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ON SUPPOSING, IMAGINING, AND RESISTING

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of
Kentucky

By
Eric Matthew Peterson

Director: Dr. Clare Batty, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Lexington, Kentucky

2017

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

ON SUPPOSING, IMAGINING, AND RESISTING

My research focuses on the philosophy of imagination. Within the analytic tradition, there recently has been a growing interest in imagination. The current research lies at the crossroads of various sub-disciplines of philosophy, including aesthetics, moral psychology, ethics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind. My work joins this choir as a voice from within philosophy of mind.

My dissertation addresses two questions within philosophy of imagination. What I call the *Relation Question* asks what is the proper relation between supposition and imagination, and what I call the *Unification Question* asks what is the imagination. With regards to the *Relation Question*, philosophers answer it in one of two ways: either supposition and imagination are distinct mental capacities (what I call two-nature views) or supposition is a kind of imagination (what I call one-nature views). I argue that both views fail to explain all of the features central to the relation. With regards to the *Unification Question*, many philosophers doubt it has an answer because there is no clear way to unify the disparate activities of imagination. I argue that this skepticism is the result of mischaracterizing the relation between imagining and supposing. Thus, I answer both the *Relation* and *Unification Questions* by arguing that both imagining and supposing (as we typically understand these terms) are both instances of what I call the as-if-true attitude. I call this the as-if-true attitude view of imagining. The explanatory payoff of this is that my view can explain all of the features central to the relation without positing two distinct mental capacities (as two-nature views do) and without getting facts about supposition wrong (as one-nature views do). It also gives us a way of seeing how we might unify the different activities of imagination.

Finally, I demonstrate that my view has application to what is known in the literature as the phenomenon of imaginative resistance. This phenomenon has to do with competent imaginers failing to comply with invitations to imagine certain propositions. It has been noted in the literature that there is variation to this phenomenon, where some people experience it and some do not. Some philosophers attempt to explain this by appealing to contextual factors. Thus, I call

them *Contextual Variant Views*. I argue that these views fail to account for all of variation. I show that from my as-if-true attitude view comes another view that I call *Constraint Variant View*. I argue that this view can account for all of the variation of imaginative resistance.

KEYWORDS: Imagination, Supposition, Constraints, As-If-True Attitude, Imaginative Resistance

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ON SUPPOSING, IMAGINING, AND RESISTING

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For Randi Beth, my lovely bride. For my children, Jude, Ezra, August, and Emerie

In memory of Maggie Sophia

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A friend of mine told me that the most important characteristic for writing a dissertation is not intelligence, but endurance. I thought that this was an overstatement until I began writing this dissertation. Writing a dissertation is like running a marathon. You need both endurance and help along the way. As I am crossing the finish line, I am not sure whence the endurance came, but I do know who helped me, and I need to acknowledge them.

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Dissertation Overview

What is the imagination? Answering this question has proved difficult for philosophers. Many philosophers consider the question too difficult (if not impossible) to answer in part due to the challenge of unifying the many different characterizations and activities of the imagination. For instance, there are taxonomic challenges with regards to the different uses and meanings of the term (Gendler 2011; cf. also Strawson 1982, and Walton 1990). Similarly, there are challenges in unifying the different explanatory roles for which we call upon the imagination (Kind 2013). Because of these challenges, and others, for ease of reference, call this question the Unification Question. Related to this question is another difficult question, namely, the question of the relation between imagination and other speculative mental states such as supposing and conceiving. Call this the Relation Question (from hereon I restrict this question to only imagining and supposing). As Kind (2016) notes, the answer to the Relation Question depends importantly on what the imagination is.

In this dissertation, I answer both the Unification Question and the Relation Question. My argument focuses on answering the Relation Question. I develop and defend a view that all imagining is a kind of supposing. For reasons that will become clear below, I call this view the As-If-True Attitude view, or AIT view for short. I, then, return to the Unification question, and I argue that this view gives us an answer to this question as well. As I argue, an answer to this question has proven difficult for philosophers because we have mischaracterized the relation between imagining and supposing. Once we rightly characterize this relation, we arrive at

the right characterization of the imagination that unifies the different activities of imagination.

In chapter one of this dissertation, I focus on existing answers to the Relation Question, and I argue that they all fail. First, I propose a taxonomy by which we can group existing answers to the Relation Question. Existing answers fall into one of two groups. What I call *two-nature views* hold that imagining and supposing are distinct mental capacities; and what I call *one-nature views* hold that supposing is a kind of imagining. Second, I delineate a set of features which I argue constitutes an explanandum for any answer to this question. Central to the set are two broad differences between imagining and supposing and one specific similarity between imagining and supposing. Finally, I offer reasons why all current views fail to explain this set of features as a whole. In positing two distinct mental capacities, I argue that two-nature views are uneconomical and fail to explain the similarity between supposing and imagining. In positing that supposing is a kind of imagining, I argue that one-nature views get facts about supposition wrong and, as a result, they fail to explain the differences.

In chapter two of this dissertation, I propose and defend a new answer to the Relation Question. First, I propose and develop a new view of the relation between imagination and supposition that I call the AIT view. I posit what I call the *as-if-true attitude*, and I help myself to a notion discussed in the literature referred to as 'constraints'. As we will see, the constraints are different mental mechanisms and capacities that can limit what can be imagined. I argue that both imagining and supposing, as they are often understood, are both instances of the as-if-true attitude.

What makes them different are different constraints that get placed on the as-if-true attitude. Second, I show how the AIT view succeeds where the current views fail. Unlike two-nature views, the AIT view does not hold that imagining and supposing are distinct mental capacities. Because of this, I show that the view can explain the specific similarity between imagining and supposing. Unlike current one-nature views, I do not take supposing to be a kind of imagining. Because of this, the AIT view does not get facts about supposition wrong. As a result, the AIT view can explain the differences between supposing and imagining. Finally, I show how this view not only offers an answer to the Relation Question, but that it also offers an answer to the Unification Question.

In chapter three of this dissertation, I apply the AIT view to what is called the phenomenon of imaginative resistance. This phenomenon can be characterized as competent imaginers failing to comply with invitations to imagine certain propositions. It has been noted in the literature that there is variation to this phenomenon, where some people experience it and some do not. Some philosophers attempt to explain this by appealing to contextual factors. I call those views *Contextual Variant Views*. I argue that *Contextual Variant Views* fail to account for all of variation. I show that the AIT view draws our attention to another view—what I call *Constraint Variant View*. I argue that this view can account for all of the variation of imaginative resistance.

Supposition vs. Imagination

Chapter One

How should we characterize the relation between imagination and supposition?

Call this the *Relation Question*. There are two types of view that attempt to answer this question—what I will call *one-nature views* and *two-nature views*. Two-nature views hold that supposition and imagination are distinct mental capacities. Current one-nature views argue that supposing is somehow a kind of imagining.¹ In this chapter, I argue that both types of view fail to rightly characterize the relation for different reasons. In Chapter 2, I develop and defend a view that avoids these problems and thus succeeds in answering the Relation Question.

The structure of this paper is as follows: section 1.1 provides some necessary stage setting. In particular, I give an overview of the Relation Question. I also argue for a set of criteria that any view of the relation must account for. Section 1.2 discusses *two-nature views*. I argue that they fail to explain all of the features central to the relation. Section 1.3 discusses *one-nature views*. I argue that they also fail to explain all of the features.

§ 1.1 Stage Setting

The reasons given in the literature for why we should make a distinction between supposition and imagination seem to fall into two broad categories: things that we can and cannot do with each mental activity, and things that each mental

¹ In chapter two, I argue for a different kind of one-nature view, hence my qualification of ‘current’.

activity does or does not do to us. In particular, we can suppose more propositional contents than we can imagine, but in our imaginings we can experience more phenomenal contents. Call this difference the *Ability Difference*. Further, imagination does more to us, at least affectively, than supposition. Imagination can cause us to feel fear, anxiety, joy, and so on. Supposition does not usually do this to us. Call this difference the *Emotional Difference* (cf. also Arcangeli 2014). Thus, we can characterize the differences between supposition and imagination as follows:

Ability Difference: We are able to suppose more propositional contents than we can imagine; however, in our imaginings, we are able to experience in fine-grained ways phenomenal contents.

Emotional Difference: Supposition rarely triggers affect and desire; imagination very often triggers both affect and desire, and can even motivate us to action.

We can see the plausibility of the **Ability Difference** through reflecting on the fact that we can suppose just about anything with minimal effort. For instance, we can suppose that humans can fly like superman, that there are finite prime numbers, and that contradictions are true. However, we cannot imagine a contradiction. This is due to the fact that we cannot form an image of a contradiction. Yet, the imagination has an ability that supposition lacks. I am referring to the imagination's ability to form images that allows us to have very vivid experiences. When we suppose contents, we do not experience those contents in any way. Related to this, Weatherson (2004) suggests that supposition can be more coarse-grained in ways that imagination cannot. When I suppose for the sake of argument, I rarely if ever fill in details or embellish my thoughts, and so on.

However, filling in details and embellishing is at the core of most imaginative activities.

We can also see the plausibility of the **Ability Difference** (and implicitly the **Emotional Difference**) through reflecting on what has been called the puzzle of imaginative resistance. The puzzle arises from the apparent asymmetry of response between imagining descriptive errors and imagining what we take to be moral or aesthetic errors. Moran (1994) claims that this puzzle can only arise with imagining and not supposing.² As a result, he claims that the puzzle gives us a reason to keep supposition distinct from imagination. Gendler (2000) also uses this puzzle as a way to demarcate imagination from supposition. In order to understand the asymmetry of response, Gendler has us consider the following two statements:

- (1) I am asked to make-believe that *P* holds (where *P* is some non-moral proposition that I do not believe holds).
- (2) I am asked to make-believe that *M* holds (where *M* is some moral proposition that I do not believe holds).

If I am asked to make-believe that *Hobbits live in Middle Earth*, I have no trouble complying with the request. This is an example of statement (1) above. However, if I am asked to make-believe that *female infanticide is a good*, I have resistance, to some degree, in complying with this request. This is an example of statement (2) above. The asymmetry of response between instances of (1) and (2) is what gives rise to the puzzle of imaginative resistance. Instances of (1) do not evoke imaginative resistance; where as, instances of (2) do evoke imaginative

² Moran's term for 'supposing' is hypothetical reasoning.

resistance. However, Gendler argues that this puzzle disappears in the activity of supposing:

(3) I am asked to *suppose for the sake of argument* that *P* holds (where *P* is some non-moral proposition that I do not believe holds).

(4) I am asked to *suppose for the sake of argument* that *M* holds (where *M* is some moral proposition that I do not believe holds).

When the request is for supposition rather than make-belief (i.e., imagining), then we do not experience the asymmetry. With no difficulty, I can suppose for the sake of argument that *Cantor's Theorem is false*. Likewise, without difficulty, I can suppose for the sake of the argument that *female infanticide is a good*. As a result, supposition is immune to the puzzle of imaginative resistance, whereas the imagination is not. This is why Gendler concludes that imagination is distinct from supposition. In fact, many philosophers agree that imaginative resistance illustrates one difference between imagining and supposing (cf., Doggett and Egan 2007, and Balcerak Jackson 2016)

We can see the plausibility of the **Emotional Difference** by reflecting on the fact that our imaginings often move us in very vivid and powerful ways. When we imaginatively engage novels, we can feel pity, hope, or indignation among other affective states for certain characters and their actions. Our supposings do not move us in the same way. This can be seen in Moran's (1994) characterization of the difference when he contrasts imaginative engagement with hypothetical reasoning, which he takes to be equivalent to supposition. According to Moran, hypothetical reasoning involves merely seeing what follows from the truth of some proposition, whereas "imagination with respect to emotional attitudes may require such things

as dramatic rehearsal, the right mood, the right experiences, a sympathetic nature” (Moran 1994, 105). Also, according to Moran, engaging imagination requires more effort and a greater conceptual and experiential repertoire than hypothetical reasoning or supposition. When the imagination is engaged it calls upon further mental, conative, and affective states. When I imagine that p , often my other mental states such as beliefs, desires, and emotions contribute in my imagining that p . When I suppose that p , I need not engage other mental states such as beliefs, desires, and emotions. For example, when I imagine that *Romeo and Juliet are about to commit suicide*, my background beliefs and other imaginings from the story, along with my desire that they thrive, all contribute to how I imagine the content. These affective and conative states make my imagining more vivid and salient. I do not merely imagine the proposition as true in order to see what follows logically from its truth, as I would if I were only supposing the proposition. Rather, I imagine it as being true and I imagine what it would be like—that is, in my imagining, I am carried along by all sorts of desires, affections, and imagery.

Related to the **Emotional Difference**, Doggett and Egan (2007) acknowledge what can be called the motivational difference between imagining and supposing. I lump the motivational difference under the **Emotional Difference**, primarily because it is our values, emotions and desires, broadly construed, that are responsible for our motivations. Doggett and Egan attempt to explain how our imagination can motivate us to act. As they point out, children are a good source of examples of imagination motivating action. “When they imagine that they are cats or elephants or cops or robbers, this can give rise to all sorts of behavior” (2).

Doggett and Egan point out that the motivation to act is missing when we suppose that something is the case.

