Scruton's Musical Experiences

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Abstract
Roger Scruton's account of the nature of music and our experience of it foregrounds the *imagination*. It is a particularly interesting and promising 'non-realist' view in the aesthetics of music, in the sense that it does not postulate aesthetic properties of music that we represent in musical experience. In this paper I critically examine both Scruton's view and his main argument for it.

1. Scruton's aspect theory

1.1 Belief and imagination

Scruton's view is that musical experience is a kind of 'aspect' experience, whereby sounds are represented in experience as falling under ordinary concepts, such as concepts of emotion, motion and height, but we do not *believe* that the sounds really fall under those concepts – instead we *imagine* them doing so. The experience of music is an imaginative experience or an aspect experience in which ordinary non-aesthetic concepts of things figure, but they are entertained or imagined as opposed to being believed to apply to what is experienced.[1] On Scruton's view, musical experience is not an awareness of distinctively aesthetic qualities but an imaginative experience of ordinary properties. So what is distinctive of musical experience lies in the attitude (imagination) not the contents (the things and properties we think of).[2] The kind of mental state that we have in musical experience is imagination or imaginative perception.

[1] See especially Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997: 88–94; but see also Scruton, 'Understanding Music', in *The Aesthetic Understanding*, Manchester: Carcanet, 1983; and Scruton, *Art and Imagination*, London: Methuen, 1974.

[2] Jerrold Levinson's account of our experience of music is similar to Scruton's since Levinson thinks that musical experience involves *imagining* a musical 'persona' in the music, rather than the awareness of aesthetic properties of the music. See Jerrold Levinson 'Musical Expressiveness', in *The Pleasures of Aesthetics*, Ithaca; Cornell. 1996; and Levinson, 'Musical

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On such a view, imagination is presumed to be a mental kind distinct from belief. So an adequate account of the distinction between belief and imagination is needed. The trouble is that no one has a fully satisfying account of what the difference between them consists in. Nevertheless, there are plausible features by which we can tell whether a mental state is one of belief or imagination. Candidate criteria are that they differ either in causal or in normative ways or both. For example, belief and imagination tend to cause and rationalize different kinds of behaviour. If I believe I am in a burning building, and I don't want to be burned, then it will be rational to try to escape or to try to put out the fire, and I will probably try to do one of those actions. But if I merely imagine and do not believe that I am in a burning building – perhaps I am watching a play or film – then those actions are not rational and I am unlikely to do them. In these respects imagination and belief differ and so we can tell them apart.

To understand the issue about musical experience, we need to grasp more than the distinction between belief and imagination; we also need to grasp a distinction between perceptual correlates of belief and imagination: there is the phenomenon of imaginative seeing of the sort we engage in when we see a face in a cloud or a duck in the duck-rabbit ambiguous picture – these are 'aspects' that we see. And this seems different from ordinary perceptual experience. How can we tell these mental states apart? One way would be to say that perceptual experiences rationalize beliefs and are not directly subject to the will, whereas imaginative aspect perceptual experiences do not rationalize beliefs and seem in principle to be subject to the will.[3] Given that there are criteria for distinguishing belief and imagination or between perceptual experience and aspectual imaginative experience, the debate over musical experience can go ahead.

1.2 Metaphor and Imagination

Scruton arrives at his thesis about the nature of music and our experience of it from the thesis that emotion *descriptions* of music are

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Expressiveness as Hearability-as-Expression', in his *Contemplating Art*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

[3] Colin McGinn, *Mindsight: Image, Dream, Meaning*, Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 2004.

