constitutive dependence between the properties represented by the two kinds of awareness: the possession of certain marks does not obviously require something else (e.g., a landscape) to be a certain way; nor the other way round. In the remainder of this article, I discuss two

1.2). Desires, by contrast, lack this general kind of commitment.

<sup>13</sup> This is true even of documentary pictures. Although they are concerned with the actual past, they do not present the depicted as part of the (present or past) actual world. In other words, our pictorial experience of them is, taken by itself, neutral towards how things are in the actual world. Only additional thoughts or beliefs about the (intended or accidental) truthfulness of the photograph can establish such a commitment.

imagination-based attempts to account for (DEP), before returning very briefly to the possibility of explaining its truth in terms of the sameness of (judgement-like) commitment and object, as well as a constitutive dependence among the experienced properties.

## IMAGINING FROM THE INSIDE AND IMAGINING DE RE

The previous considerations —and especially Hopkins' example— show that pictorial experience does not simply consist in the simultaneous occurrence of an episode of seeing and any combination of perception-independent episodes of imagining. But perhaps it is possible to identify a perception-dependent form of imagining which combines with surface perception in such a way as to form pictorial experience and ensure the truth of (DEP). In particular, the thought may be that what matters is not only what is imagined, but also how it is imagined. This is a plausible interpretation of Walton's proposal to understand the kind of imagining involved in pictorial experience as an instance of: (1) imagining from the inside, rather than intellectual imagining; (2) de re imagining with respect to our real perception of the marked surface of the picture; and (3) imagining this real perception of the picture to be a perception of the depicted (Walton 1990, p. 293f).<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, pictorial experience consists in perceiving the surface of a picture and imagining of this perception, and from the inside, that it is a perception of what the picture depicts (e.g., a landscape, a man, or something else).

<sup>14</sup> Walton does not explicitly characterise the kind of imagining in question as a de re imagining. But this reading is strongly suggested by the fact that he uses a standard way of describing de re thoughts (Evans 1982; McDowell 1984) when specifying the kind of imagining concerned: namely as an instance of imagining of the perception that it has a certain property. Given that Walton is surely knowledgeable of the respective debate, this cannot be just an accident.

Walton is not very explicit about what imagining from the inside consists in. It cannot amount to visualising, given that it makes no sense to speak of «visualising one perception to be another» (Budd 1992a, p. 197). Nor is it reducible to intellectual imagining, given that the latter amounts to imagining something from the outside (Wollheim 1984, ch. 3). Walton agrees on both when he says that the imagining involved in pictorial experience is some kind of thought (1990, p. 295), but not an instance of imagining that something is the case (1990, p. 293). Instead —presumably following Peacocke (1985)— he takes imagining something from the inside to consist in imagining, from a first-personal perspective, oneself experiencing or doing it (Walton 1990, p. 28ff).

But this understanding of the nature of imagining from the inside raises an immediate problem for Walton's imagination-based account of pictorial experience. For there is no sense in which we could imagine ourselves «experiencing» a perception of something to be a perception of something else. The identity between two experiences is simply not among the things that can be imagined from the inside. At best, we can imagine, from the inside, having a certain experience and then intellectually imagine something about this experience —for instance, that it is identical with some other (real or imagined) experience (Peacocke 1985; Martin 2001, 2003).<sup>15</sup>

So, Walton's proposal should in fact be that the imaginative dimension of pictorial experience comprises, first, imagining from the inside seeing the depicted and, second, imagining *de re* of the concurrent perception of the picture that it is a perception of what is imagined, from the inside, as being seen.<sup>16</sup> Pictorial experience thus consists of seeing the picture and engaging

<sup>15</sup> This becomes even clearer if imagining experiencing something is further specified as imagining the phenomenal character of the kind of experience concerned (i.e., what it is subjectively like for us to have that experience; Dorsch 2010a, 2010b). For that an experience is identical with another experience is not part of its phenomenal character (especially if, as in this case, the identity is impossible due to a difference in objects).

<sup>16</sup> The imaginative thought may perhaps also be said to be *de re* with respect to the first element. Moreover, it might be hoped that this suffices to ensure that one of the two imaginative elements depends on the other, and that they together form a single and unified imaginative project. But

in a complex imaginative project both concerning that perception and the depicted scene. In fact, Walton clearly distinguishes the two elements himself (though he is not very explicit about how exactly he conceives of their relationship; Walton 1990, p. 293).

The first element does not introduce any dependence of our awareness of the depicted onto our awareness of the picture. We can imagine seeing something with closed eyes, for instance. As a consequence, the establishment of the dependence relation should be the function of the second element. Assuming that *de re* thought is (at least sometimes) object-dependent, imagining something *de re* about a real perception indeed presupposes the actual existence of the latter. For instance, the *de re* thought may refer to the perception demonstratively (e.g., «this is a perception of Delft»); and demonstrative reference arguably requires the existence of its referent—at least, if the reference is concerned with the actual world (Evans 1982, p. 173; McDowell 1984). It is in this sense that the second imaginative element is perception-dependent: it refers *de re* to an actual perception. Moreover, since the perception-dependent imaginative thought is about the depicted scene by imaginatively identifying it as the object of perception, the refined proposal can ensure that pictorial experience involves an (imaginative) awareness of the depicted which depends on surface perception. Hence, the truth of (DEP) seems to be guaranteed. But this impression is misleading.