Supposing for *reductio* that we are elephants does not motivate us at all; neither does supposing that we are immaterial souls or birds or....When we entertain the possibility that something is the case, we aren't so motivated. Merely entertaining the possibility that John McCain will be president in 2009 does not motivate us at all. Neither does entertaining the possibility that we are cops or robbers or....(Doggett and Egan 2007, 2)

According to Doggett and Egan, then, we have one more reason to demarcate supposition from imagination. Supposition does not motivate us to do anything; imagination very often motivates us to act in a variety of ways.³

In sum, both the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference** give us compelling reasons to think that supposition and imagination are distinct. As I mentioned above, we can do more with supposition, but the imagination does more to us (e.g., motivates us to action, moves us to tears, and so on). As will become evident later, another way to characterize this is that supposition is freer or less constrained. In contrast, imagination is less free or more constrained.⁴ Imagining often takes greater effort requiring a greater conceptual and experiential repertoire. Imagination often brings about further cognitive, conative, and affective states. Supposition does not. Supposition is immune to the puzzle of imaginative resistance; we can suppose just about anything with minimal effort. But there are

³ Balcerak Jackson (2016) argues that supposition motivates us to deliberate. Even if this is true, Doggett and Egan's point goes through that our imaginings can motivate us in more ways than supposition.

⁴ I will discuss what I mean by 'constraints' in chapter 2. For now, I use it an intuitive sense to refer to the various mental mechanisms and capacities that restrict which contents can be successfully imagined. I will give a more detailed analysis when I develop my view.

some things that we cannot imagine (logical contradictions) or resist imagining (moral and aesthetic errors), so imagining is not immune to the puzzle of imaginative resistance. Imagination motivates a variety of behavior. Supposition does not.

Some philosophers think that these differences favor two-nature views over one-nature views. However, before turning to such views it is worth considering some significant similarities that might warrant one-nature views over two-nature views.

Arcangeli (2014) describes some of the similarities between supposition and imagination. She argues that both imagination and supposition are will-dependent and truth-independent. They are both will-dependent in that successful performance of each activity depends on one's willingness to engage in that activity. They are both truth-independent in that we can bear each attitude to any content regardless of the truth-value of such contents.⁵ According to Arcangeli, these features help to contrast both supposition and imagination from belief. This is because belief is largely will-independent meaning that you cannot just believe anything at will, and belief is truth-dependent because it is sensitive to the truth-values of its contents. Additionally, supposition and imagination are both responsive to the inference mechanism. Essential to supposing is the holding of certain contents to be true in order to explore logical consequences.⁶ Yet, in our

⁵ Although they are similar in these respects, I will argue below that supposition is more will-dependent than imagination and that supposition is more truth independent than imagination.

⁶ Though in chapter two, I will argue that there is a distinction between what supposition is and what we do with supposition.

imaginings, we also make all sorts of inferences. This can be seen when children pretend. For instance, if a child is pretending to have a tea party and someone spills one of the tea cups onto a teddy bear, the child can successfully infer that the tea cup is now empty and “teddy” needs to be cleaned.⁷

While these similarities are important and should be explained on any view of the relation between supposition and imagination, there is one similarity that is most pressing for any view to explain. Weinberg and Mesin (2006) describe this similarity well:

It is rare to confuse either supposing or imagining with believing, but it seems fairly likely that we commonly confuse supposing and imagining with one another. A supposition may slide into a daydream via free association if one is not paying close attention, for example, and it may be impossible to say where the one activity leaves off and the other commences (194).

The observation seems to be about vague boundaries between supposing and imagining. As an example of this, consider Jackson’s (1982) famous thought experiment about Mary. In particular, consider teaching this thought experiment to a freshman in an introduction to philosophy class. At first, you are asking the student to entertain certain propositions as if they are true. Mary is a scientist. She knows all of the physical facts about color. Though she has been confined to a black and white room for her entire life, she has normal color vision. By the end of the thought experiment, however, you do not merely ask your student to simply entertain certain propositions as if they are true. This is because when Mary is

⁷ I take this example from Leslie’s (1994a) famous psychological experiment that aims to show that children can make reliable inferences within their games of pretense. I will discuss this experiment further below.

released from her confinement and shown, for the first time a ripe, red tomato, you do not merely want the student to take this as true; rather, you want her to imagine the experience. The force of the thought experiment comes from imagining what it would be like for Mary to see red for the first time. The thought-experiment begins with an activity of supposing but clearly ends with a more robust activity of imagining. Still, it is not entirely clear where the one activity ends and the other begins. Does the robust activity of imagining begin only when she is released from the black and white room? Does it begin when one is attempting to picture her in the black and white room? Does it begin when one attempts to imagine what it would be like to know all of the physical facts about color? Reasons could be given to support any of these transitional points. As a result, it is unclear whether there is a specific transition from supposing to imagining. Arguably, many thought experiments have a structure like this, and so provide us with examples of confusing supposing with imagining. As Langland-Hassan (2015) claims the distinction between 'imagining' and 'supposing' does not come from folk psychology. Ordinary folk use the terms interchangeably.⁸

Although there is more than one similarity between imagining and supposing, I think that this particular similarity is of the most concern for any characterization of the relation. This is because the other similarities do not necessarily point to a particular characterization of the relation between supposing

⁸ Interestingly, at the 2016 SSPP Annual Conference, Michael Stuart presented results from a series of experiments that tried to disambiguate supposition from imagination among ordinary folk. Results were mixed, even after being primed about the differences between supposing and imagining, it seemed that the participants had a hard time not simply using 'supposition' and 'imagination' as interchangeable terms referring to roughly the same activity.

and imagining; however, the fact that we could confuse supposing with imagining does point to a particular characterization of the relation. For ease of reference, then, I will name this feature:

Similarity: Given that there are vague boundaries between supposition and imagination, it is possible to confuse one with the other.

The **Ability Difference**, the **Emotional Difference**, and **Similarity** together constitute a set of features that any view of the relation between supposition and imagination must explain. Despite this, both current one-nature views and two-nature views fail to account for at least one of them. In the rest of this chapter, I support this claim. In section 1.2, I will characterize two-nature views and demonstrate how they fail to explain **Similarity**. In section 1.3, I will characterize one-nature views and demonstrate how they fail to explain both the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference**.

§ 1.2 Two-Nature Views

Two-nature views draw on the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference** in arguing that supposition and imagination are two distinct mental capacities. Moran (1994), Gendler (2002), and Kind (2013) can all be read as endorsing something like a two-nature view, though none of them develop it explicitly as such. Recently, however, Balcerak Jackson (2016) has explicitly argued for such a position. Balcerak Jackson discusses what she calls the *common nature thesis*. According to this thesis, imagining, supposing, and conceiving are all

instances of the same basic cognitive capacity.⁹ This gives us a simple way of characterizing two-nature views. A view about the relation of supposing and imagining is two-nature just in case it rejects the *common nature thesis*—that is, it rejects that imagining and supposing are both instances of the same basic cognitive capacity. According to this view, then, imagining and supposing are the result of distinct mental capacities.

We can distinguish mental capacities by appealing to the distinct nature of each capacity. Consider two paradigmatically distinct mental capacities: belief and desire. The nature of belief is distinct from the nature of desire due to different directions of fit to reality as well as different functional roles in behavior. As has been rehearsed often, belief aims at the truth—it has a mind to world direction of fit; in contrast, desire aims at satisfaction—it has a mind to world direction of fit (cf. Humberstone, 1992). And the functional role of belief is to provide the information that satisfies desire. My desire for food and my belief that there is food in the pantry together explain my behavior of walking to the pantry and getting food. Thus, belief is a mental capacity that is distinct from the mental capacity of desire, and so on. Two-nature views such as Balcerak Jacksons' are committed to something similar about imagining and supposing. According to Balcerak Jackson, the differences between supposition and imagination are sufficient to establish that supposition and imagination have different natures and so belong to distinct mental capacities. The problem, as I already indicated, is that two-nature views cannot explain all of

⁹ Though she includes conceiving, I will drop it from this discussion.

the features that characterizes the relation between supposition and imagination. I will show this next.

1.2.1 Against Two-Nature Views

My case against two-nature views is two-fold: first, such views are uneconomical, and, second, such views fail to explain **Similarity**.

The first concern relies on an intuition almost as old as philosophy itself. For any two competing hypotheses or theories, we should prefer the simplest. This is sometimes referred to as “Ockham’s Razor” or the law of parsimony. Employing such a principle, it is unnecessary to posit two distinct mental capacities in order to explain features that one mental capacity can explain. As a result, if we can explain the set of features central to the relation between imagining and supposing without positing that each is a distinct mental capacity, then we should avoid positing that each is a distinct mental capacity.

The second concern is that two-nature views fail to explain **Similarity**. In order to see this, consider two paradigmatic distinct mental capacities: belief and fictional imagining. It is very rare to confuse one of these mental capacities with the other. Even in small children who are still developing cognitively, it is rare that they confuse belief with pretense (cf. Gendler 2003)¹⁰. Gendler (2003) draws out a principle from this fact that she calls the *quarantining principle*. This principle states that things do not come to be believed merely because they are pretended. A

¹⁰ Though Gendler uses ‘pretense’ in this article she does not distinguish it from imagining. Some philosophers want to keep the terms distinct reserving ‘pretense’ for overt behavior and ‘imagining’ for the mental act. Gendler does not think that the distinction makes a difference to her points about quarantining.

child who pretends that a banana is a telephone will not, in normal circumstances, come to believe that the banana is a telephone. Such quarantining happens automatically, and it gives us a principled way of being sure that there is a difference between belief and pretense.¹¹

Arguably, this sort of quarantining happens often between the many mental capacities that we take as paradigmatically distinct. Simply because we desire that p be the case, it does not follow that we come to believe that p is the case or that p will be the case. Because of this, it is plausible to think that distinct mental capacities operate according to some kind of quarantining principle and that this accounts for the fact that we rarely confuse them. One could say that the quarantining prevents vague boundaries.¹² The problem that the existence of such a principle raises for two-nature views is clear: if supposition and imagination are distinct mental capacities, then there ought to be some sort of quarantining principle applicable to them and, given this, we ought to expect to rarely confuse supposing with imagining. But of course, we can and do confuse supposing with imagining as **Similarity** observes. Thus, two-nature views of supposition and imagination cannot explain **Similarity**. Given that two-nature views posit that supposing and imagining are distinct mental capacities, such views predict that we should rarely confuse

¹¹ There seems to be much empirical support for this. For a recent discussion, see Van Leeuwen (2014).

¹² Gendler also discusses examples of contagion between belief and imaginings, which might be a problem for trying to use quarantining as a way to avoid vague boundaries. However, I agree with Van Leeuwen who states that contagion shows simply that the cognitive attitudes are permeable, not that there are no boundaries (cf. Van Leeuwen 2014).

supposings and imaginings. Yet such predictions conflict with the data, namely, that we often confuse one for the other.

Another argument that counts against two-nature views relies on what Van Leeuwen (2014a) calls *cognitive governance*. Simply put, cognitive governance refers to the informational background that supplies and governs new inferences among cognitive attitudes. For instance, often we make inferences while engaging in imaginative activities. When reading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, we might make the inference that Lucy Pevensie has a heart that pumps blood. Although this is never explicitly told to us in the story, it is rather clear that she is a human both in and out of *Narnia*. And we know that humans have hearts that pump blood. In this case, our beliefs about humans *cognitively govern* our imaginings of the story, allowing us to infer further imaginings. Belief cognitively governs other cognitive attitudes such as imaginings, supposing, acceptances, and so on.

However, those attitudes do not cognitively govern belief. In order to see this, consider an example from Van Leeuwen that shows the way belief cognitively governs imagining:

INITIAL IMAGINING: *Michelangelo's David falls off a boat into the water.*
FACTUAL BELIEFS: *Michelangelo's David is marble. Marble sinks in water.*
INFERRED IMAGINING: *Michelangelo's David is sinking in the water.*

In this example, some of our factual beliefs supply information that governs a new inference in our imagining. To show that imagining cannot do this for belief, Van Leeuwen changes the example as follows:

INITIAL FACTUAL BELIEFS: *Michelangelo's David is marble. Marble sinks in water.*
IMAGINING: *Michelangelo's David falls off a boat into the water.*

FACTUAL BELIEF: *Michelangelo's David is sinking in the water.* (2014, 702-703)

As this example illustrates, if our imaginings cognitively governed our beliefs, then we would form absurd belief states, such as *Michelangelo's David is both sinking in the water and in a museum in Florence, Italy.* This obviously does not happen.

Imaginings do not give us new beliefs the way that beliefs can, and do, give us new imaginings. Thus, cognitive governance gives us another plausible way of distinguishing paradigmatically distinct cognitive attitudes. Cognitive governance would indicate that belief and imagining have different natures.

Additionally, as Van Leeuwen points out, it is important to see that specific attitudes can be cognitively self-governing. Thus, imaginings coupled with other imaginings can allow us to infer further imaginings. The same can be said for supposings. However, beliefs differ in that they are characterized by having cognitive governance in general. Beliefs do to other attitudes what those attitudes cannot do to belief. Van Leeuwen suggests that this shows an anti-symmetric relation between beliefs and imaginings (2014, 703). In so far as we could modify Van Leeuwen's example to contrast supposition with belief, it is plausible to hold that supposings also have this anti-symmetric relation with beliefs. Similar to Gendler's *quarantining*, cognitive governance supports our pre-theoretical idea that belief is paradigmatically distinct from imagining. Also, just as we do not find a quarantining principle between supposing and imagining, supposing and imagining do not cognitively govern one another. Both Gendler's *quarantining* and Van Leeuwen's *cognitive governance* put pressure on the idea that imagining is a cognitive capacity distinct from supposing.