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typically metaphorical. I call this the 'Aesthetic Metaphor Thesis'. This is a thesis that Scruton has foregrounded in his philosophy of music.[4]

However, Scruton also claims that metaphors enter into our *experience* of music.[5] But this cannot be meant literally. Scruton's view is not merely one about *linguistic* description. It is also about musical *experience*. Scruton is appealing to certain mental states, those involved in seeing aspects – imaginative perception – and he thinks that our aesthetic judgments about music derive from mental states of that sort. But the Aesthetic Metaphor Thesis is one about *linguistic description*, not about musical *experience*.[6] Scruton thinks that aesthetic linguistic descriptions in terms of emotion, motion or height are metaphorical, but he would say that this claim does not go far enough. The Aesthetic Metaphor Thesis is one thing; Scruton's aspect perception theory is another. Asserting that theory is a further claim that Scruton makes, over and above noting the metaphoricality of emotion descriptions, and I do not endorse this view of musical experience. Although I reject Scruton's aspect perception theory, I think we should celebrate Scruton's emphasis on the prevalence of metaphor in our description of music.[7]

[4] Scruton *Art and Imagination*, *The Aesthetics of Music*, and 'Reply to Budd', *British Journal of Aesthetics* **44**, 2004: 184–187. See also his illustrious forebears, Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, Indianapolis: Hackett. 1986, chapter 3; and Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol*, New York: Prometheus, 1956. This thesis seems to me to be very important. I defend it in Nick Zangwill: 'Music, Metaphor and Emotion', *Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism* **65**, 2007: 391–400.

[5] For example, Scruton *The Aesthetics of Music*: 78.

[6] Scruton's appeal to 'metaphor' is therefore metaphorical. For the Aesthetic Metaphor Thesis, by contrast, aesthetic linguistic description is literally metaphorical. On Scruton's use of the notion of metaphor, see Malcolm Budd: 'Musical Movement and Aesthetic Metaphors', *British Journal of Aesthetics* **43**, 2003: 209–223, section IV.

[7] Those who take emotion descriptions of music literally must say that the music stands in some *relation* (expression?, arousal?, representation?...) to real emotions. But in our common experience and thought about music, we do not locate features described in emotion terms somewhere else, such as in the composer or in an audience. Just as colours do not look like relations or dispositions, but look like simple properties (see Mark Johnston, 'How to Speak of the Colors', *Philosophical Studies* **68**, 1992: 221–263), so sadness in music does not seem relational; sadness seems like a non-relational property of the sounds. Both the realist and Scruton can respect musical phenomenology, whereas literalists flout it.

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On Scruton's view, the aesthetic judgments that derive from imaginative experiences are not judgments about aesthetic properties. By contrast, according to Aesthetic Realism, there *are* aesthetic qualities of sounds that we represent in musical experience. Furthermore we have thoughts about music that are beliefs about those aesthetic qualities, and we reach for ordinary *words*, and use them metaphorically, to describe them. So the Aesthetic Metaphor Thesis is compatible with aesthetic realism. I call this alternative position 'realist' not 'cognitivist', for the reason that imagination is plausibly classified as a *cognitive* act, whereas the whole point is to distinguish beliefs from imagination and understand aesthetic experience and judgment in terms of the former not the latter.[8]

Metaphors can be more or less appropriate. And what the appropriateness of emotion, motion or spatial metaphors consists in is given by the nature of musical experience. Thus what appropriateness consists in depends on the aesthetic realism issue. An aesthetic realist will say that emotion, motion or spatial descriptions of music are metaphorical description of aesthetic properties of music. So they are more or less appropriate in virtue of being more or less faithful to the aesthetic properties of the music. On such a view, there is bound to be a loose relation of fit between metaphor and property. By contrast, on a non-realist view of Scruton's kind, metaphors are appropriate in virtue of the concepts employed in the imaginative act by which we apprehend the music. We hear the music imaginatively as sad, as in motion, as high, and that is why the literal words for the properties of emotion, motion and height are suitable metaphors for describing the sounds that we hear in those ways. Other non-realist writers may have different accounts of metaphorical appropriateness.