One main difficulty is that the discussed dependence obtains in fact between the perception and the *de re* reference to it, rather than between the

while the second element refers to the perceptual experience imagined from the inside (or to its object), its dependence should instead be on the imagining, from the inside, of that experience. This poses a problem for Walton since he assumes that the perceptual and the imaginative dimension of pictorial experience interpenetrate each other (1990: 295; cf. also below). It is no problem, though, for Peacocke's comparable claim that, in imagining from the inside seeing a suitcase with a cat behind, the imaginative thought («S-imagining») about the cat depends on the visualising of the suitcase. For while the dependence may as well be due to some *de re* demonstration (e.g., «there is a cat behind this suitcase»), Peacocke explicitly—and rightly—denies that the sensory and the intellectual element interpenetrate (i.e., that this is a case of visualizing something under a concept; 1985, n. 10).

perception and the imagination of what is depicted. This would be unproblematic if the two aspects of the imaginative *de re* thought would be inseparable. But it is possible to uncouple the (non-imaginative) *de re* reference from the (imaginative) intellectual representation of what is depicted (e.g., we can imagine that Delft has a certain appearance and is seen by us without any reference to our concurrent perception of Vermeer's painting). Hence, our awareness of the depicted does not really depend for its existence on the perception.

The other central problem is that our basic awareness of what is depicted is visual. Not only does pictorial experience represent the visual appearance of the depicted objects, but it also represents this appearance fundamentally in a visual —rather than an intellectual (i.e., thought- like)— manner (Wollheim 2003, p. 137). This is, for instance, reflected in the fact that we can come to know every little detail of how something looks like just by seeing a depiction of it. Even the best description of a rhinoceros could not have given people in Europe the same rich and detailed knowledge of its visual appearance as did Dürer's famous woodcut (Hopkins 2003, p. 150). Similarly, drawing a picture is a more adequate way of conveying to others what we see than describing it in words. Ascribing a visual character to the awareness of what is depicted explains best why this is so. Furthermore, our experience of the depicted shows the kind of perspectivalness present in visual perceptions, memories and imaginings, but absent in thought (Hopkins 1998, ch. 7; Martin 2003; Dorsch 2010a). We represent the appearance of the depicted objects from certain spatial points of view —with the consequence, for example, that the front-sides of the objects are given to us in a different manner (i.e., «sensorily») than their back-sides (Macpherson unpublished). Again, this indicates that our representation of the depicted entities is visual in nature and, therefore, cannot consist just in some intellectual form of awareness.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Hopkins (unpublished) provides the additional argument that the awareness of the depicted is visual (and not just a thought, say, about its visual appearance) because we can visually scrutinise the depicted scene (e.g., focus on one of the depicted objects in order to get clearer about its colour, shape, or kind) and visually find something in the scene (e.g., the symmetry of

The visuality of our awareness of the depicted scene may, of course, be captured by the first imaginative element (which may also in part explain why it is needed in the first place). There are good reasons to assume that an episode of imagining experiencing something inherits some of its phenomenologically salient aspects from the imagined experience —among them, centrally, the object and manner of experience (Martin 2003; Dorsch 2010a). Accordingly, imagining seeing Delft represents Delft in a visual manner. But, as already noted above, the first element does not depend for its occurrence on surface perception.

Walton's imagination-based account therefore faces a serious problem. The nature of imagining from the inside forces him to assume two distinct imaginative elements, one representing the depicted scene visually and from the inside, the other intellectually and from the outside. The reason for this is that the two desired conditions on the manner of imagining —that it is from the inside and *de re* with respect to perception— are incompatible with each other and have to be satisfied by different elements of awareness. But neither element is able to unite in itself both of the two characteristics essential to our basic awareness of what a picture depicts: only the first element can make a claim to visuality, and only the second a claim to dependence on perception. That is, the visual awareness is not dependent; and the dependent one not visual. By contrast, it is our visual awareness of the depicted scene which is perception-dependent. Hence, the account under discussion does not manage to identify a kind of imaginative awareness which may play the role of our basic awareness of the depicted scene.

This problem can perhaps be avoided if the perceptual and the imaginative dimension of pictorial experience are taken to interpenetrate each other. Indeed, Walton maintains himself that the link between the two dimensions is closer than that of *de re* reference of one to the other. More specifically, he claims that the complex instance of imagining «enters into» or «informs» the perception of the marked surface, in a similar way in which ordinary perception is penetrated by conceptual elements (Walton 1990, p.

the configuration of certain depicted objects).

295). However, identifying the imaginative dimension of pictorial experience with imagining, from the inside, of the perception of the picture that it is a perception of the depicted scene does not suffice to guarantee that the two dimensions interpenetrate. Both instances of imagining from the inside and *de re* thoughts about a perceptual experience can stay completely separately from the latter. In other words, Walton should introduce a fourth characterisation of the form of imagining at issue: (4) that it involves what may be called imaginative penetration, that is, the penetration of a perceptual experience by an (incomplete) imaginative thought.