1.2.2 An Objection and Reply

At this point, a two-nature theorist could argue that **Similarity** is not a problem for two-nature views. After all, it is an empirical fact that, under certain conditions, we can confuse distinct mental states. We could confuse some imaginings with perceptions as well as episodic memories.¹³ These facts should not, and do not, motivate us to develop a theory according to which perception, imagining, and memories belong to the same basic cognitive capacity.

My reply is that not all confusions fall under **Similarity**. Yes, there is empirical support that under *some conditions*, we struggle to differentiate between different mental states. The problem is what must those conditions be in order to count as an example of **Similarity**. Consider the Perky experiment (Perky 1910), in which subjects take themselves to be visualizing an object that they are actually perceiving. This experiment arguably shows that, under the right conditions, we can confuse perception with imagery. However, these conditions are not ordinary conditions; rather, they are highly controlled, laboratory conditions. As Peter Langland-Hassan has argued, “given the great lengths one must go in order to make someone confuse the two”, it seems to follow that it is very rare to confuse imagining with perceiving (Langland-Hassan 2015, 670).¹⁴ And this shows that such confusions would actually be rare; whereas, the confusion of **Similarity** is not rare.

¹³ Thanks to Magdalena Balcerak Jackson for pushing me on this.

¹⁴ Arguably, a similar thing can be said concerning cases known as “false memories” (Cf. Debus 2016). Plausibly, in such cases, subjects mistake a vivid imagining about a past event as an episodic memory of the same event. Again the conditions have to be very specific (repeated questions about the event, claims of authoritative reports from one’s parents) in order for the subject to “accept” it as a memory.

I would argue that **Similarity** does not require special conditions in order for it to be true. In the most mundane of conditions, it seems that we can begin a supposing and slide into a more robust imagining unwittingly. These considerations provide for the following argument:

1. In the most mundane of conditions, it is rare to confuse distinct mental states/capacities.
2. In the most mundane of conditions, it is not rare to confuse supposing with imagining.
3. Therefore, supposing and imagining are not distinct mental states.

Premise 1 is more plausible than its denial given the experiment-like conditions one needs in order to confuse distinct mental states. Premise 2 is more plausible than its denial given **Similarity**, and our Mary thought-experiment example. Thus the objection from the two-nature theorist—that confusing mental states is common and so does not pose a threat to her view—does not go through.

Yet, even if it is true that in *normal* conditions we can confuse imagining with perception or episodic memory, one plausible explanation for this is that they share the same mental imagery, and thus they are all phenomenally similar. On some views (Nanay 2015, 2016), perception and mental imagery can share the same content. The phenomenal similarity between perception and mental imagery is based on that sameness of content. If an episodic memory state and an imagined state share the same mental imagery, it does not seem too controversial that we could mistake one for the other.

However, as plausible as this explanation of the confusion of distinct mental states might be, it does not explain why we can confuse supposing with imagining. This is because, arguably, supposing and imagining do not share mental imagery.

That is, imagery is not constitutive of supposition. Thus, normal conditions or not, the confusing of imagination, perception, and episodic memory does not fall under **Similarity**.

It follows, then, that two-nature views fail to explain **Similarity**. In fact, such views imply that **Similarity** is false. As I have argued, this is primarily because they posit distinct cognitive capacities for supposing and imagining. As I have suggested, this in turn makes two-nature views less economical than one-nature views, but current one-nature views have their own set of problems.

§ 1.3 One-Nature Views

One-nature views draw on the similarity between supposition and imagination in arguing that imagining and supposing are both instances of the same cognitive capacity. We can again appeal to Balcerak Jackson's *common nature thesis* in order to give a simple characterization of one-nature views. A view about the relation between supposing and imagining is one-nature just in case it endorses the *common nature thesis*. Though there are no one-nature views that explicitly argue for the *common nature thesis*, it is plausible to take one-nature views as implicitly endorsing something like it. All current one-nature views argue that supposition is a kind of imagination. However, their proponents disagree as to what kind of imagining supposition is. Currie and Ravenscroft (2002) and Weinberg and Meskin (2006) hold that supposition is a belief-like imagining. Arcangeli (2014) holds that supposition is more like the mental state of acceptance than it is like belief.

In what remains in this section, I will do two things. First, I will summarize the different one-nature views. Second, I will summarize an argument that Arcangeli (2014) raises against Currie and Ravenscroft, and Weinberg and Meskin. I do this in order to show that her argument generalizes such that it is a problem for all current one-nature views, including Arcangeli's own view. In general, I argue taking supposition as a kind of imagining gets facts about supposition wrong. Because of this, such views fail to explain both the **Ability Difference** and **Emotional Difference**.

1.3.1 Currie and Ravenscroft

Currie and Ravenscroft (2002) develop and defend a simulationist account of the imagination. They focus their account of the imagination on what they call *recreative imagination*, or:

...the capacity to put ourselves in the place of another, or in the place of our own future, past, or counterfactual self: seeing, thinking about, and responding to the world as the other sees, thinks about, and responds to it (2002, 8-9).

This capacity is also referred to as *imaginative projection*, and involves, in particular, projecting ourselves into “states that are not perceptions or beliefs or decisions, or experiences of movements of one's body, but which are in various ways like those states” (2002, 8-9). These are the states of recreative imagination. Recreative states mimic or simulate their counterpart states. For instance, perception is a mental state; thus, its recreative state is called perception-like imagining. If the latter involves visual imagery, it mirrors vision in the former. According to Currie and Ravenscroft, for any mental state, there is a recreative state

that mimics it. There are beliefs and there are belief-like imaginings. There are desires, and there are desire-like imaginings. Belief-like imaginings mirror the inferential role that belief plays. Desire-like imaginings mirror our real desires and affections. Currie and Ravenscroft postulate desire-like imaginings to explain the conative and affective consequences of our imaginative activities. For instance, when we find ourselves wanting Harry Potter to defeat Lord Voldemort, this desire is not a real desire. For Currie and Ravenscroft, it is a desire-like imagining. For them supposition is belief-like imagining that is isolated from, or not affected much by, desire-like imagining (2002, 35).

In light of this, we can see how Currie and Ravenscroft, at least implicitly, endorse the *common nature thesis*, and so can be viewed as holding to a one-nature view. According to them, there is one capacity for recreative imagining. From this one capacity comes of all of the recreative states—including supposition, or mere belief-like imagining. It is clear that for them, supposition is not its own cognitive capacity separate and distinct from imagination; rather it just is a certain kind of imagining.

1.3.2 Weinberg and Meskin

The next one-nature view comes from Weinberg and Meskin (2006). Weinberg and Meskin attempt to develop an account that distinguishes imagining and supposing in light of our cognitive architecture. Before setting out the details of their account, I will need to say more about cognitive architecture in general. Theories that invoke the notion of cognitive architecture are those that attempt to map out the formal structure of the mind at the functional level. ‘Functional’ refers

to the input-output relations between certain mental states—such as belief and desire—and other mental mechanisms—such as inference mechanisms and the decision-making system. Originally, theories of cognitive architecture posited two representational states: belief and desire (cf. Nichols and Stich 2003). Often theorists refer to belief and desire as “boxes”, indicating that each are functionally distinct pieces of our cognitive architecture. The belief box contains representations that play the functional role of belief. The desire box contains representations that play the functional role of desire. In order to see how this is meant to work, consider the following example. Suppose you perceive the event of my returning from the fridge with a beer. According to the cognitive architecture account, this action or event can be explained by positing that my belief box contains at least the representation ‘there is beer in the fridge’, and my desire box contains the representation ‘I want a beer’. These representations causally interact with other relevant components such as the action-generating mechanism in order to usher in my behavior—namely, my going to the fridge and retrieving a beer. Although many think that this theory is still incomplete, it has been widely adopted among cognitive scientists and philosophers (cf. Nichols and Stich 2003).

One of the reasons it is incomplete is that it is not clear how imagination fits in. Nichols and Stich (2003) were the first to attempt to remedy this gap by developing a cognitive architecture account of the imagination. Weinberg and Meskin base much of their account on Nichols and Stich’s account. Hence, following Nichols and Stich, Weinberg and Meskin talk of both a belief box (BB from hereon)

and an imagination box (IB from hereon).¹⁵ Weinberg and Meskin, then, describe five mechanisms that interact with both the IB and the BB: (1) the affect systems, (2) the monitoring systems, (3) the inferential mechanisms, (4) the Updater, and (5) various domain-specific processes—e.g., folk morality mechanism, folk biology mechanism, folk psychology mechanism, and so on. Following this, they describe two mechanisms that work exclusively with the IB: (6) the Inputter and (7) the Script Elaborator. It is not necessary to discuss each of these in order to understand their view. But to see, in general, how Weinberg and Meskin’s cognitive architecture view works, consider both the affect system (1) and the inferential mechanism (3).

Consider the affect system, first. The affect system underwrites the whole range of our affective states and emotions. It is uncontroversial to see that the BB can interact with our affect systems causing emotions within us. Many beliefs can move us emotionally. My belief that my son is hurt will cause me, for example, to have pity on his pain. In the same way, then, the IB interacts with the affect systems causing emotions to arise within us. My imagining that a fictional character is suffering will cause me to have pity on such a character.

Now, consider the inference mechanism. The inference mechanism also interacts with both the BB and the IB. If we have the belief that p and the belief that *if p , then q* , then the inference mechanism would give as an output of the belief that q . Likewise, if we have an imagining that p and an imagining that *if p , then q* , then the inference mechanism will give as an output the imagining that q . One of the most cited examples that illustrates how the inference mechanism interacts with

¹⁵ Nichols and Stich refer to the IB as the ‘Possible Worlds Box’ or PWB.

imagination is Leslie's (1994a) tea party experiment. In this experiment, Leslie would have children pretend to be having a tea party. After asking the children to "fill" the empty cups with tea, the experimenter took one cup and turned it over, shaking it and replacing it upright. When the experimenter asked which cup was empty, the children indicated that it was the one that the experimenter had turned over—although both were in fact empty. According to Leslie, the experiment shows that the inference mechanism treats belief and pretend (imaginary) representations in much the same way.

Building on these ideas, Weinberg and Meskin argue that their cognitive architecture account gives us better way to account for the relation between supposition and imagination:

[Supposition and imagination] are mental activities which involve different characteristic sets of cognitive processes engaging with IB. Moreover, for both supposing and imagining, and for each process in the architecture, one can specify whether its engagement is typical, atypical, or variable (2006, 194).¹⁶

As can be seen, for Weinberg and Meskin, supposition and imagination are not functionally distinct mental capacities as two-nature views hold. Rather, whether an activity counts as supposing or imagining depends on which cognitive processes are engaging the IB. For instance, the inference system is an example of a process that is typical of both activities. It is often used in imagination (as we have seen with Leslie's Tea Party), and use of it seems essential to the activity of supposition.

Supposition, after all, is often undertaken to reason through the consequences of

¹⁶ They do not specify what they mean by typical, atypical, or variable; however, I take it that typical means the interaction is very regular; atypical means the interaction is very rare; variable means the interaction happens some of the time.

taking some content as true. Interaction with the inference mechanism demonstrates how similar supposition and imagination can be.

In contrast, the affect systems are an example of processes that show how distinct supposition and imagination can be. Being moved emotionally is a central part of most activities of the imagination. Weinberg and Meskin think that there are imaginative activities that do not produce affect, such as philosophical thought-experiments, so they characterize the interaction between imagination and the affect system as variable as opposed to typical. However, the interaction between supposition and the affect system is clearly atypical. They do note that some acts of supposition may have unintended side-effects of producing emotions, but these, they claim, are never a proper part of supposition (195). According to Weinberg and Meskin, this explains how it is rare to be moved emotionally by supposition, but it is rather common to be moved emotionally by our imaginings.

It is evident that Weinberg and Meskin, at least implicitly, endorse the *common nature thesis*, and so can be read as holding to a one-nature view. There is *one* box that receives and processes imaginary representations, the IB. This box is responsible for both supposition and imagination. Which activity a person is engaged in depends on which other cognitive processes are engaging the IB. Similar to Currie and Ravenscroft, then, it is plausible to take them as treating supposition as kind of imagination. At least functionally, supposition is belief-like imagining. I will next briefly discuss the criticism that Arcangeli (2014) raises against both Currie and Ravenscroft, and Weinberg and Meskin. In considering her criticisms, we

arrive at her own one-nature view of the relation between supposition and imagination. I will then argue that her view is susceptible to the same criticism.

1.3.3 Arcangeli

In her 2014, Arcangeli argues against views that she calls cognitivist views of supposition, where supposition is taken as a belief-like imagining. In this paper, she sets out three grades of cognitivism about supposition: (1) supposition is a belief, (2) supposition is belief-like imagining, and (3) supposition is a sub-species of belief-like imagining. She dismisses (1) quickly given that it is wildly implausible and no one defends it. As she claims, there is nothing wrong with supposing statements that we know are false; however, there is something problematic in believing statements that we know are false. She argues that (2) is problematic because supposition is “freer” than belief-like imagining—that is, we can suppose more contents that we can imagine—, and supposition is emotionally “cold”—that is, supposition does not normally trigger emotions. In essence, (2) is problematic because it implies that the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference** are false. Most of her argument is focused on (3), where she places Currie and Ravenscroft’s and Weinberg and Meskin’s views. Her main criticism is that they fail to explain the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference**. I will first rehearse some general considerations she gives as to why one should reject cognitivism about supposition. I will then turn to her more substantive criticisms of both Currie and Ravenscroft’s and Weinberg and Meskin’s views.