[8] The realist view is occupied by Eddy Zemach, *Real Beauty*, State Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1997; Nick Zangwill 2003: 'Aesthetic Realism I', in *Oxford Companion to Aesthetics*, Jerrold Levinson (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press; and perhaps Peter Kivy, *New Essays on Musical Understanding*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

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2. Scruton's argument against realism

2.1 Scruton's argument against realism and the thought/language reply

Scruton argues from the Aesthetic Metaphorical Thesis description to his aspect perception theory. He first put forward the argument in his 1974 book *Art and Imagination*.[9] Here is how he puts the argument in his 1997 book *The Aesthetics of Music*:

> If we say that the Countess's aria 'Dove sono' from *Le nozze di Figaro* actually possesses the sadness that we hear in it, we face the question whether this sadness is the same property as that possessed by a sad person or another property. It surely cannot be the *same* property: the sadness of persons is a property that only conscious organisms can possess. But it cannot be *another* property, since it is precisely *this* word – 'sad' – with its normal meaning, that we apply to the music, and this is the whole point of the description. To say that the word ascribes, in this use, another property, is to say that it has another sense – in other words that it is not used metaphorically but ambiguously. If that were so, we could equally have used some other word to make the point, and someone could be an expert at noticing the property we describe as musical sadness, even though he vehemently denies that the music can be sad. (He might even say that it makes no sense to describe the music as sad.) But that is surely absurd: if he refuses to describe the music as sad, then he has not noticed the sadness. It follows that the word 'sad' attributes to the music neither the property that is possessed by sad people, nor any other property. It therefore attributes no property at all.[10]

The realist response that I gave way back in 1991 was very simple, and it still seems to me to be roughly right.[11] I argued that once one makes a firm thought/talk distinction, it is then clear that Scruton's argument from the sameness of linguistic meaning does not show that there is no distinctively aesthetic thought (or 'sense'). For one word can be used to express different concepts, and the aesthetic concept can refer to an aesthetic property while the non-aesthetic concept

[9] Scruton *Art and Imagination*: 38–43 and 44 where he summarizes the argument.

[10] Scruton *The Aesthetics of Music*: 154.

[11] Zangwill *Metaphysics of Beauty*, Ithaca; Cornell, 2001, chapter 10.

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does not. The realist view is that music has aesthetic properties that we think about with aesthetic concepts but which we describe using nonaesthetic emotion *words* that are not literally meant. This is an alternative non-literalist view to Scruton's view. Non-literalist views come in realist and non-realist varieties. Scruton's non-realist view might be right, but his argument from metaphorical descriptions does not establish that view. Metaphor obviously afflicts our *talk* but not obviously our *thought* and *experience* of music. So the realist view is still in play. That cleanly breaks Scruton's argument.

It is true that the realist is then faced with various explanatory burdens. One of these is the problem of saying exactly what the relation is between the aesthetic and nonaesthetic concepts that we express linguistically with the same words. In 1991, I proposed a causal account of this relation. Malcolm Budd challenged that account[12] and I have responded to those criticisms.[13] Budd also criticized my commitment to the 'Essential Metaphor Thesis', which is the thesis that many aesthetic properties *must* be described metaphorically.[14] I hope soon to address those arguments. Realism may also be subject to other difficulties. Nevertheless, whether or not there are good arguments against realism, Scruton's argument fails to refute realism and establish some non-realist view or his particular non-realist view.

2.2 Why does scruton overlook aesthetic realism?: First reason, metaphor

One thing that might explain why Scruton seems to overlook the space for realism is his view of metaphor. Scruton's view is quite near that of Donald Davidson, who Scruton anticipates.[15] But Scruton's view is slightly more restrictive than Davidson's. Both share the idea that there is no metaphorical linguistic meaning and that words used metaphorically mean what they do when normally used.[16] However, Davidson allows that a metaphor may 'make us

[12] Malcolm Budd, 'Aesthetic Realism and the Emotional Qualities of Music', *British Journal of Aesthetics* **45**, 2005: 111–122.

[13] In Nick Zangwill. 'Aesthetic Concepts and Musical Aesthetic Realism', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 2010.

[14] In Nick Zangwill, Music, Essential Metaphor and Private Language, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 2010.

[15] Scruton, *Art and Imagination*; Donald Davidson, 'What Metaphors Mean', in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.