This addition would, however, render Walton's focus on imagining from the inside —and thus also his postulation of the first imaginative element of imagining seeing the depicted scene— obsolete. All that would be needed is the second imaginative element, namely imaginatively conceiving of one's actual perception in terms of a perception of the depicted scene —or, if one prefers, imaginatively conceiving of the object of one's actual perception in terms of the depicted scene. This is more or less the view defended by Roger Scruton and others, to which I now turn.

### IMAGINATIVE PENETRATION

According to Scruton, pictorial experience involves nothing more than a perceptual awareness of the picture and an imaginative thought about, or conception of, the depicted. More precisely, pictorial experience is, for him, a kind of *seeing-as*: recognising something as a picture of a landscape, say, means seeing it as a landscape (1974, p. 108 and 118f). And seeing-as —at least in its perceptual variant<sup>18</sup>— involves both a perceptual and an intellectual (or thought-like) element (1974, p. 117).

<sup>18</sup> Scruton (1974: 115ff.) distinguishes perceptual seeing-as —which is, for him, involved in pictorial experience— from other forms of seeing-as (e.g., emotional seeing-as), as well as from other phenomena that might be described in terms of «seeing-as» but differ substantially from what he calls seeing-as —notably in their involvement of a judgement-like attitude (e.g., cognitive penetration or higher-level perception).

Moreover, the two elements are constitutively dependent on each other—or, as Scruton sometimes says instead, have to be characterised in terms of each other. In this respect, they differ from ordinary episodes of perception and thought. While the character of the perceptual experience is changed by the impact of thinking (1974, p. 108), the instance of thinking concerned is «embodied» by the experience in such a way that «it cannot be isolated from [the latter]» (1974, p. 117). Finally, the intellectual element pertains to imaginative rather than to judgement-like thought. When we recognise something as a depiction of a landscape, we see it as a landscape without taking it to be a landscape (1974, p. 115 and 120). In accordance with this, one way of describing seeing-as is «as the sensory «embodiment» of [the imaginative thinking of an object as something that it is not]» (1974, p. 117).

Scruton therefore takes pictorial experience to be an instance of what may be called seeing under an imaginatively employed concept. But there are also experiences which might be described as the sensory «embodiment» of a judgement-like thought. Consider the case of seeing a triangular shape on a piece of paper. Once we start to conceive of the triangle not (merely) as a triangle, but as one half of a parallelogram, how the figure appears to us may change. That is, there may be a difference between seeing the shape while taking it to be a triangle and seeing it while taking it to be (also) one half of a parallelogram. Although we are aware of the fact that the figure in front of us has not altered, the way in which we see it may have changed: it may now appear to be half of a parallelogram, rather than (merely) a triangle. As Malcolm Budd describes this and similar cases: «we see it differently, although we see that it is no different from how it was» (Budd 1989, p. 77).

For Scruton, the experience of the one half of a parallelogram is not an instance of seeing-as in his sense, since it involves judgement-like rather than imaginative thought: we do take the triangular shape to be one half of a parallelogram. But the two cases have none the less something important in common: they concern the interpenetration, rather than mere simultaneous occurrence, of a perceptual and a thought-like element. We may capture both the similarity and the difference by saying that, while perceptual seeing-as is

a matter of seeing something under an imaginatively entertained concept, cases like recognising the figure as one half of a parallelogram are instances of seeing something under a judgement–likely employed concept.

The latter, judgement–like kind of seeing under a concept constitutes a form of cognitive penetration in so far as the perceptual experience and, notably, its phenomenal character is altered by the impact of some cognitive element—in this case, by judgement–likely conceiving of the perceived object in a certain way. But it differs from some other examples of cognitive penetration (Macpherson forthcoming) in that the intellectual element and its impact on the perceptual element occur on the level of consciousness. The subject is conscious of taking the figure to be one half of a parallelogram; and the corresponding change in her perceptual experience is open to her introspection. In a similar way, seeing something under an imaginatively entertained concept may be understood as a form of imaginative penetration, given that the difference between merely seeing a marked surface and having a pictorial experience is taken to be due to an imaginative conception of the depicted, which «penetrates» and, hence, essentially changes the nature and character of the perceptual experience of the picture concerned.

Scruton is not the only philosopher who takes pictorial experience to involve intellectual imagining. Brian O'Shaughnessy is another one. Although his discussion of pictorial experience in his book *Consciousness and the World* (2003) is only very brief, it reveals central similarities between his view and Scruton's.<sup>19</sup> Most notably, O'Shaughnessy, too, takes pictorial experience to consist in the interpenetration of perceptual experience and intellectual imagination. More precisely, pictorial experience involves for him an imaginative interpretation of the seen marks, which constitutively depends on that perception of the marked surface and, at the same time, changes this experience by adding to it a second object of awareness, namely what is depicted (2003, p. 347). Furthermore, O'Shaughnessy distinguishes this imaginative interpretation of what is seen from the non–imaginative interpretation already involved in ordinary perception—such as when we

<sup>19</sup> See Dorsch (2012) for a detailed discussion of O'Shaughnessy's account of imagining.

visually recognise something as a flat and marked surface located in three-dimensional space (2003, p. 347). He thus also tracks the distinction between seeing something under an imaginatively entertained concept and seeing it under a judgmentally employed one.