Her general reason to reject cognitivist views of supposition is the fact that belief and supposition actually have very little in common. She sets out five features

by which we can compare and contrast belief, imagination, and supposition. These are *inferentiality*, *emotionality*, *normativity*, *relation to will*, and *relation to truth*.

Belief, imagination, and supposition all share in the feature of inferentiality. That is, all of them can infer more content from some initial content. Emotionality is found in both imagining and belief; in contrast, as we have seen, supposition does not take emotional inputs. The third feature normativity, concerns the constraints of each attitude. All three attitudes are different on this feature. Supposition is the least constrained of the three; as we know, one can suppose just about anything.

Imagination is more constrained by one's worldview, desires, visual imagery, affections, and so on. And belief is perhaps the most constrained as it is essential to belief to track truth, conform to the world, and abide by rational coherence.

The fourth feature is the relation of each attitude to will. Recall that we have seen this above in the discussion of similarities between supposition and imagination. Both supposition and imagination are will-dependent. In contrast, belief is will-*independent*. You can choose what to suppose, and you even can choose what to imagine (though as we have seen with the **Ability Difference** there are some limits to this). However, you cannot choose (at least directly) what to believe. Finally, the fifth feature is the relation of each attitude to truth. Again we have seen this above. Both supposition and imagination are truth-independent. In contrast, belief is truth-dependent. We are not required to suppose or imagine only true things, but belief is constrained by truth. We take our beliefs to be true, and we try to avoid holding false beliefs. As Arcangeli demonstrates, supposition and belief only share one of the five features (inferentiality). This indicates that supposition

and belief are more different than they are alike. Thus, according to Arcangeli, this is a general reason to reject cognitivist views about supposition. However, she provides more specific and substantive criticisms as well. I turn to these next.

Arcangeli, first, argues that both Currie and Ravenscroft, and Weinberg and Meskin fail to explain what I have called the **Ability Difference**.¹⁷ Recall that, with Currie and Ravenscroft, supposition is a type of belief-like imagining that is separate from desire-like imagining. With this, they explain the fact that we can suppose more than we can imagine; it is due to the fact that desire-like imagining acts as a constraint on what sort of contents can be imagined but does not do so in the case of supposition. When belief-like imagining is isolated from desire-like imagining, we can successfully suppose more content. Arcangeli's main problem with this is that it seems to conflict with the widespread claim that supposition is effortless. This is because, according to Arcangeli, when a person imagines a content that would normally be constrained, that person has to disconnect her desire-like imagining in order to successfully suppose the content. This is just counterintuitive to how most of us experience the act of supposition. We do not usually feel that we need to make an effort to filter out desire-like imagining in order to successfully suppose a certain content.

According to Arcangeli, Weinberg and Meskin fail to explain the **Ability Difference** for similar reasons. Recall that for them, the imagination box has a suppositional mode which occurs when the imagination box is disconnected from

¹⁷ What I call the Ability Difference, Arcangeli calls the normative difference. I will use my terms throughout.

certain cognitive, conative, and other domain-specific mechanisms, such as folk morality and folk psychology mechanisms. This, according to them, explains the **Ability Difference** by showing that when in suppositional mode, one can more freely entertain contents that would normally be constrained if connected to other mechanisms. Arcangeli sees two problems with this explanation. First, if disconnecting some of the mechanisms takes an effort of the will, then they face the same objection raised against Currie and Ravenscroft. The second problem is that it is not clear that, when in suppositional mode, the imagination box is disconnected from all mechanisms. According to Weinberg and Meskin, supposition interacts in a variable manner with many domain-specific mechanisms. They give as an example a detective engaging in supposition in order to determine how a murder took place. Here, the suppositional mode might interact with certain domain-specific mechanisms, such as folk psychology mechanisms, in order to determine what the murderer was thinking, and so on. Arcangeli's point is that if in suppositional mode, the imagination box is not disconnected from all cognitive, conative, and other domain-specific mechanisms, then, appealing to the disconnection will not help to explain the **Ability Difference** between supposition and imagination.

According to Arcangeli, Weinberg and Meskin will reply that it is the disconnection from certain kinds of mechanisms, namely, the ones that would constrain the act of supposition. The problem now is that it is not clear what triggers which mechanisms to disconnect for the relevant activity of supposition. Until this is answered, it is not clear that Weinberg and Meskin's view really does explain the difference. As Arcangeli claims, Weinberg and Meskin could appeal to context to

account for the disconnection of the relevant mechanisms. But as she argues, this fails because in many contexts we can vacillate between supposing and imagining. I add that if Weinberg and Meskin have to appeal to something extra-mental to explain the disconnection, then it is obvious that their account of supposition cannot explain the **Ability Difference**. Thus, according to Arcangeli, and in light of these further considerations, all cognitivist views of supposition fail to explain the **Ability Difference** between supposition and imagination.

Arcangeli also argues that such views fail to explain the **Emotional Difference**. According to Arcangeli, Currie and Ravenscroft do not clearly address the emotional asymmetry between supposition and imagination. It is not too difficult to see that in response they might give a similar explanation as they do for the **Ability Difference**—namely, that when belief-like imagining is disconnected from desire-like imagining it accounts for the emotional asymmetry. But, her objections to their explanation of the **Ability Difference** would hold here as well—it conflicts with the effortlessness of supposition.

Weinberg and Meskin do offer an explanation for the emotional asymmetry. But, like Currie and Ravenscroft, it is also the same as their explanation of the **Ability Difference**—that is, the emotional difference is explained by the fact that supposition is disconnected from the affect mechanism. Thus, her same objections would apply here as well. Either the disconnection is up to us, which conflicts with the effortlessness of supposition, or the question of what triggers the disconnection is left unanswered. If the latter, it is again not clear that their account can explain the difference by merely appealing to disconnection. Even setting aside worries about

disconnection, Arcangeli argues that it is false that supposition is disconnected from the affect system. Certain contents cause affect regardless of whether we are merely supposing such content. She quotes Nichols (2006) who argues that if we suppose that a diner has eviscerated a cat and was eating its dripping entrails, we would surely feel disgust. Thus, according to Arcangeli, all cognitivist views of supposition fail to explain the **Emotional Difference**.

After raising these criticisms to cognitivist views of supposition, Arcangeli considers an objection to her view. Given the problems for cognitivist views about supposition, the objection claims that one ought to question whether supposition is any kind of imagining whatsoever. Given this, the objection continues, we ought to take seriously the possibility that two-nature views are right—imagining and supposing are distinct mental capacities. She is rather quick in dismissing this suggestion, stating that “[g]iven its will-dependence and truth-independence, however, arguably supposition belongs to the imaginative realm, and the differences between supposition and [cognitive imagination] are better explained by maintaining that the former is a *specific* type of imagining distinct from the latter” (Arcangeli 2014, 621). This is the extent of her reasons to reject the possibility that two-nature views are correct. As it stands, it is rather weak. After all, because two things share properties, that is not enough to take each as belonging to the same mental capacity. However, we can read her charitably as claiming that we do not have good reasons to see supposition as being functionally distinct from imagining. As a result, I read her as defending a one-nature view of supposition and imagination.

After considering the objection, Arcangeli argues that supposition is a *sui generis* kind of imagining. She suggests that supposition could be understood as an *acceptance*-like imagining. She does not fully develop or defend this view; however, she gestures at its plausibility by showing how it fits within an existing framework of imagination. The framework that she has in mind is that different types of imaginings have their own non-imaginative counterparts (recall above Currie and Ravenscroft 2002). For instance, sensory-like imagining has a counterpart in perception and belief-like imagining has a counterpart in belief. She argues that the mental state of acceptance can be viewed as a non-imaginative counterpart to supposition. She acknowledges that other philosophers have posited a distinct mental state called ‘acceptance’ in order to deal with certain problems of belief. For instance, she mentions that there are seemingly paradoxical cases in which a person seems to hold both the belief that p and the belief that $\sim p$. To remove the air of paradox, we can hold that one of those mental states is not belief but acceptance.¹⁸ Acceptance is also more similar to supposition than belief. For instance, acceptance, unlike belief, is will-dependent, and acceptance is truth-independent. Though I am sympathetic with her reasons to reject cognitivist views of supposition, I think that her proposed view is susceptible to the same problems that she raised against those views.

¹⁸ Arcangeli does not give an example of cases such as these, but cf. Bratman 1992.

1.3.4 Against Arcangeli

In order to argue against Arcangeli, I will first summarize her argument in a way that is faithful to her criticisms of cognitivist views of supposition. I will then demonstrate how this argument generalizes so that Arcangeli's view is susceptible to the same worries she raised against the cognitivist views.

By way of summary, cognitivist views of supposition cannot explain the differences between supposition and imagination primarily because they mischaracterize supposition. In order to see how this is so, consider how supposition is often characterized. Supposition is described as one of the freest of cognitive attitudes. As I noted earlier in the chapter, we can suppose anything with minimal effort. It is this effortlessness that Arcangeli argues is misconstrued by cognitivist views. This effortlessness is captured well by reflecting on two characteristics that are essential to supposition. The first is what I call the ESSENCE of supposition. And the second is what I call the PHENOMENOLOGY of supposition. What we refer to as the effortlessness of supposition can be captured by either one, or both, of these two characteristics:

ESSENCE: We can suppose just about any content.

PHENOMENOLOGY: With supposition, we experience as if we can suppose any content.

As we know, Arcangeli argues that cognitivist views of supposition imply that, in order to successfully suppose some content, one needs to turn off certain mental mechanisms such as desires and affections. This implies that supposition takes effort on our part. However, this conflicts with PHENOMENOLOGY. But PHENOMENOLOGY seems to be the best reason to think that ESSENCE is true—that

is, our best evidence that we can suppose just about anything is our introspective awareness that we experience as if we can suppose just about anything. Given this, both ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY together give us a good reason to accept and explain both the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference**.¹⁹ Thus, the root of the problems for cognitivist views of supposition is that they get facts about supposition wrong—i.e., their views imply that ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY are false. I will next show that these criticisms generalize such that Arcangeli's view is susceptible to them as well.

Following Arcangeli, I hold that will-dependence and truth-independence are general features of the imaginative realm. The problem is that supposition and imagination actually vary significantly with regards to these features. I will show how they do so with respect to will-dependence, first, and truth-independence, second. What the variation, in each case, shows is that Arcangeli's view is susceptible to her own criticisms.

Consider will-dependence, then. Not all imaginings have the same degree of will-dependence, and some imaginings are will-independent. As we have already seen, many imaginings are constrained in such a way that a mere willing would not be sufficient for successfully undertaking the activity. For instance, you might not be able to will yourself to imagine some distasteful content. Some imaginings are will-independent in that they are involuntary, such as earworms—involuntary songs or sounds that pop up in our mind. In contrast, supposition is the most will-

¹⁹ It might, at first, not be obvious that ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY give us reasons to accept and explain the **Emotional Difference**, but recall that one of the reasons we *can* suppose just about anything is due to the fact that supposition does not really trigger our affections and desires.

dependent of all imaginative activities. For supposition, the will-dependence is largely a black and white issue: either you do will to suppose some content or you do not will to suppose some content. The success of undertaking the activity depends ultimately on one's willingness to entertain the content as if it is true. Attempting to imagine that same content in a more robust way may lead to difficulties. As a result, with imagining, its will-dependence is a matter of degrees, or it is inoperative.

We can further understand this idea—that the will-dependence of imaginings either comes in degrees or is inoperative—by reflecting on how imaginings are often constrained in ways that supposings are not. Imaginings can be constrained by visual images. Supposition is not so constrained. I can suppose at will that a square-circle exists. I cannot imagine at will that a square-circle exists because I cannot form an image of a square-circle. Moreover, such constraints are, at times, completely independent of the will. As Nanay (2016) reminds us, we can have “involuntary flashbacks to some scene that we have seen earlier” (125). Because some mental images are involuntarily formed, will-dependence cannot be a generalized feature of the imaginative realm—not, at least, without some qualification.

Of course, forming visual images is not always involuntary. But even when it depends on my will, and thus is voluntary, its will-dependence arguably comes in degrees. In order to see this, compare the following tasks of supposition and imagining. Consider that I am asked to suppose that the world is ending because of a zombie apocalypse. Again, such an activity seems to be maximally will-dependent.

As long as I have a basic understanding of what the words of the sentence mean, or the concepts involved, I should be able to successfully suppose that sentence.

Suppose further that I am not a fan of the zombie apocalypse genre, and that I would not have the slightest idea of what a zombie is supposed to look like. Now if I were asked to now imagine that the world is ending because of a zombie apocalypse, I would have difficulty. I would be able to comply but only insofar as I am able to form vague images. I might want to form vivid images, but my mere willing would not be successful. In contrast, if I were a zombie apocalypse super-fan, then I would be able to form, with ease, vivid images of zombies and of the end of the world. But, one does not become a super-fan overnight. As one becomes more steeped in the zombie apocalyptic genre, such a person's ability to form vivid images of the zombie apocalypse arguably becomes more refined. In other words, the formation of the vivid images becomes more will-dependent. In this case, given one constraint on our imaginative activities (i.e., the formation of images), the will-dependence of imagination admits of degree. Thus, we have seen that, with such a constraint, either our will-dependence is inoperative in forming images or it comes in degrees.