[16] Scruton *The Aesthetics of Music*: 84.

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notice' characteristics of things other than those the word usually refers to. Hence there is room for aesthetic realism, since a word used metaphorically may bring us to notice an aesthetic property, although it is not referred to by the word. By contrast, in his book *The Aesthetics of Music*, Scruton commits himself to the view that the *point* of metaphor always lies in its inviting a certain imaginative experience or aspect perception; He writes:

> The point of . . . a metaphor [is] not to describe an object, but to *change its aspect*, so that we respond to it in another way.[17]

This is implausible, as a general claim. Davidson's view is broader. Of course a metaphor does not describe what the word usually does, but the point of a metaphor can be to lead us to *see* and even *believe* something, not necessarily to *imagine* something, as Scruton thinks is generally true. Davidson's account of the point of metaphor is a little broader than Scruton's, and that extra room is enough to allow the aesthetic realist comfortable living space. Moreover Davidson's more hospitable broader view is surely independently more plausible, since metaphors can and often do bring us to know about the world, not just to imagine things.

2.3 Why does scruton overlook aesthetic realism?: Second reason, the 'private language argument'

A second explanation may lie in Scruton's acceptance of a standard reading of Wittgenstein's so-called 'Private Language Argument'.[18] Like many commentators, Scruton takes the 'Private Language Argument' to have a negative consequences for our inner mental states. This consequence is often called 'anti-Cartesian' (by commentators, though not by Wittgenstein). The 'Cartesian' view, allegedly under attack, is that there are some 'private' qualities of our experience that we can think about only because we are intimately aware of them, and which cannot be communicated in literal public language. In fact, this 'Anti-Cartesian' conclusion seems to be stronger than anything that the so-called 'Private Language Argument' *could* possibly show, since the 'Private Language Argument' passages are concerned with the meaning of the *language* with which we talk

[17] Scruton *The Aesthetics of Music*: 84.

[18] Scruton, 'The First Person', in *Sexual Desire*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986, appendix 1; see also his *Art and Imagination:* 10–11 and *Modern Philosophy*, London: Sinclair Stevenson, 1994, chapter 5.

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about inner states, not the inner states themselves.[19] Nevertheless, the 'Private Language Argument' is often taken by commentators to show that there cannot be *thoughts* that are incommunicable in literal terms.

My own view of Wittgenstein (to put it confrontationally) is that there is no 'Private Language Argument' in Wittgenstein, and if there were, it would be flawed; and there is no 'Anti-Cartesian' conclusion in Wittgenstein, and if there were, it would be implausible. I have not the space to substantiate this here[20]; but it is at least clear that the authority of Wittgenstein cannot be invoked against aesthetic realism. Nevertheless, Scruton's acceptance of Wittgenstein, as he is standardly interpreted, makes some sense of his overlooking the realist option in the philosophy of music. For the realist view demands that there are literally incommunicable thoughts about real aesthetic properties, which only metaphor or other non-literal devices can convey. In fact Wittgenstein, as he is standardly interpreted, makes a non-realist view of music more or less compulsory, given the non-literalism about emotion descriptions of music. If there were a good 'Private Language Argument' and a plausible 'Anti-Cartesian' conclusion, then realism about both sensations and aesthetic properties would be ruled out because it could not be the case that we can *think* of the properties of sensations and of aesthetic properties even though they are describable in *language* only by means of metaphor. For that would make the thoughts 'private' in the sense that we do not and cannot describe them literally in public language. I say this by way of diagnosing why Scruton's overlooks aesthetic realism or sees no space for it. Subtract the (flawed) so-called 'Private Language Argument' and subtract the (implausible) 'Anti-Cartesianism' and space for aesthetic realism opens up.

3. Two inconclusive arguments against Scruton

Having critically examined Scruton's argument for his view. I now turn to arguments against his view. I begin with the two inconclusive arguments before moving on to two arguments that I believe carry weight.

[19] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Blackwell: Oxford, 1953.