More recently, Kathleen Stock (2008) has defended the view that pictorial experience is partly constituted by an imaginative thought about what is depicted (such as the thought «there is a landscape»). But her view differs from Scruton's and O'Shaughnessy's in several crucial aspects, some of which are of special significance here. First, she identifies cases of pictorial experience in which the thought about the depicted is judgement-like rather than imaginative (e.g., when we look at documentary photographs; 2008, p. 373). Second, Stock does not discuss whether —or the extent to which— the sensory and the intellectual element said to be involved in pictorial experience are dependent on each other. In particular, she is silent on whether she understands the relation between the two elements in terms of Scruton's notion of perceptual seeing-as, or as being similar to that between perception and conception in seeing a triangular shape as one half of a parallelogram.

Third, and perhaps most important, Stock —in contrast to Scruton and O'Shaughnessy— is open to the possibility that pictorial experience is not exhausted by seeing the picture and imaginatively thinking something about the depicted (as well as, perhaps, imaginatively thinking that one sees it). However, she does not specify much further what the additional elements involved in pictorial experience might be, apart from suggesting that they could be sensory or non-conceptual (2008, p. 369), as well as perceptual (2008, p. 371 and n. 25). In particular, her position seems to be compatible with the view that the most basic awareness of what is depicted involved in pictorial experience is non-imaginative (e.g., perceptual), and that the imaginative thought about the depicted is just a response to, or conceptualisation of, this more fundamental form of awareness. In other words, all what she says appears to be reconcilable with the rejection of imagination-based accounts, given that the latter take our basic awareness of what a picture depicts to be imaginative. None the less, in part because Stock invokes Scruton's view so prominently in her defense of the idea that pictorial

experience is partly imaginative, one gets the impression that she prefers to deny the non-imaginativeness of our fundamental access to pictorial content, and also to take the connection between perception and imaginative thought to be similar to that involved in perceptual seeing-as, or in seeing something under a concept.

Understanding pictorial experience in terms of seeing something under a concept promises to accommodate and explain (DEP). In the case of cognitive penetration, how we experience the seen object depends on how we conceive of it. But the conceptual element is also dependent on the perceptual one. For it does not amount to a full-fledged thought (e.g., «this is one half of a parallelogram») which could occur on its own and is just added to the perceptual experience, but instead consists in some less complete conception (e.g., «is one half of a parallelogram») which needs the perceptual element for completion. We do not see the figure and, in addition, think «this is one half of a parallelogram». We just see (the figure under the concept of) one half of a parallelogram.

Now, it seems fairly safe to assume that an explanation of why the perceptual and the conceptual element involved in seeing something under a judgement-likely employed concept are mutually dependent on each other is in principle available (Macpherson forthcoming). Moreover, it may very well turn out to be irrelevant for this explanation that the concept is applied judgement-likely rather than imaginatively. Imaginative penetration (if it exists at all) might therefore involve the same kind of constitutive dependence. That is, there is some realistic hope that the explainable dependence between perception and conception involved in seeing something under a concept obtains regardless of whether the concept is applied judgement-likely or imaginatively.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> It has been argued —sometimes following Kant— that the judgemental employment of a concept in perceptual experience involves imagination in one way or another (e.g., Strawson 1970). But this does not mean that the concept is imaginatively employed, that is, applied to the object concerned without taking the concept to really apply to that object.

### 1. The Possibility of Imaginative Penetration

However, one important problem with the strategy of accounting for pictorial experience in terms of seeing under an imaginatively applied concept is that it is far from clear that this phenomenon is possible, let alone that it actually occurs. Three considerations are relevant here.

First, there are no obvious actual examples (over and above, perhaps, pictorial experience). It is, of course, easy to construct a case that is very similar to that of seeing the triangle as one half of a parallelogram, and which does not obviously involve any judgement-like application of a concept. Our perceptual awareness of a bouncer at a pub may change, say, if we begin to conceive of him in terms of a gorilla. We certainly do not judge him to be a gorilla. So, one possible interpretation of this case is that our experience of the bouncer is altered in response to our imagining him to be a gorilla. But this is neither the only, nor necessarily the best interpretation. According to another reading, the concept involved is not that of being a gorilla, but instead that of looking like a gorilla. In other words, what happens may be that our experience changes as result of us taking the bouncer to be similar in appearance to a gorilla—a perfect instance of cognitive penetration. Of course, recognising the resemblance in the first place might have to involve visualising a gorilla. But this instance of imagining would not enter into the perception of the bouncer.

The second interpretation is at least as plausible as the first, if not more so. Indeed, the second has the advantage of making use of a well-established explanatory strategy—which is moreover needed to account for many other cases (such as the visual recognition of one half of a parallelogram)—by treating the example at hand as an instance of seeing something under a judgement-likely employed concept. By contrast, the first reading introduces an entirely new explanation, the meaning—and usefulness of which is furthermore in question. The defender of the actuality of seeing something under an imaginatively entertained concept is required to present more

evidence for his case, than simply to present examples which can be interpreted either way.