Let's consider another set of constraints on imaginings. Often in our imaginings, there are emotions and desires that are triggered by imagining some content. Usually the emotions and desires color how one imagines that content. Given that emotions and desires are not directly will-dependent, a successful undertaking of a complex imaginative activity that included emotions and desires would not exclusively depend on the will. One example of this is our engagement with novels or movies. When our imaginations are engaged with these fictions, we

are carried along or transported to the fictional world. There is an immersion that happens. It is in this immersion that we experience being moved in all sorts of ways. We find ourselves being angry at “bad guys”, happy at “good guys”, and intrigued by “conflicted guys”. In good novels or movies, or ones that grip us, we can experience a whole range of emotions and desires. Such experiences are more like a discovery than a decision. We find ourselves having these various emotions and desires; such emotions do not seem to depend on our wills. To the extent that emotions and desires are essential to some imaginative acts and to the extent that emotions and desires are not will-dependent, it follows that we have another example that will-dependence is sometimes inoperative in accomplishing an imaginative act.

As a last example of how the will-dependence of imagination comes in degrees, we can also consider the phenomenon of imaginative resistance. Recall that this phenomenon arises when otherwise competent imaginers fail to comply with an invitation to imagine certain content. One reason that we resist is because we are *unwilling* to imagine certain content (cf. Gendler 2000, 2006). I also think that imaginative resistance comes in degrees. (For a fuller defense of this claim, see chapter 3 of this dissertation). Contextual factors such as genre can mitigate the resistance one has to certain imaginings. I may resist imagining that a head decapitation scene is funny if such a scene is in a realistic fiction. However, I might not resist imagining that a head decapitation scene is funny if such a scene is in a dark comedy genre.²⁰ Different genres might make me more or less willing to imaginatively engage with the stories. If imaginative resistance is a matter of what I

²⁰ This example is from Liao 2013.

am unwilling to imagine, and if what I am unwilling to imagine comes in degrees, then this is another example of how the will-dependence of the imagination comes in degrees.

All of the above examples show that, because of the various constraints on imagination, either its will-dependence is inoperative or that its will-dependence comes in degrees. The same cannot be said of supposition. Supposition is more will-dependent than imagination. If the imagination is more constrained in its will-dependence than supposition, and if one holds that supposition is a kind of imagination, then one must explain how we remove the constraints on the will-dependence. And this seems to run into the same problem that Arcangeli raised above: it conflicts with the fact that supposition is effortless (or as I would say it gets the ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY of supposition wrong). We simply do not experience a “turning-off” as it were of various constraints (e.g. conative, affective, imagery, and so on) in order to successfully suppose a content. Thus, because Arcangeli holds that supposition is a kind of imagining, she is susceptible to the same criticisms that she raised against the cognitivists views of supposition.

We can see that this problem comes up with the other general feature of the imaginative realm—namely, truth-independence. Here again, I argue that supposition and imagination differ in this respect. Recall that truth-independence is the idea that the truth-values of a given content is largely irrelevant to successfully taking an attitude towards that content. As it was with the feature of will-dependence, supposition turns out to be more truth-independent than imagination. Again, as we saw earlier, we can suppose anything. For instance, we can suppose

contents that are true; I can suppose that I am typing my dissertation. We can also suppose contents that are false: I can suppose that I am typing my dissertation in an undiscovered alien language. Due to the constraints that limit what we can successfully suppose, imagination is different. There are true contents that we cannot imagine, such as a 1000-side polygon. There are false contents that we cannot imagine, such as things with contradictory properties—a married bachelor, I am not identical to myself. Thus, imagination is less truth-independent than supposition, and as a result we see the same problem that came from the difference in will-dependence. That is, if the imagination is more constrained in its truth-independence than supposition, and if one holds that supposition is a kind of imagination, then one must explain how we remove the constraints on the will-dependence. Once again, this conflicts with the ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY of supposition.

Apart from the features that Arcangeli notes, we can add one more general feature of the imaginative realm. Let's call it *modal-independence*. The contents that we can suppose are largely independent of their modal status. We can suppose possible contents: suppose that I am not a philosopher. We can suppose impossible contents: suppose that there is a largest cardinal number, or that water is not H₂O. Imagination is more restricted in its *modal-independence*. In fact, this might be stated too weakly. Some would argue that imagination is not characterized by *modal-independence*, but rather by *modal-dependence*. If imagining were modal-dependent, then it would follow that we could only imagine possible contents (and conversely, that we could not imagine impossible things). If this were true it would

just add to the problem for all current one nature views, including Arcangeli's: how is it that a mental capacity characterized by *modal-independence* could come from a mental capacity characterized by *modal-dependence*? That the imagination is *modal-dependent* would require a close conceptual tie between imagination and possibility, but there is no consensus on how to understand the connection between imagination and possibility.²¹ Yet, even if it were false, and the imagination exhibited *modal-independence*, the imagination would still be less modally-independent than supposition. As we have already seen, we can suppose possible and impossible contents. We cannot imagine impossible contents, such as square-circles, and there might be some possibilities that we cannot imagine.

Take the possibility that I am a brain-in-a-vat (from hereon, BIV). Given the perspectival nature of the imagination, I cannot actually imagine myself as a BIV. If I were a BIV, then imagining myself (from the inside) as a BIV would look indistinguishable from imagining myself as a BIV, when I am not one. This along with a plausible principle that we can distinguish perceiving from imagining, indicates that we actually cannot imagine ourselves as BIVs.²² To be sure this is not to claim that you cannot imagine a situation where you are having an out-of-body experience, witnessing an envatted brain, and being told that that brain is you. It is the claim that you cannot imagine *from the inside* that you are a BIV, even though it seems plausible to say that it is possible that you are a BIV. If one finds this example

²¹ For a good overview of this debate, see the introduction to Gendler and Hawthorne (2002).

²² Now of course Perky's famous experiment seems to show that we can confuse perception and imagination; this however does not undermine a general principle that we mostly can distinguish the two activities (cf. Langland-Hassan 2015).

unconvincing, it is not hard to come with other examples that illustrate the point. For instance, chiliagons are possible, yet we cannot imagine them, in part, because we cannot form an image of them. Once again, the problem should be evident. If the imagination is more constrained in its modal-independence than supposition, and if one holds that supposition is a kind of imagination, then one must explain how we remove the constraints on the modal-independence.

The features of *will-dependence*, *truth-independence*, and *modal-independence* all demonstrate that Arcangeli's view suffers from the same problems she raised against the cognitivist views of supposition. Supposition is maximally *will-dependent*, *truth-independent*, and *modal-independent*. Imagination is not. Yet, if supposition is a kind of imagining, then it follows that supposition takes effort on our part. In order to suppose we need to remove the aspect of the imagination which causes it to be less *will-dependent*, *truth-independent*, and *modal-independent* than supposition. But this, similar to the cognitivist views, gets facts of supposition wrong. Arguably, this is a problem for any view that takes supposition to be a kind of imagination. Given, as we have just seen, that all current one-nature views attempt argue that supposition is a kind of imagination, it follows that all such views get facts about supposition wrong—i.e., they imply that ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY are false. And because of this they fail to explain the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference**.

The Relation Question asks: what is the relation between supposing and imagining? I have argued that any view of the relation between imagination and supposition ought to account for the **Ability Difference**, **Emotional Difference**,

and **Similarity**. I have shown that two-nature views fail to account for **Similarity** because in positing that supposition and imagination are distinct cognitive capacities, they imply that **Similarity** is false. I have also shown that one-nature views fail to account for both the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference** mainly because in positing that supposition is a kind of imagining, they get facts about supposition wrong. In the next chapter, I propose a new view that succeeds in answering the Relation Question. Unlike two-nature views, that view does not posit two distinct cognitive capacities for supposing and imagining. Unlike current one-nature views, that view does not take supposing to be a kind of imagining. Rather, this view will argue that imagining is a kind of supposing.

Imagining is a Kind of Supposing

Chapter Two

With respect to the Relation Question, we have seen two views. Two-nature views argue that supposing and imagining are distinct mental capacities. One-nature views argue that supposing is a kind of imagining. To date, versions of each type of view fail to account for all of the features central to the relation between supposition and imagination. Two-nature views fail to account for **Similarity** because in positing distinct capacities for supposing and imagining, they imply that **Similarity** is false. One-nature views fail to account for the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference** because in positing that supposition is a kind of imagining, they get facts about supposition wrong. In this chapter, I propose a new one-nature view—the *As-if-true Attitude* view, or AIT view. As I will argue unlike two-nature views, the AIT view can account for **Similarity**. The AIT view also does not inherit the same problems as one-nature views to date: that is to say, the AIT view can explain both **the Ability Difference** and **the Emotional Difference**. In section 2.1, I develop the AIT view. In section 2.2, I defend it.

§ 2.1 The As-If-True Attitude View: A Proposal

Recall from chapter one that the Relation Question asks: what is the relation between imagining and supposing? As we have seen, both one-nature views and two-nature views offer a model for understanding the relation. According to two-nature views, supposing and imagining are distinct cognitive capacities. According to current one-nature views, supposing is a kind of imagining. The existing views,

however, do not exhaust the views available. In particular, there is a view available that agrees with current one-nature views that there is one capacity involved in supposing and imagining, but offers a converse of existing one-nature views. Instead of claiming that supposing is a kind of imagining, the view that I will propose in this section holds that imagining is a certain kind of supposing. For the rest of this section, I develop and argue for the commitments of this view.

Recall that I am calling this view the As-If-True Attitude view, or AIT view for short. Central to the AIT view are two basic commitments. First, the AIT view claims that there is a basic cognitive attitude—what I will call the as-if-true attitude—and that that attitude is distinct from other familiar attitudes such as belief and desire. Second, according to the AIT view, this basic cognitive attitude can be constrained in various ways by other mental mechanisms, attitudes, and states. I argue that a view with these two commitments allows me to answer the Relation Question without inheriting the same problems of current one-nature and two-nature views. As I will argue, the short answer to the Relation Question is that supposing and imagining, as we typically understand them, are both instances of the as-if-true attitude. The difference between them amounts to a difference in the mechanisms, attitudes, and states that constrain that attitude. I will argue for each commitment of the AIT view in turn. Section 2.1.1 provides reasons for the first commitment. Section 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 together provide reasons for the second commitment.

2.1.1 As-if-true Attitude

We can gain a better characterization of the as-if-true attitude by answering the following questions: (1) what reasons do we have for positing such an attitude?

and (2) how is it different than belief? Question (1) is important for establishing that there is such an attitude. Question (2) is important because ‘belief’ arguably is the most analyzed and understood of the cognitive attitudes. Getting clear on how the as-if-true attitude is similar and dissimilar to belief, then, will help us to understand the as-if-true attitude.

Consider, first, question (1). I posit that the as-if-true attitude is a basic cognitive attitude that takes any content and treats it as if it were true. Why think that there is such an attitude? If we look at supposition more closely, we will see that there already is a “core” attitude in which we treat a content as if it were true. In order to develop this further, consider what most philosophers mean by ‘supposition’. Most philosophers take supposition to be a step in hypothetical reasoning, where one assumes that a certain content is true for the purpose of reasoning to the consequences of that content (cf. Flew 1953, Moran 1994, White 1990, Gendler 2000, Goldman 2006, Kind 2013, Arcangeli 2014, Ichikawa and Jarvis 2012, Balcerak Jackson 2016). Notice, however, that we can make a distinction between the nature of supposition—assuming a certain content to be true—and what we do with supposition—using it as an essential step in hypothetical reasoning. This distinction reveals that we have two related but distinct meanings of ‘supposition’. ‘Supposition’ in the broad sense refers to that basic attitude in which one takes a content as if it is true—what I have called the nature of supposition. ‘Supposition’ in the narrow sense refers to the particular use to which that basic attitude is put—e.g., reasoning to the consequences of taking a certain content as if true. Philosophers tend to only use ‘supposition’ in the narrow sense

and this is one reason why the distinction between the nature and purpose of supposition is not always made explicit.

To see that this distinction is at least implicit in the discussion of supposition, consider Balcerak Jackson (2016). Balcerak Jackson argues that we treat supposition as a type of acceptance. She argues that “to accept a proposition is not merely to treat it as true as a matter of coincidence, or because one has been struck by lightning. It is to treat it as true *for a purpose*” (52, emphasis hers).²³ She suggests that, in supposition, that purpose is typically to reason through to the consequences of the supposed proposition. While currently, it is not typical to hold that supposition is a type of acceptance, it is common to hold that supposition is some attitude towards a proposition for the purpose of reasoning through to the consequences of that proposition. Because of this we can read Balcerak Jackson as favoring a narrow sense of ‘supposition’; however, we can also see that ‘supposition’ in the broad sense is implicit in her definition of ‘supposition’. Granting for the moment that supposition is a type of acceptance, then, Balcerak Jackson’s view highlights the distinction between what supposition is—the core of supposition—and its use—what we do with supposition. That is, we can treat a proposition as true—the nature of the act of supposition—and we can treat a proposition as true for a particular purpose—the use to which that act is directed.