[20] I recommend Jaakko Hintikka and Merrill B. Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

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3.1 First inconclusive argument: The Will

Scruton claims that belief and imagination differ in the way that they are subject to the will. On a simple account, imagination is subject to the will whereas belief is not. The objection to Scruton, then, would be that in our musical experience, in most cases, we have no choice over our experience. For example, if music sounds heavy, then in most cases, hearing it as delicate is impossible for us. We cannot hear it one way or another as we please. The experience is not subject to our will. Therefore it seems that our experience of music is not a matter of imagination.

But this objection is not decisive. Scruton can reply that the connection between imagination and the will is not straightforward. The view might be merely that imagination is sometimes subject to the will, or that it can be subject to the will. Thus it might still be true that there are some things that we cannot help imagining, for example, if we are frightened. And our visual imaginative experience of seeing lines on a page as a face is not under our control. Musical imaginative experiences may be similar to these kinds of cases. If so, the fact that we have no choice in our musical experience does not show that musical experience is not a matter of imagination.

This point might be turned around. Scruton might say that we do often have a choice in our musical experience. When we listen to music, we may choose to listen to the melody, the base, the harmonic progression, the rhythm, and so on. And he might argue that the fact we have some choice in our musical experience supports his imagination theory. The possibility of choosing what to listen to seems to have more in common with seeing aspects (when we look at duck-rabbits or Necker cubes) than the ordinary perception of physical objects and properties in front of one, where we have no choice over what to experience.[21]

However, on a realist view, any stretch of music is likely to be complex, in that it has many aesthetic properties that depend on different nonaesthetic properties of the sounds. A stretch of music will *bristle* with different aesthetic properties, and in listening to the music and its properties we may selectively attend to some aesthetic properties rather than others. This is similar to the way, at a crowded party, one may listen to different conversations at will. Nevertheless, what one hears is there at the party, not partly constituted by my acts of listening. We are just focusing our attention on one part of reality rather than another. Similarly, in musical

[21] Scruton put this argument to me.

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experience, when one attends at will to different aspects of the stretch of music, one is not necessarily deploying imagination; we may instead be focusing on some aesthetic properties of the music rather than others. There are many sonic elements of a stretch of sound that constitute music, and one fusion of some but not all of those elements generates certain aesthetic properties, while a different fusion of the elements generates different aesthetic properties. Suppose, simplifying greatly, that a work contains just four notes; A, C, E and G. And let us (perhaps impossibly) ignore the temporal dimension, which would add further complexity. Then, if I count correctly, we may attend to 10 combinations of the musical elements: <A, C>; <A, E>; <A, G>; <C, E>; <C, G>; <E, G>; <A, C, E>; <A, C, G>; <C, E, G>; and <A, C, E, G>. And we may attend to the aesthetic properties set up by each of these fusions. This is a large simplification, but it is enough to see that where a stretch of sound bristles with aesthetic properties, we may, in our aesthetic attention, focus on some aesthetic properties rather than others. This focusing of our attention, which is indeed subject to the will, need not be a matter of imagination.[22]

3.2 Second inconclusive argument: Phenomenology

It might be argued that the phenomenology of musical experience weighs against Scruton's non-realism and in favour of aesthetic realism: our musical experience presents itself to us as an awareness of aesthetic characteristics of the music, which we describe in terms of emotion, motion or height. Those characteristics, which are the objects of musical experience, seem to us to be *in* the music, and they seem to cause our experience of them, and thus are not partly constituted by that experience.[23] Those qualities of the music *cause* our musical experience and those experiences are *of* the music and

[22] In *Art and Imagination*, belief and the imagination are distinguished by the fact that it makes sense to order someone to imagine something not to believe it (Scruton *Art and Imagination*: 96; see also McGinn, *Mindsight*: 12–17). But if we are distinguishing imaginative perception from perceptual experience, this criterion does not work. One can order someone to pay attention to certain features of the world that they are perceiving.