Second, we need an explanation of why some conceptions manage to influence our perceptual experiences, while others fail to do so. If we look at the triangular shape while thinking of it as one half of a circle, how the figure visually appears to us is likely to remain unchanged. Similarly, conceiving of the bouncer in terms of a rabbit has probably no effect on our perceptual experience of him. Accordingly, there have to be certain constraints on the penetration of perception by conception. What seems to matter in the case of the triangular figure is that it is taken by us —largely on the grounds of perceptual evidence— to constitute one half of a parallelogram, rather than one half of a circle. Thinking of the bouncer as a gorilla and thinking of him as a rabbit, on the other hand, seem to differ in their impact on our perceptual experience because we notice —again primarily on perceptual grounds— some resemblance between the bouncer and a gorilla, but not between him and a rabbit. One important constraint on being able to see something under a concept is therefore that the concept concerned is taken by us to actually apply to the perceived object. Hence, seeing something under a concept means seeing it under a judgement—likely employed concept.

This is reflected by the fact that the application of the concept is sensitive to evidence concerned with the actual nature of the perceived object. For instance, not only may it be your testimonial evidence which brings me to see the bouncer under the concept of a gorilla; but, on closer, inspection I may come to the conclusion that he looks more like a bear than a gorilla and, as a result, switch to seeing him under the concept of a bear. By contrast, just imagining or assuming him to be like a bear, or a gorilla or a rabbit —or just entertaining this possibility— is not enough to start to see him under the respective concept and, in this way, result in an interpenetration of perception and conception.<sup>21</sup>

Third, there is a plausible underlying explanation of why there are —and can be— no cases of seeing something under an imaginatively entertained

<sup>21</sup> See Budd (1992a, p. 197) for further examples illustrating the same insufficiency.

concept. The thought is, again, that the required constitutive dependence between the perceptual and the conceptual element concerned presupposes a sameness in object and commitment. This is, indeed, in line with —and already suggested by— the noted constraint on seeing something under a concept, namely that we have to take the concept to actually apply to the perceived object. What matters is, again, that we are non-neutral with respect to the triangular shape's actual identity with one half of a parallelogram, or to the real resemblance between the bouncer and some gorilla. And both commitments require that our respective sensory and intellectual representations are concerned with one and the same actual entity. But the proposed explanation also leaves room for the possibility of visualising something under an imaginatively entertained concept —which is another aspect speaking in its favour. After all, whether we conceive of an imagined bouncer as looking like a gorilla is likely to make a difference to how we visualise him.

## 2. The Involvement of Imaginative Penetration

But even if it is generally possible to see something under an imaginatively applied concept, there are two already noted essential characteristics of pictorial experience —namely its possession of two objects of awareness and its visuality —which speak strongly against the involvement of imaginative penetration.

Switching from seeing something simpliciter (or, if that is impossible, from seeing it under some concept) to seeing it under a —judgement-likely or imaginatively employed— (new) concept does not introduce a second object of awareness over and above the perceived one. Seeing a tree under the concept of an oak means seeing an oak —and not seeing one tree and, in addition to this, being also aware of another tree that is an oak and distinct from the first. Similarly, seeing a bouncer in terms of a gorilla does not lead to an experience with two objects of awareness (e.g., the man and a gorilla). Instead, we continue to being aware of a single object (i.e., the man), even though how it is given to us has changed. So why should seeing a picture

under the concept of a landscape result in the double visual awareness of the picture and of a landscape? What is needed is a satisfactory explanation of why some cases of seeing under a concept are special in involving two objects of awareness.<sup>22</sup>

It might be insisted that this happens if and because there is a difference in commitment between the perceptual awareness and the application of the concept. Thus, the idea might be that, since the judgement-like commitment involved in seeing the picture is different from the imagination-like commitment involved in thinking of the landscape (i.e., the first takes the actual world to be a certain way, while the second does not), the two kinds of awareness cannot merge into a single awareness, but have to stay separate. However, this would also render it entirely obscure why the two elements should none the less count as belonging to one and the same phenomenologically unified mental experience and, moreover, as being constitutively dependent on each other.

The second feature of pictorial experience, that renders it very difficult to understand it in terms of imaginative penetration, is that our basic awareness of the depicted is visual, not intellectual. The visuality of pictorial experience and, especially, of the basic awareness of the depicted scene is compatible with pictorial experience also involving an intellectual awareness of what is depicted. But it undermines one of the more plausible motivations for endorsing the idea that pictorial experience is partly constituted by such an imaginative thought.