To see an example in which this distinction is more explicit consider Ichikawa and Jarvis (2012). In this paper, Ichikawa and Jarvis argue for the role of

²³ She is following Stalnaker’s technical notion of ‘acceptance’, which is a generic propositional attitude where one treats a proposition as true in various contexts and temporarily sets aside considerations of the proposition being false (cf. 1984, 2002).

imagination in modal epistemology. Many philosophers think that imagination plays some role in modal epistemology. As we will see below, Kind (2013) takes modal epistemology to be a paradigmatic instance of imagination. In contrast to other philosophers, Ichikawa and Jarvis hold that supposition is the basic attitude that we take towards possibilities—they do not make a sharp distinction between imagination and supposition.²⁴ In doing so, they allow supposition to refer to a broader array of imaginative activities. Because of this, it is plausible to read them as making room for ‘supposition’ in the broad sense. For instance, they even consider the propositional attitude that we take towards fiction to be primarily that of *supposing*. On the face of it, the claim that supposing has a role to play in modal epistemology might appear to be false. After all, Ichikawa and Jarvis are attempting to secure a robust connection between what we can imagine and what is possible. Given that we can suppose anything, supposition would seem to be useless at giving us any knowledge about possibility, necessity, and impossibility. They are quick to acknowledge this, and explain that it is a particular type of supposing—one under the constraints of rational coherence—that can play the appropriate role in our modal epistemologies. Given that they distinguish a particular type of supposing in the case of modal epistemology, it is plausible to read them as proposing that there is a core attitude—taking a certain content as true—that can be put to use under certain rational constraints in order to give us knowledge of possibility.

²⁴ The details of their view are not pertinent as I am merely using them to illustrate the way that they exploit the distinction between what supposition is and what we do with it.

As we can see, implicit in Balcerak Jackson and explicit in Ichikawa and Jarvis, there is a core to supposition that is a basic attitude that takes any content as if it is true. This I call the *as-if-true attitude*. The reason to accept the as-if-true attitude is that it is already found in supposition, especially how it is typically understood by philosophers, e.g, in its narrow sense. This fact has been obscured because we have not always made the distinction between the nature, or core, of supposition and the purpose to which it is put to use. And one reason that this distinction has been obscured is due to the fact that philosophers tend to only use the term 'supposition' in its narrow sense. However, it is important to see that when we use supposition in the narrow sense, it refers to an activity that always includes the core attitude of taking content as if it were true. In other words, supposition in the narrow sense always includes supposition in the broad sense. Or, in other words, the nature of supposition remains regardless of how we use supposition. As Balcerak Jackson claims, the typical use of supposition is hypothetical reasoning. Here we hold a core or basic attitude towards a content treating it as if it is true, and we reason through the consequences of that proposition being true—this is the purpose to which we put the core attitude. Given this, hypothetical reasoning turns out to be the as-if-true attitude under various rational constraints, such as coherence, consistency, truth-preservation, and so on. Without these rational constraints, one cannot reason at all from the proposition that one takes to be true. The same structure is found in Ichikawa and Jarvis. As we saw above, they argue that one use of supposition is to give us access to what is possible. Again, in such cases, we hold a basic, or core, attitude towards

propositions. We consider these propositions true and then, with the use of various constraints of rational coherence, we determine whether they inform us about what is possible. In both cases, then, the core of supposition just is the as-if-true attitude put to different uses. And in both cases, we see ‘supposition’ in the broad sense—an as-if-true attitude toward any content—and in the narrow sense—that same as-if-true attitude used for different purposes.

Consider, next, question (2)—how is the as-if-true attitude different than belief? We can find an answer by considering a recent paper by Neil Van Leeuwen (2014). In this article, Van Leeuwen offers a way of distinguishing belief from a group of attitudes that he calls secondary cognitive attitudes. According to Van Leeuwen, examples of the secondary cognitive attitudes are *fictional imagining*, *acceptance in a context*, and *hypothesis*. Van Leeuwen calls these attitudes ‘secondary’ because they all share characteristics that contrast them with the cognitive attitude of belief. In short, they are considered secondary because their role in eliciting behavior is limited when compared to the role of belief in doing the same. Belief can be considered a primary cognitive attitude. To demonstrate this, Van Leeuwen develops a framework that consists of three dimensions by which to contrast belief with the secondary cognitive attitudes. These three dimensions are *cognitive governance*, *practical setting independence*, and *evidential vulnerability*.

The first dimension by which Van Leeuwen distinguishes belief from the secondary cognitive attitudes is cognitive governance. We have seen cognitive governance characterized in chapter one. Recall that cognitive governance refers to the informational background that supplies and governs new inferences among

cognitive attitudes. Belief cognitively governs other cognitive attitudes such as imaginings, supposing, acceptances, and so on. However, those attitudes do not cognitively govern belief. Again consider the example from Van Leeuwen:

INITIAL IMAGINING: *Michelangelo's David falls off a boat into the water.*
FACTUAL BELIEFS: *Michelangelo's David is marble. Marble sinks in water.*
INFERRED IMAGINING: *Michelangelo's David is sinking in the water.*

In this example, some of our factual beliefs about the statue supply information that governs a new inference in our imaginings—in this case, given the matter of which the statue is made, the statue would sink in water. To show that imagining does not do this for belief, again consider Van Leeuwen's second example:

INITIAL FACTUAL BELIEFS: *Michelangelo's David is marble. Marble sinks in water.*
IMAGINING: *Michelangelo's David falls off a boat into the water.*
FACTUAL BELIEF: *Michelangelo's David is sinking in the water.* (2014, 702-703)

As this example illustrates, if our imaginings cognitively governed our beliefs, then we would form absurd belief states—in this case, that Michelangelo's David is sinking. Our only reason for believing this would be because we imagined that it fell off of a boat. It is groundless in the way that wishful thinking is and therefore absurd. Imagining that something is the case is not good grounds for taking it to be the case. Forming beliefs in this manner obviously does not happen. Thus, Van Leeuwen concludes that imagining does not cognitively govern belief, but belief does cognitively govern imagining. Van Leeuwen claims that this generalizes for all of the secondary cognitive attitudes. Thus, according to Van Leeuwen, belief and the secondary cognitive attitudes differ with regards to the property of cognitive governance.

The second dimension by which Van Leeuwen distinguishes belief from the secondary cognitive attitudes is practical setting independence. Very briefly, according to Van Leeuwen, 'practical setting' refers to the specific situation where a cognitive attitude guides behavior (2014, 702). Secondary cognitive attitudes are practical setting dependent; they guide behavior only within certain contexts. One example that he gives is fictional imagining. Fictional imagining guides behavior in the specific setting of make-believe play, or pretense. For instance, when I imagine that I am Luke Skywalker in a light saber battle with Darth Vader, this imagining guides the specific actions that I engage in during this episode of pretense. In contrast, beliefs are practical setting independent—they operate across different settings or contexts (702). As Van Leeuwen claims, "[i]magine the furniture before me is a spaceship, I continue to factually believe that it is a sofa of such and such dimensions and cushiness" (702). That this belief is always there in our cognitive background is made evident by the fact that we do not attempt to "fly" it as if it were a spaceship. According to Van Leeuwen, then, belief and the secondary cognitive attitudes differ with regards to the property of practical setting independence.

The third dimension by which Van Leeuwen distinguishes belief from the secondary cognitive attitudes is evidential vulnerability. Belief is vulnerable to evidence in the sense that if I believe that p and come across evidence that $\sim p$, I tend to give up my belief that p . If I believe that my kids are playing in the yard, but then I hear them fighting in the basement, I give up my belief about them being in the yard.

Giving up such a belief is not something we do voluntarily (704).²⁵ As Van Leeuwen argues, “if contrary evidence did not extinguish factual beliefs, we would be poor survivors. One’s factual beliefs that no hyenas are near must vanish on seeing fresh hyena tracks, on pain of being lunch” (704). Other attitudes may be vulnerable to evidence, but they are not vulnerable in an involuntary sense like beliefs. While I am imagining p , if I come across evidence that $\sim p$, I need not give up my imagining of p . And even if I do give up imagining p , I still have the choice to stay with imagining p . According to Van Leeuwen, then, belief and the secondary cognitive attitudes differ in regards to the property of evidential vulnerability.

It is important to see that similar to imagining, supposition can be distinguished from belief along Van Leeuwen’s three dimensions. Supposition does not cognitively govern belief the way that belief cognitively governs supposition. If I suppose p , and I believe that *if p , then q* , I might suppose q . In contrast, if I believe p , and I suppose that *if p , then q* , I do not come to believe q . Also, supposition is practically setting dependent. One only supposes for a particular purpose, in a specific context. Finally, supposition is not evidentially vulnerable as is belief. When I suppose p , and I come across evidence that $\sim p$, I need not give up supposing p . But as I argued above, the as-if-true attitude is the core of supposition. It follows then that the as-if-true attitude can be distinguished from belief along these three dimensions.²⁶ The as-if-true attitude, then, is practical setting dependent; whereas

²⁵it is largely recognized that we do not choose our beliefs (cf. Williams 1973).

²⁶ It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully argue that the as-if-true attitude is a secondary cognitive attitude. I would argue that the as-if-true attitude is a good candidate to unify the secondary cognitive attitudes, but that will have to wait for another paper.

belief is practical setting independent. The as-if-true attitude is cognitively governed by belief, but the reverse does not hold. The as-if-true attitude is not involuntarily vulnerable to evidence; whereas, belief is involuntarily vulnerable to evidence.

To sum up thus far, recall that the first commitment of the AIT view is that there is a basic cognitive attitude that takes any content and treats it as true—what I call the as-if-true attitude. This section argued for that commitment by answering two questions. Question (1) asked what reasons we have for accepting such an attitude. My answer is that we already accept implicitly it in our conception of supposition. My view makes it explicit. Question (2) asked how is the as-if-true attitude similar to belief. In comparing the as-if-true attitude to belief, we have gained a better understanding on how to characterize that attitude, and we even have seen some preliminary reasons to think that imagining and supposing both belong to the same cognitive capacity—imagining and supposing share in the properties that distinguish each of them from belief.

Now that we have seen good reasons to accept the first commitment of the AIT view, the next two sections will develop and argue for the second commitment of the AIT view. Recall that the second commitment is that the as-if-true attitude can be constrained by different mental mechanisms, attitudes, and capacities. In the literature, these are referred to as ‘constraints’. I will develop the notion of these constraints as it applies to the as-if-true attitude and the Relation Question, next.

2.1.2 Constraints

'Constraint' is a technical term that many philosophers appeal to in their accounts of the imagination. It refers to a limit on a cognitive capacity. Philosophers have posited them for various reasons. Kind and Kung (2016) have argued that constraints are required as a solution to what is called *the puzzle of imaginative use*, which is the puzzle of explaining how the same capacity that allows us to escape reality can also inform us about reality. I will turn to that puzzle below. Kind (2016) has argued that constraints are required to give an account of the epistemic significance of imagination—that the imagination can sometimes justify our contingent beliefs about the world.²⁷ Kung (2010, 2016), Ichikawa and Jarvis (2012) and Balcerak Jackson (2016) have all argued that constraints are required to give a plausible account of the relation between imagination and possibility. If our imaginings are not constrained, then we could come to believe the wrong modal facts. This is because an unconstrained imagination allows us to “imagine” scenarios that are impossible such as “water is not H₂O” or “Hesperus is not Phosphorus”. Many philosophers share the intuition with Kripke that we are not really imagining such scenarios.²⁸

According to Kind and Kung (2016) the idea that something like constraints have a critical role to play in a complete account of the imagination can be found in both historical and contemporary treatments of the imagination. Still, they claim, none of the treatments have sufficiently developed the notion. Given that Kind and

²⁷ See also, Currie (2016).

²⁸ Cf. Kripke (1980).

Kung (2016) give a relatively developed account of constraints, I will summarize their account in what follows. This summary will provide an initial understanding of the role that constraints will play in the AIT view below.

As I mentioned above, Kind and Kung see constraints as being critical to solving the *puzzle of imaginative use*. This puzzle arises from the fact that there seems to be two incompatible uses of the imagination. The first is what they call the *transcendent use*. We employ this transcendent use when the imagination “enable[s] us to escape or look beyond the world as it is, as when we daydream, fantasize, or pretend” (Kind and Kung 2016, 1). The second is what they call the *instructive use*. We employ the instructive use when the imagination “enable[s] us to learn about the world as it is, as when we plan or make decisions, or predict the future” (Kind and Kung 2016, 1). The *puzzle of imaginative use* arises from considering the following question: how can the same mental activity that allows us to fly completely free of reality, as in its transcendent use, also teach us something about it, as in its instructive use?

Their answer lies in the notion of constraints. They suggest that if the capacity that allows for the *transcendent use* is somehow reined in, then that capacity can instruct us about the world. As they say, the *instructive use* of the imagination requires constraints in order to keep the imagination tracking reality. If our imagination was always unconstrained, as it is in the transcendent use, then it would be difficult for imagination to inform us about reality (Kung and Kind 2016, 21). That is, it would be an unreliable guide to reality. There is nothing about imagination *per se* that requires it to reliably track reality. We do not tend to fault

our imaginings if such imaginings misinform us about reality. In contrast, we tend to fault our perceptions if such perceptions misinform us about reality. Given that it does inform us about reality—and reliably so in certain circumstances—it must do so as a result of constraints placed on it from the world and other mental mechanisms or capacities, such as belief.