[23] A parallel sort of objection is urged by Paul Boghossian and David Velleman against secondary-quality views of colour. See Paul Boghossian and David Velleman, 'Colour as a Secondary Quality', *Mind*, 1989: 81–103.

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of those qualities. Therefore they are represented in musical experience as distinct from those experiences and impacting on them.

This objection has some force but it is not decisive. For Scruton could reply that the experience of an aspect of a thing, such as a face in a cloud, does present itself as an awareness of something there *in* the cloud – namely, the face. Similarly, the duck in the duck-rabbit picture, when we are seeing the duck aspect, appears to be there in the picture. It seems to be what our experience is of, and it seems to be the cause of my experience. Thus, in a sense, the aspect appears to be there in the world, and that appearance is all that matters as far as the phenomenological objection goes. Is there some more robust sense in which we represent aesthetic properties, such as delicacy or sadness, in out musical experience as being there in the music? Perhaps. But the onus of proof seems to have shifted back onto the realist to show this.

4. Two more effective arguments against Scruton

4.1 First more effective argument: Normativity

Scruton's aesthetic non-realism faces a serious problem over accounting for the norms of correctness that we think apply to our musical judgments and experiences. If musical experience is a kind of aspect perceptual experience, then we need to understand how it can be that not all aspect experiences are equally good – that some are more appropriate than others. If the experience of music is an awareness of real (mind-independent) properties of the music, as the aesthetic realist says, then there is no problem, since these (mind-independent) properties are the source of the correctness and incorrectness of musical experiences and judgements. But seeing aspects is not seeing real (mind-independent) properties, so we need some other explanation of the aspiration of our judgements to correctness.[24]

[24] For statements of this objection, see Paul Boghossian, 'On Hearing the Music in the Sound: Scruton on Musical Expression', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* **60**, 2002: 51; and Zangwill 'Aesthetic Realism I', part 2. Levinson's view is also non-realist, and like Scruton, he appeals to the imagination; so he too faces a burden over explaining the source of the normativity bearing on the imaginative experiences that he thinks experiencing music involves.

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This normativity objection is powerful but not decisive. Perhaps Scruton can supplement his theory so as to provide the needed normativity. Compare Richard Wollheim's theory of pictorial representation. Wollheim thinks that certain experiences – what he calls 'seeing-in' experiences – are needed to understand pictorial representation. When we look at pictures, we have certain seeing-in experiences, such as seeing a face in marks on paper or seeing a man in the moon. Yet Wollheim supplies the normativity needed by this account – since pictures represent some things and not others – by saying that correct seeing-in experiences are those that correspond to the artist's intention.[25] I am not suggesting that Scruton should appeal to the composer's or musician's intentions, just that some such account is in principle available to Scruton.

Nevertheless, when we consider objections to realism, such as those of Scruton and others, we should keep in mind the advantage that realism has over its rivals when it comes to explaining normativity. This advantage is the comparative *ease* of providing a plausible source of the correctness and incorrectness that we assume (in common sense aesthetic thought) to apply to aesthetic judgments. That source is reality: correct aesthetic judgments are correct in virtue of aesthetic facts, incorrect aesthetic judgments are not. Some things really are beautiful, graceful or delicate. And that aesthetic reality – the beauty, grace or delicacy of things – is the source of the norms of correctness and incorrectness of aesthetic judgments about that reality. By contrast, non-realists, such as Hume, Kant and Scruton have to work hard to explain how, given that aesthetic judgments lack aesthetic representational content, and given that there are no (mind-independent) aesthetic properties, some judgments are nevertheless better than others; some are correct or appropriate while others are incorrect or inappropriate. Hume, Kant and Scruton all have the virtue of seeing this problem and squarely facing it. But their solutions are all complex and less obviously compelling than the realist's account. This consideration is not decisive, for there are other dialectically important considerations. Nevertheless, it certainly has weight.