Although none of the proponents of an imagination-based account of pictorial experience mentioned is really explicit about this, their view appears to be partly motivated by the fact that pictorial experience is committal about the presence of certain entities in the depicted scene. Our experience of a

<sup>22</sup> Scruton (1974, p. 118) reveals some awareness of this problem when he points out — presumably following Wollheim (1980)— that it is perhaps more adequate to understand the kind of seeing under a concept involved in pictorial experience as «seeing-in» than as «seeing-as». But he does not say anything more about this difference and, in particular, nothing about how «seeing-in» differs from cognitive penetration, and why it involves two interdependent kinds of awareness. Stock (2008, n. 25) is similarly silent about this issue.

picture of a landscape makes a specific claim about what is part of the depicted situation, namely a landscape with a certain visual appearance (e.g., with foliated rather than leafless trees). Now, it might be supposed that only thoughts can show the kind of non-neutrality described —perhaps because it is also assumed that only thoughts are propositional attitudes or regard something as (actually, possibly or fictionally) true (Velleman 2000, ch. 11). But this supposition, together with the non-neutrality of pictorial experience with respect to the depicted situation, requires an endorsement of the view that pictorial experience involves some imaginative thought about the depicted.

However, the presented argument is not sound since neither propositionality, nor regarding something as true is required for non-neutrality. Perceptions and episodic memories purport to present the actual (past or present) world as being a certain way; while the same is true of different forms of sensory imagining with respect to some possible or fictional world (Martin 2001, 2003; Dorsch 2010a). Seeing a tree comes with being committed to the presence of a tree in our actual environment. Visualising a tree is non-neutral about the presence of a tree in the imagined situation. So the same kind of commitment may very well be present in the basic sensory awareness of the depicted that is involved in pictorial experience. But if pictorial experience already involves a committal sensory awareness of what is depicted, then there is no need any more for the postulation of an additional intellectual constituent of pictorial experience in order to account for the non-neutrality under discussion. So, at least one potential motivation for assuming that an imaginative thought about the depicted is constitutive of pictorial experience can be undermined.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Scruton (1974, p. 109) mentions other reasons, which I aim to deal with elsewhere. Stock (2008) does not add any positive reasons for accepting the involvement of an intellectual awareness of what is depicted. Her defense is focussed exclusively on addressing certain objections to this acceptance. Besides, given that the commitment involved in our awareness of what is depicted does not concern the actual world, but instead some possible or fictional situation, it may seem natural to conclude that it is of the same kind as the commitment distinctive of imagining, rather than the commitment essential to judgement, perception, or

Moreover, the visuality of our basic awareness of the depicted constitutes two serious challenges for the assumption of an involvement of imaginative penetration. First, if it is doubtful that pictorial experience includes imaginative thought, it is also doubtful that recognising something as a picture is partly a matter of seeing a marked surface under some imaginatively employed concept. Second, even if independent reasons can be found for the claim that pictorial experience involves the imaginative conception of what is depicted, it still needs to be established that the interpenetration of this intellectual element with the perception of the picture leads to a visual form of awareness of the depicted. It can perhaps be shown that seeing something under a concept constitutes, overall, a visual experience (O'Shaughnessy 2003, p. 347). In particular, there is perhaps a genuine sense in which the application of the concept leads to the extension of the content of the already existing visual perception of the object concerned. We may therefore count as literally seeing one half of a parallelogram, or the likeness between the bouncer and a gorilla (Millar 2010). But our awareness of what is depicted is different in that it neither concerns a seen object, nor extends the scope of an already existing perception —at least if we follow the imagination-based account and take this awareness to be imaginative. Hence, it remains mysterious how imaginative conception could engender visual awareness.

If imagining is involved at all, it should be assumed to be an instance of visualising. But it is not surprising that none of the defenders of an imagination-based account takes the postulated imaginative awareness of the depicted to be an instance of visualising (Wollheim 2003, p. 146; O'Shaughnessy 2003, p. 347). For it is even less clear than in the case of imaginative thought how visualising could depend on surface perception in such a way as to generate pictorial experience. The following example illustrates this well.

memory. A full defense of the non-imaginativeness of pictorial experience has also to counter this line of argumentation. The thought should be, very briefly, that the fact that pictorial experience involves an imagination-like commitment does not entail that it is an instance of imagining, just as possessing a judgement-like commitment does not suffice for being a belief or judgemental thought.

When we look at a smooth, white surface (e.g., a wall) and visualise a black square at a certain location on it, our perception of the surface and our imagination of the square do not merge into a single and unified experience. In particular, we are still aware of the whiteness of those portions of the wall where we visualise the black square to be: the visualised blackness does not, so to speak, occlude the seen whiteness. We therefore undergo not just one visual experience representing a black square on a white background (as it may happen when we visualise not only the black square, but also the white surface), but two visual experiences with different objects and commitments.