Kind and Kung discuss two primary classes of constraints that are central to imaginative use. The first class of constraints are what they call architectural constraints. These are constraints that result from our cognitive architecture. Various aspects of our cognitive architecture, such as our imagery mechanism—responsible for forming mental images—, may limit what can be imagined. For example, consider that act of trying to image a chiliagon—a 1000 sided polygon. Intuitively, we cannot form an image of a chiliagon *qua* chiliagon because we cannot perceive a chiliagon *qua* chiliagon—we simply see it as a circle. I return to this idea below.

The second class of constraints that Kind and Kung discuss are non-architectural constraints. One source of these constraints, they suggest, is our *will*. Unlike architectural constraints, these are constraints that we can voluntarily impose on our imaginative projects. In order to see an example of at least two architectural constraints, consider Kind (2016).

As I noted above, in this paper, Kind gives an explanation of the role that our imaginings have in justifying our contingent beliefs about the world (Kind 2016, 146). Kind provides an account of the imagination called *imagining under constraints*. She argues that this account can explain the epistemic significance of the

imagination in these circumstances. According to Kind, there are two constraints that provide our imaginings with epistemic significance: the reality constraint and the change constraint. Our imaginings are constrained by the reality constraint when our imaginings are guided by the world as it really is. For instance, when I am imagining whether a new sofa will fit into my living room, my imagining follows the reality constraint. Based on memory, I form images of the space of my living room and I attempt to form an image of the new sofa in relation to the space of that room. In contrast, when I am imagining that I can fly by flapping my arms really hard, my imagining is *not* being guided by the reality constraint.

Our imaginings are constrained by the change constraint when, in imagining a change in the world, such an imaginative change is the result of a logical consequence. For instance, I might imagine the following propositions, <if it is raining, then the game will be cancelled> and <it is raining>. In such an imagining, I will likely infer <the game is cancelled>. In making this inference in my imagining, my imagining is guided by the change constraint. The change in the imagining is that the game has been cancelled. When our imaginings are guided by the reality and change constraints, those imaginings do provide epistemic justification for some of our contingent beliefs about the world—e.g., one’s imaginings may justify one’s belief that the new sofa will fit and that the game will be cancelled. Thus, according to Kind, imagining under certain constraints provides epistemic significance to some of our imaginings.

I am sympathetic to Kind and Kung’s, and Kind’s account of constraints. However, there are at least two questions that need to be addressed to flesh out

their account for the purposes of developing and arguing for the AIT view. These two questions are the following: (1) how do the constraints constrain? Kind and Kung (2016) do not directly address this question, nor does Kind (2016), although it seems implicit in her discussion of the reality and change constraints. (2) Do distinct constraints interact with one another in any interesting way?

Consider (1) first. I argue that there are two ways in which the constraints constrain. Let's consider the non-architectural constraints first. Non-architectural constraints constrain in a *normative* manner. To say that such constraints constrain in a normative manner means that such constraints place limits of consistency or appropriateness on our imaginative activities. For instance, Kind's reality constraint provides norms of how we should imagine certain content. The norms are derived from the way that world is and demand that our imaginings fit with the way the world is. If we are imagining that humans can fly by flapping their arms vigorously, then such imagining would violate the reality constraint. Kind's change constraint is another example of a non-architectural constraint. It provides logical norms that guide our imaginings. If in our imaginings, we imagine <if it is snowing, then the game will be cancelled> and <the game has been cancelled>, and infer in our imaginings <it is snowing>, then our imaginings are violating the change constraint.

As another example of a non-architectural constraint, consider genre. According to Liao (2016), "[g]enre influences the propositions that are warranted to be fictional in a narrative and the ways that one ought to, and actually does, engage with a narrative" (470). As this quote makes clear, genre constrains one's imaginings in the normative sense. By establishing norms of convention and

expectation, genres establish what is appropriate to imagine while one is engaging some narrative, and what is not appropriate to imagine while engaging the same narrative. From this, we see that in the case of genre, as in the other cases of non-architectural constraints that Kind and Kung highlight, the non-architectural constraints constrain by providing norms for successfully undertaking a particular imaginative project.

Next, consider the architectural constraints. In contrast to the non-architectural constraints, architectural constraints constrain in virtue of the various relations that obtain between various mental mechanisms and mental states. Our cognitive architecture has a particular structure, and this structure places limits on which relations obtain between various mental mechanisms and mental states. For instance, consider the imagery mechanism. There are certain contents that the imagery mechanism cannot bring about. It is not that our imagery mechanisms *ought not* to image a square-circle; it is rather that our imagery mechanism *cannot* image a square-circle. If one is worried that a square-circle is an impossible object, and so think that the imagery mechanism cannot be faulted for failing to image such an object, then we can use the example of a chiliagon or myriagon, which are possible objects that cannot be imaged.

We can gain traction on the idea that the imagery mechanism constrains in this manner by considering a view recently defended by Bence Nanay (2010a, 2013, 2015, 2016). Nanay defends a version of the Similar Content view—a view that attempts to explain the phenomenal similarities between perception and mental imagery.

According to Nanay, we should think of the content of perception and mental imagery as predicative—that is, as involving the attribution of properties to objects. Perceptual states attribute properties to perceived objects, and mental imagery states attribute properties to imagined objects (Nanay, 2016). Whether I am perceiving my black iPhone on the table or imagining it on the table, Nanay argues that the content of each state is exactly the same, and it is this sameness in content that grounds the sameness in phenomenology between perceived objects and imagined objects. However, there are also differences between perception and mental imagery. Most notably, there is what has been called a difference in the “feeling of presence”. When I see my laptop before me, I have a feeling that it is present before me, but when I form a mental image of my laptop, I do not have a feeling that it is present before me. Some argue that this difference can be explained in terms of a difference in intensity—the properties attributed in perception are more *determinate* than the properties attributed in mental imagery (Nanay 2016).

Nanay disagrees. According to Nanay, the difference is not do to a difference in determinacy where perceptual content is more determinate than imagined content. He argues that imagined content can be just as determinate if not more determinate than perceptual content. Rather, he argues that the difference in determinacy comes from the different ways in which properties are attributed in perception and mental imagery. In perception, the properties are attributed to the object in a bottom-up manner—the properties are “read off” of your experience; but in mental imagery, the properties are attributed to the object in a top-down

manner—the properties come from your memories, beliefs, and so on. Nanay (2016) claims:

If you are looking at the apple and you are attending to the exact shade of red of the patch on its righthand side, the high determinacy of this attributed color property comes in a bottom-up manner from what you see. But if you close your eyes and visualize an apple, you can still attribute this very determinate property to the patch on the righthand side of the apple, but in this case, this determinacy comes in a top-down manner: from our memory or belief or expectations (129).

Nanay's Similar Content view illustrates how the imagery mechanism can constrain what can be imagined. Suppose Nanay is correct. It follows that our imagery mechanism is constrained by our perception.

In order to see this, consider the difference between forming a mental image of a triangle on my kitchen table and forming a mental image of a chiliagon on my kitchen table. The former activity takes minimal effort for us to do. However, it is not clear that we can successfully do the latter. In the case of the triangle, one can “see” the mental image as that of a triangle. In the case of a chiliagon, one cannot simply “see” from the mental image that it is a chiliagon. This is due to the fact that chiliagons (depending on their size) are virtually indistinguishable from circles. When perceiving most chiliagons, our visual system sees them as circles; though with sufficient zoom, we could be shown that the object is actually a 1000-sided polygon.

It is in this way that we can say the imagery mechanism constrains according to its relation within our cognitive architecture. The imagery mechanism primarily receives inputs from perception. In this way, it cannot image an object, which has not yet been experienced by perception. Thus, perception acts as a constraint on

our mental imagery, and mental imagery acts as a constraint on our imaginings. In a slogan: If you cannot perceive it, you cannot image it. Does this answer generalize to other architectural constraints? I argue that it does. Plausibly, the conative and affective mechanisms, due to their relations within our cognitive architecture, can constrain our imaginative activities.²⁹ For example, if we are invited to imagine a world where justice is a fiction, we might resist complying because we have an aversion to such worlds—we do not desire to imagine such worlds.

Thus, we have answer to the question of how the constraints constrain. The architectural constraints constrain in virtue of their relation to our overall cognitive architecture. And non-architectural constraints constrain by providing norms to guide the imaginative activity.

We are now in a position to answer question (2): do distinct constraints interact in any interesting way? The answer to this is yes, and we can see that it is so if we consider the example of genre. As we saw above, genre as a non-architectural constraint provides norms for what is appropriate to imagine. Given the way that our affective and conative mechanisms relate within our cognitive architecture, there are some things we are unable or unwilling to imagine. Although these are architectural constraints, they are sensitive to non-architectural constraints, such as genre. More specifically, some non-architectural constraints can influence how the architectural constraints constrain. For example, my conative and affective mechanisms ordinarily resist finding a head decapitation scene to be funny,

²⁹ Though as we will see below, this claim will be modified to make room for cases where we desire things in a fiction that we would not desire in the real world.

whether in reality or in my imagination. However, genre can have a disarming affect on those mechanisms. When I learn the conventions of dark comedy, my expectations change. I come to see that the appropriate response to a head decapitation scene can be one of laughter.³⁰ My conative and affective mechanisms follow suit and they do not resist, though they would resist in most ordinary situations. It follows, then, that some non-architectural constraints can put a temporary hold on certain architectural constraints.³¹ This is at least one example of how distinct constraints can interact in interesting ways.

Thus far, we have seen examples of both architectural and non-architectural constraints, their differences, and how they constrain in certain key cases. At this point, however, one may wonder if talk of ‘constraints’ is misleading. After all, when we are engaging a novel, we are not really thinking about the things that we cannot, or will not, imagine. Rather, we are focusing on the story and enjoying the imaginative activity. Part of what makes the imaginative activity worthwhile and enjoyable are the ways in which the activity moves us. It is difficult to understand what we mean by ‘being moved’ if we are not at least in part referring to the conative and affective mechanisms. Now, even though the conative and affective mechanisms responsible for this affective response can be referred to as ‘constraints’, this characterization seems to leave something out. Such mechanisms are not merely restricting or constraining what can be imagined; they are—more importantly—coloring or embellishing the content of our imagining. It is more

³⁰ This example comes from Liao (2013).

³¹ Weinberg (2008) modifies an account from Weinberg and Meskin (2006) showing that genre can reconfigure our architectural mechanisms.

appropriate to refer to them as “decor” or “flourishes” than it is to refer to them merely as constraints.

Given these considerations, I agree that referring to such mechanisms as constraints runs the risk of being misleading. To mitigate this risk, it is important to see that the same mental mechanisms responsible for constraining our imaginings are also responsible for adding decor to our imaginings. We could think of the constraint/decor as two sides of the same coin. Yet, to explain the metaphor, a better way to think of it is in terms of cause and effect. One effect of the constraints is to embellish our imaginative activities. The other effect, as we have seen, is to rein in what we can successfully imagine. Different activities will make each effect more salient. For instance, if we are beginning with an unconstrained imaginative activity such as the core of supposition, then when we add more mental mechanisms, what we can successfully imagine becomes constrained. So it would be natural to refer to them as ‘constraints’. However, when we are beginning with an imaginative activity such as engaging a narrative, already a constrained imaginative activity, the mental mechanisms are clearly seen to be responsible for coloring or embellishing the content of our imaginings. And here, it would of course be natural to refer to them as décor rather than constraints.

With this much characterization, we are in a better position to see the role that they play in the AIT view. We have seen that constraints are called upon to solve the *puzzle of imaginative use*. They also are used to explain how the imagination can have epistemic significance. And they are used to explain how the imagination can give evidence for what is possible. In all of these, constraints are

necessary in order to solve a problem or explain a feature. My AIT view is that constraints are also necessary to properly characterize the relation between supposition and imagination. To be sure, I am not the first to suggest that constraints have a role in explaining the differences between supposition and imagination. Many have discussed constraints either implicitly or explicitly in their discussions of supposition and imagination (Balcerak Jackson 2016, Meskin and Weinberg 2006, Currie and Ravenscroft 2002, Arcangeli 2014). The problem—as we saw in chapter one—is that they have wrongly argued either that supposition and imagination are distinct capacities or that supposition is a kind of imagining. While I agree with these philosophers that constraints play a necessary role in explaining the differences between supposing and imagining, what is distinctive about my view is that certain constraints are essential to the imagining; all imaginings are due to constraints on the as-if-true attitude.

2.1.3 As-If-true Attitude under Constraints

As I mentioned above, the AIT view has two basic commitments: first, there is a basic cognitive attitude that I call the as-if-true attitude, which is distinct from other familiar cognitive attitudes such as belief. Second, this basic cognitive attitude can be constrained in various ways. When this as-if-true attitude is unconstrained, it can entertain any content as if it were true. Here, as I argued above, this attitude just is the core of supposition. When this same as-if-true attitude is limited by various constraints, the result is one of the more familiar variety of imaginings. So in one specific sense of the term ‘supposition’—supposition in the broad sense—, imagination is simply supposition under constraints. The rest of this section will

develop and argue for this claim. Doing this will give us reason to accept the second commitment of the AIT view.