Scruton thinks that the source of the correctness and incorrectness of aesthetic judgement is to be found in morality.[26] He appeals to the

[25] Richard Wollheim, 'Seeing-as, Seeing-in, and Pictorial Representation', in *Art and its Objects*, second edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

[26] Scruton *Art and Imagination*, chapter 16; and *The Aesthetics of Music*, chapter 12.

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moral virtues and vices of the person having imaginative aesthetic experiences. But such a suggestion faces obvious difficulties.[27] Famously, moral virtue and aesthetic discrimination often dramatically diverge: there are aesthetically discriminating brutes and aesthetically blind moral saints. So it is difficult to see how aesthetic judgement and moral virtue are to be linked so that the latter is the source of the correctness and incorrectness of the former. Scruton points out that we sometimes describe works of art aesthetically in terms that are typically moral in import, such as 'sincere' or 'sentimental'.[28] But this does not establish a connection between our aesthetic and moral faculties. For such descriptions can be interpreted metaphorically, like descriptions in terms of emotion, motion and height. To be sure, the moral terms that we use in metaphorical aesthetic descriptions reveal our moral outlook. It is only to be expected that the concepts that we deploy in the description of music connect with our social and moral life. But that does not mean that it is a form of moral evaluation or that the mental states involved in listening to music when moral descriptions are used are exercises of the virtues that the word in its normal moral use would indicate.

Thus Scruton does not provide anything that speaks in favour of a moral source of aesthetic normativity, and thus we have nothing to counteract the thought that normativity is a consideration that favours aesthetic realism.

4.2 Second more effective argument: Univocity

A second problem for Scruton's view is univocity. He gives one theory of the kind of musical experience that is involved in the experience of 'sadness', 'motion', 'height' and other metaphorically described features, and he must give a different theory of the musical experience that is involved in the experience of musical beauty and ugliness, since there are no metaphorical linguistic descriptions there, and there is therefore no temptation to appeal to imagination in analyzing the mental state in question. Only in the theory of the former does the appeal to imagination have some plausibility. But then Scruton has a fractured theory. A realist by contrast gives a univocal theory. Both 'beauty' and 'sadness' are aesthetic properties of the music and the mental act in question by which we

[27] See Zangwill 'Aesthetic Realism I', part 5.

[28] Scruton *Art and Imagination*: 245–249; *The Aesthetics of Music*: 386–390 and 485–488.

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apprehend them in neither case involves imagination but is a matter, firstly, of the pleasure taken in those properties, and secondly, of our beliefs about them. A fractured theory is problematic because in common sense aesthetic thought, 'verdictive' properties, like beauty and ugliness, stand in a particular intimate relation to 'substantive' aesthetic properties like delicacy, elegance and sadness. The relation is that the substantive features are *ways* that things have the verdictive features.[29] Something may be beautiful by being delicate. One obtains because of the other. And in musical experience we are aware that one is instantiated because of the instantiation of the other. Hence a univocal theory of both makes more sense. For the realist, one property instantiation holds in virtue of another. For a pure sentimentalist, one sentiment is related in the right way to another sentiment. But for Scruton, sadness is apprehended by the imagination, and beauty by a quite different kind of mental act. So the account of our musical experience fractures along that line where there should be a common account.

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On an aesthetic realist view, music has (mind-independent) aesthetic properties that we describe metaphorically, which are the intentional object of musical experience and judgement. Scruton's arguments against aesthetic realism can be rendered harmless by making a sharp thought/talk distinction; so different concepts are deployed in the metaphorical and non-metaphorical uses of the same words. There are of course other arguments against aesthetic realism. But the aesthetic realist account of music has advantages over Scruton's imagination account: in particular, it can more easily explain the normative aspirations of aesthetic judgements, and it can provide a univocal account of them.[30]

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[29] Zangwill *Metaphysics of Beauty*, chapters 1 and 2.

[30] This paper was given as a talk at a conference in honour of Roger Scruton organized by myself and my colleague Andy Hamilton in Durham castle in July 2008. A selection of papers from the conference appeared in the *British Journal of Aesthetics* in October 2009. Thanks to Ariel Kernberg for comments.

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