Indeed, for the visual representation of the surface to become part of the same experience as the visualising of the square (e.g., in an episode of visualising both the surface and the square), it would have to be disconnected from the actually perceived environment and become part of the imagined situation. In particular, the surface would have to be represented as being located in the same space, and from the same point of view within that space, as the square. But the actual space and perspective are not identical with the imagined ones (even if they are imagined to be identical; Sartre 2004, p. 149ff; Wittgenstein 1984, § 622; Hopkins 1998, ch. 7). For instance, if we actually move around, our perspective on the seen surface changes, but not that on the visualised square. Accordingly, the perception-dependent awareness of the depicted scene involved in pictorial experience cannot be an instance of visualising.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, it is highly doubtful that the imagination-based account of pictorial experience can account for the truth of (DEP). Treating our awareness of the depicted scene as an instance of *de re* imagining, possibly combined with imagining from the inside, fails because the imaginative *de re* thought is not visual and separable from any visual form of imagining the depicted entities, and because the perception-dependent (e.g.,

demonstrative) element of the thought is separable from the imaginative conception of the depicted. Taking our awareness of the depicted scene to consist in an incomplete imaginative conception that penetrates the perception of the marked surface of the picture, on the other hand, remains largely ad hoc and, again, cannot capture the visuality of pictorial experience, as well as its involvement of two objects of awareness. In addition, it is rather difficult to think of another kind of imagining that can be dependent on surface perception in such a way as to engender pictorial experience —as illustrated by the fact that the recent defenders of imagination-based accounts have chosen or suggested one of the two options discussed. As a result, imagination-based accounts of pictorial experience should be rejected. One significant obstacle for endorsing the Agency Account of imagining is therefore removed.

But how can we explain the truth of (DEP), if not in terms of imagining the depicted? Identifying pictorial experience with seeing under a judgement-likely employed concept encounters, again, the problem of explaining the presence of two objects of awareness. After all, cognitive penetration seems to require not only sameness in commitment, but also sameness in object. Perhaps, the best option is therefore to take pictorial experience to be perceptual through and through.<sup>24</sup> Of course, we do not see Delft when looking at Vermeer's painting. Instead, the idea should be that we see (part of) the visual appearance of Delft relative to the point of view in question (i.e., some or all of its properties visible from that perspective), without seeing any particular object as instantiating this appearance (i.e., without seeing Delft or any other specific suitable city). This requires that

<sup>24</sup> Wollheim (1980, 1989, 2003) takes pictorial experience to be completely perceptual, but also argues that not much further can be said about the nature of this experience other than that it shows some similarities to just seeing the picture (without being aware of anything depicted), as well as to seeing the depicted face to face (without being aware of any depicting surface). As a result, Wollheim's view cannot illuminate why the two kinds of awareness involved in pictorial experience depend on each other and form an integrated whole (Hopkins (1998), ch. 1.4). Elsewhere (Dorsch 2013), I argue that identifying pictorial experience with seeing the depicting surface as visually resembling the depicted scene (Budd 1992b; Hopkins 1998) presupposes the assumption of a non-perceptual awareness of what is depicted.

two-dimensional pictures differ from other visible objects in making two (or more) appearances accessible to vision: one which they instantiate (i.e., the visual appearance of their marked surface), and one which they merely make accessible to vision (i.e., the visual appearance of whatever is depicted). The two corresponding dimensions of perceptual awareness differ accordingly in that, while one of them makes us aware of a particular object (i.e., the surface), the other makes us just aware of some type of object.<sup>25</sup>

It is now possible to account for (DEP) in roughly the same way as for the dependence between colour and shape perception. A surface —in contrast, say, to light (as in the case of three-dimensional holograms)—cannot possess the capacity to make an appearance accessible to vision without instantiating it if it does not also possess the capacity to make its own appearance accessible to vision. Not only do surfaces generally instantiate a visually accessible appearance. But they can make other appearances visually accessible only by means of their own appearance being a certain way. The noted dependence on the level of what is perceptually experienced then gives rise to a dependence on the level of perceptual experience, because the two kinds of appearance are visible from (almost) exactly the same points of view.

The qualification is needed to accommodate *trompe-l'oeils* which manage to completely fool us when seen from a particular point of view. If this happens, the appearance instantiated by the *trompe-l'oeil's* surface is masked by the uninstanced appearance that it depicts. As a result, we undergo an illusionistic experience and suffer a perceptual illusion of the

<sup>25</sup> This account of pictorial experience has been inspired by —and comes close to— an account presented by M. G. F. Martin in 2006 at the University of [X]. There are also close similarities to one of the views discussed by Stock (2008, p. 371), as well as to the view put forward in Wiesing (2005/2009). I defend the account sketched here in more detail elsewhere (Dorsch 2013). There, I also argue that identifying pictorial experience with seeing the depicting surface as visually resembling (in some respect or another) the depicted scene (Budd 1992b; Hopkins 1998) does not provide the resources to account for the truth of (DEP). Besides, note that objective appearances are such that an object can possess only one of them at a certain moment of time (Martin 2010). This is just a consequence of facts like the one, say, that only one shade of colour can be instantiated at each point of a coloured surface.

presence of an instance of the depicted appearance in our actual environment. Since (DEP) does not apply in such cases, this sole exception to the claim that both appearances are visible from the same range of points of view becomes irrelevant. Besides, even perfectly misleading two-dimensional trompe-l'oeils reveal their own appearance when seen from other perspectives and can therefore be recognised as depictions, that is, as possessing the capacity to render visible both their own appearance and the appearance of something else.\*

FABIAN DORSCH  
 Philosophische Fakultät  
 Universität Freiburg, Suiza  
 Av. de l'Europe 20  
 1700 Freiburg, Suiza  
 Schweiz. fabian.dorsch@unifr.ch

## References

- Budd, Malcolm (1989). *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*. London: Routledge.
- Budd, Malcolm (1992a). «Review of Kendall Walton's *Mimesis as Make-Believe*». *Mind* 101: pp. 195–198.
- Budd, Malcolm (1992b). «On Looking at a Picture». In *Psychoanalysis Mind and Art: Perspectives on Richard Wollheim*, edited by James Hopkins and Anthony Savile, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Casey, Edward (1976). *Imagining*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Collingwood, Robin G. (1958). *The Principles of Art*. New York: Galaxy.

\* I would like to thank Malcolm Budd, Rob Hopkins, Mike Martin, Ludger Schwarte, Lambert Wiesing and the late Richard Wollheim for their very helpful and constructive comments on earlier drafts.

- Dorsch, Fabian (2009). «Judging and the Scope of Mental Agency». In *Mental Actions*, edited by Lucy O'Brien and Matthew Soteriou. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dorsch, Fabian (2010a). «Transparency and Imagining Seeing». *Philosophical Explorations* 13, no. 3: pp. 173–200.
- Dorsch, Fabian (2010b). «Emotional Imagining and Our Responses to Fiction». *Enrahonar* 44: pp. 153–176.
- Dorsch, Fabian (2012). *The Unity of Imagining*. Frankfurt: Ontos.
- Dorsch, Fabian (2013). *Seeing the Depicted*. Manuscript.
- Evans, Gareth (1982). *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gombrich, Ernst (1960). *Art and Illusion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hopkins, Robert (1998). *Picture, Image and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hopkins, Robert (2003). «What Makes Representational Painting Truly Visual?». *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl., 78: pp. 149–167.
- Hopkins, Robert (2004). «Painting, Sculpture, Sight, and Touch». *British Journal of Aesthetics* 44: pp. 149–166.
- Hopkins, Robert (2010). «Inflected Pictorial Experience: Its Treatment and Significance». In *Philosophical Perspectives on Depiction*, edited by Catharine Abell and Katerina Bantinaki. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 151–180.
- Hopkins, Robert (unpublished). «Pictorial Presence». Manuscript.
- Husserl, Edmund (1980). *Phantasie, Bildbewußtsein, Erinnerung*. Den Haag: Nijhoff y Kluwer.
- Husserl, Edmund (2001). *Logical Investigations*. London: Routledge.
- Lopes, Dominic (2005). *Sight and Sensibility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Macpherson, Fiona (forthcoming). «Cognitive Penetration of Colour Experience: Rethinking the Issue in Light of an Indirect Mechanism». *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.
- Macpherson, Fiona (ed.) (unpublished). *Phenomenal Presence*. Manuscript.
- Martin, Michael G. F. (2001). «Out of the Past: Episodic Recall as Retained Acquaintance». In *Time and Memory*, edited by Christoph Hoerl and Teresa McCormack. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 257–284.
- Martin, Michael G. F. (2003). «The Transparency of Experience». *Mind and Language* 17: pp. 376–425.
- Martin, Michael G. F. (2010). «What's in a Look?». In *Perceiving the World*, edited by Bence Nanay. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 160–225.
- McDowell, John (1984). «De Re Senses». *Philosophical Quarterly* 34: pp. 283–294.
- McGinn, Colin (2004). *Mindsight*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- Millar, Alan (2010). «Knowledge and Recognition». In *The Nature and Value of Knowledge: Three Investigations*, edited by Duncan Pritchard, Alan Millar and Adrian Haddock. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 121–242.
- O'Shaughnessy, Brian (2003). *Consciousness and the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Peacocke, Christopher (1985). «Imagination, Experience and Possibility». In *Essays on Berkeley*, edited by John Foster and Howard Robinson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 19–35.
- Podro, Michael (1998). *Depiction*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sartre, Jean–Paul (2004). *The Imaginary*. London: Routledge.
- Schier, Flint (1986). *Deeper into Pictures*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Scruton, Roger (1974). *Art and Imagination*. London: Methuen & Co.
- Searle, John (1983). *Intentionality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Stock, Kathleen (2008). «The Role of Imagining in Seeing–In». *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 66: pp. 365–380.
- Strawson, Peter (1970). «Imagination and Perception». In *Experience and Theory*, edited by Lawrence Forster and Joe William Swanson. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Velleman, David (2000). *The Possibility of Practical Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walton, Kendall (1990). *Mimesis as Make–Believe*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- Walton, Kendall (2002). «Depiction, Perception, and Imagination: Responses to Richard Wollheim». *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 60: pp. 27–35.
- Wiesing, Lambert (2005/2009). *Artificial Presence*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1984). *Zettel*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Wollheim, Richard (1973). «Imagination and Identification». In *On Art and the Mind*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- Wollheim, Richard (1980). «Seeing–as, Seeing–in, and Pictorial Representation». In *Art and Its Objects*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 205–226.
- Wollheim, Richard (1984). *The Thread of Life*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Wollheim, Richard (1989). *Painting as an Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wollheim, Richard (2003). «What Makes Representational Painting Truly Visual?». *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl., 78: pp. 131–147.