It is important to see that on this view, supposition and imagination share the same cognitive attitude: the as-if-true attitude. It is the same attitude whether we are supposing that there are a finite number of prime numbers or whether we are imagining Dorian Gray's Faustian bargain. What makes these activities distinct are the various constraints that limit that attitude. Supposing that there are a finite number of prime numbers is clearly an unconstrained attitude. One simply takes that proposition and considers it to be true. Imagining Dorian Gray's Faustian bargain is very clearly a constrained attitude. It requires being guided by the narrative that triggers all sorts of imagery, affective and conative mechanisms. Yet, even in this case, it is important to see that one still minimally holds the as-if-true attitude to the propositions of the story *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. I think that a similar idea can be found in other cognitive attitudes. Seeing this will bring clarity to the AIT view. Thus, by way of analogy, let's consider belief.

Arguably, it is orthodoxy in philosophy of mind to understand 'belief' as the is-true attitude. When I believe that there is a vase of roses on my kitchen table, I hold the is-true attitude toward the proposition <there is a vase of roses on my kitchen table>. This view is plausible because it gives us a natural way to explain our behavior. For instance, my belief that there are roses on the table—my holding that proposition to be true—can explain my rose-appreciating-behavior as when I tell my wife how lovely the roses are.

This same attitude admits of minimal sorts and complex sorts. The attitude remains minimal when it is merely holds a proposition as true. It becomes a complex attitude when it carries with it various conative and affective stances.³² As an example of the former, suppose that after checking the weather on my phone, I form the belief that it will rain tomorrow. I hold the is-true attitude to the proposition <it will rain tomorrow>. This attitude will explain much of my behavior the following day, such as carrying an umbrella, or leaving earlier to allow for extra drive time behavior. Such a belief is minimal in that it does not and, in fact, need not carry with it various conative and affective stances. This can be seen by realizing that, though I do hold the is-true attitude (i.e., belief) towards the proposition <it will rain tomorrow>, I do not have to be *for* the truth of the proposition. That is, I need not really care about the truth of the proposition *per se*. (Although I might care about not getting wet, which explains how the minimal belief can interact with my desires to explain my behavior.) As a result, the is-true attitude in the minimal sense is compatible with being indifferent to the truth value of the proposition that is the object of that attitude.

This is not the case with the is-true attitude in the complex sense. Consider the following belief. I believe that my wife, Randi, is honest. The full meaning of this propositional attitude is not captured by saying that I hold the proposition <my wife, Randi, is honest> as true. There is also a real sense in which I am *for* the truth

³² What I am proposing here is largely influenced by Howard-Snyder (2013) whose paper in the philosophy of religion delineates a notion he calls propositional faith. He proposes that propositional faith is an attitude that always includes certain affective and conative stances towards the proposition. Thus propositional faith would always be a propositional attitude in the complex sense on my view.

of this proposition. I have strong conative and affective stances towards this proposition. I do not merely take it as true, I also desire and care that it be true. I would be pained if it turned out to be false. Thus, belief, or the is-true attitude in the complex sense, is not compatible with being indifferent to the truth value of the proposition that is the object of that attitude. One cannot explain all of my wife-related behavior with just belief in the minimal sense.

It is important to stress that I take a minimal belief like the belief <it will rain tomorrow> and my belief that <my wife, Randi, is honest> to involve the *same* attitude. We can talk of their differences in the same manner that I do for supposing and imagining—by employing the notion of constraints. Minimal belief is the is-true attitude without conative and affective constraints. Belief in the complex sense is the is-true attitude under certain conative and affective constraints. This, *prima facie*, is a plausible way to characterize belief. It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully defend this view of belief. As I mentioned above, I use it here for illustrative purposes. In particular, it serves as an analogy for how we can have the same cognitive attitude—in this case, belief—that can be unconstrained or constrained and so it can admit of a minimal and a complex sense. What I call the core of supposition is the as-if-true attitude without constraints. It is an attitude in a minimal sense because it is merely concerned with taking a certain content *as if it is* true. Imagination is the same as-if-true attitude under various constraints. It is an attitude in a complex sense because it is not merely concerned with taking a content as if it is true. It is also concerned with forming an experiential perspective of the content or as Moran (1994) put it, such imagining “involves something more like a

genuine rehearsal, “trying on” the point of view” (105). This will include forming various images, taking certain affective and conative stances towards the content, and so on.

This, then, gives us reasons to accept the second commitment of the AIT view—the as-if-true attitude can be constrained by various mental mechanisms and capacities. When it is so constrained, it is imagining. Recall that the as-if-true attitude is a kind of supposition—the core of supposition. Thus, all imagining is a kind of supposing. In the next section, I will defend this claim further by showing that the AIT view can explain all of the features (**Similarity, Ability Difference, and the Emotional Difference**). Before that, however, I want to discuss how the AIT view can be modeled in a very natural way using possible worlds.

As has been rehearsed many times, we can use possible worlds to analyze the different kinds of modality in natural language. As the story typically goes, we can think of modal like “must” and “can” as quantifiers over possible worlds. “Must p” is true just in case p is true at all possible worlds. “Can p” is true just in case p is true at some world or other. But as has often been observed, ‘must’ can mean different things. “I must pay my parking ticket” means something different than “if I drop the ball, it must go down”. These both differ in meaning from “because the van is in the driveway, my wife must be home”. In order to capture this difference, we posit different accessibility relations which gives us different sets of possible worlds. These different sets of possible worlds are different “modal bases” for the modals to quantify over in different contexts. In restricting the overall sets of possible worlds to different modal bases, we are able to model different modalities (e.g., logical,

epistemic, nomological, physical, and so on). “If I drop the ball, it must go down” is true just in case in all of the *accessible* worlds—in this case, worlds that share our physical laws—where I drop the ball, it goes down.³³ This is a case of physical possibility. In such a case, the modal base is restricted to the set of possible worlds that share our physical laws. In the case of logical possibility the modal base is much more expansive, arguably, it is the set of all possible worlds.

The AIT view can be modeled in a similar way. Recall that, according to the AIT view, all imaginings are different kinds of supposings. We can distinguish between the different kinds of supposition in the same way that we distinguish between different forms of modality—logical, physical, deontic, and so on—, namely, with sets of possible worlds or “modal bases”. This is not to say that the different kinds of supposition correspond to the different forms of modality.³⁴ Rather, it is to say that the same process, or processes, that generate different forms of modality, can also generate the different kinds of supposition, namely the processes that restrict the set of possible worlds. That is, just as one can model the difference between logical possibility and physical possibility by restricting the set of possible worlds, resulting in different modal bases over which to quantify, so too can you model the difference between the core of supposition and robust imagining by restricting the set of possible worlds. These different “modal bases” represent

³³ These ideas are based on Kratzer (1977). In her analysis, in addition to a modal base, she argues that we need to posit an ordering source—a partial ordering of worlds in the modal base relative to each other, but this complication does not matter for my purposes.

³⁴ If this turned out to be true it would be a very interesting fact about ourselves and our world. It would require more argument to establish this than is possible in this project, so it will have to wait for a future project. It is worth noting that something similar to this might be correct as some philosophers have already argued that certain constraints help the imagination track what is metaphysically possible (cf. Kung 2010, Ichikawa and Jarvis 2012, Balcerak Jackson 2016).

the available possibilities that one could hold the as-if-true attitude towards.

Because we can suppose anything, the as-if-true attitude without constraints will have a very expansive “modal base”—the set of all possible worlds.

However, when we add constraints to the as-if-true attitude, the “modal base” becomes more restricted. As an example, consider the imagery constraint. When the imagery constraint is triggered, all of the propositions that cannot be imaged get shut out—the imagery constraint restricts the accessibility relations to those possible worlds. To illustrate, we can again use the example of the *chiliagon*. There is nothing logically impossible about a chiliagon. But for beings like us, it is impossible to form an image of one. So the possible worlds available for the as-if-true attitude—when the imagery constraint is triggered—do not include chiliagon possible worlds.

Although this model seems to have explanatory power, there is a significant problem with it. The problem is that the model of ‘supposition’ is incomplete. This is because on the standard possible worlds semantics, a given content, or proposition, is a set of possible worlds at which the content is true. However, we can suppose anything including impossible contents. For instance, in Euclid’s famous proof, one supposes that there are a finite number of prime numbers. From this supposition, one derives a contradiction. The proposition that there are a finite number of prime numbers is false and necessarily false.

Moreover, it is not only that we can suppose impossible contents, we often believe contents that are impossible. That is, we sometimes believe things that turn out to be necessarily false. On the standard possible worlds model, all of these

beliefs would be modeled on the null set. But this does not seem right as we want to make distinctions between impossible beliefs, or even better, we want to make distinctions between the impossible contents of any representational state (e.g., beliefs, supposings, desires, and so on).

Following an example from Nolan (2013), suppose someone, as a result of an arithmetical error, comes to believe a wrong sum, say $492+365=757$. Suppose also that someone, captivated by naïve set theory, comes to believe that there is a set of sets that are not members of themselves. Both of these contents are necessarily false. However, as Nolan points out, it does not follow that one who believes one of these must also believe the other. The null set does not allow us to make these intuitive distinctions.

This problem has motivated some philosophers to posit impossible worlds (cf. Jago 2014; Nolan 2013). If we add impossible worlds, then we can keep these intuitive distinctions between different impossible contents. The impossible world where there is a set of all sets that are not members of themselves is intuitively different than the impossible world where $492+365=757$. The different impossible worlds allow us to represent distinct impossible contents.

Possible (and impossible) worlds offer a plausible model of the AIT view. When we start with the as-if-true attitude without constraints, the content to which we can bear the as-if-true attitude is the set of all possible worlds and the set of all impossible worlds. And when the constraints are added, this “modal base” becomes more restricted.

In developing the AIT view, we have seen a plausible proposal of the relation between supposition and imagination. What remains to be seen is why we should accept it. I show this next.

§ 2.2 All Imagining is a Kind of Supposing: A Defense

In this section, I defend the AIT view. As mentioned above, this view is a version of a one-nature view. Unlike Balcerak Jackson and other two-nature views, I endorse the *common nature thesis*. However, unlike current one-nature views, I do not argue that supposition is a kind of imagining. Instead, I argue imagining is a kind of supposition. More specifically, imagining and supposing, as they are typically understood, both belong to the as-if-true attitude. Yet, because I argued that the as-if-true attitude is the core of supposition, the AIT view implies that there are many kinds of supposition—many of which are distinct imaginings. The AIT view is able to explain all of the features that any view of the relation between supposition and imagination must explain. As we saw in chapter 1, both two-nature and one-nature views fail to do this. Two-nature views fail to explain **Similarity**. One-nature views fail to explain both **the Ability Difference** and **the Emotional Difference**. My defense comes in two stages. First, I show how the AIT view explains **Similarity**, **the Ability Difference**, and **the Emotional Difference**. Second, I offer a response to an argument from Kind (2013). Kind offers an argument that can be read as undermining the *common nature thesis*, which would undermine all one-nature views. Offering a response to her argument further vindicates my view.

Finally, I return to the Unification Question. Recall that, in general, that question asks: what is the imagination? More specifically, the question is concerned with whether there is an account of the imagination that can unify all of the different activities that we call ‘imagination’. Recall also that I indicated that much of my argument would focus on answering the Relation Question and that the AIT view that provides an answer to the Relation Question would also provide an answer to the Unification Question. I end this chapter by demonstrating that in offering a response Kind’s argument, the AIT view, also, provides an answer to the Unification Question—namely, the question of what the imagination is.

2.2.1 Explaining the Features

Recall the set of features that any view of the relation between supposition and imagination must account for:

Similarity: Given that there are vague boundaries between supposition and imagination, it is possible to confuse one with the other.

Ability Difference: We are able to suppose more propositional contents than we can imagine; however, in our imaginings, we are able to experience in fine-grained ways phenomenal contents.

Emotional Difference: Supposition rarely triggers affect and desire; imagination very often triggers both affect and desire, and can even motivate us to action.

According to the AIT view, supposition and imagination share the same cognitive capacity. In particular, I have argued that they are in fact the same cognitive attitude. This allows for a natural explanation of **Similarity**. Given that supposition and imagination are both the same as-if-true cognitive attitude, it should not come as a surprise that we can often confuse one for the other. What

starts off as the as-if-true attitude without constraints can easily slide into the as-if-true attitude under constraints. Recall my use of Jackson's "Mary" from chapter one. I can easily suppose that Mary is in her black and white room while engaging in Jackson's thought experiment. At this point, all that is required is the as-if-true attitude without constraints. As I reflect on the propositions of the thought experiment, I may sense irritation or annoyance arising at the thought of a girl being "imprisoned" in a black and white room. At this point, it would be clear that I was no longer merely engaging in a thought experiment. In such a circumstance, the as-if-true attitude has triggered affective mechanisms. According to the AIT view, these mechanisms have consequently constrained my as-if-true attitude. Even if my affective mechanisms were not triggered by this thought experiment, at the very least imagery would be triggered. This is because, as I argued in chapter one, the force of the thought experiment comes from imagining what it would be like for Mary to see red for the first time. This would be a case of sliding from a suppositional activity to a more robust imaginative activity, and we easily could confuse the one activity for the other. Even though, it may not be very easy to know when the as-if-true attitude became constrained, it is still the same as-if-true attitude throughout the thought experiment. Because it is the same attitude in both activities, the AIT view does not inherit the same problems from two-nature views—namely, there is no worry about functionally distinct capacities implying that **Similarity** is false. As a result, the AIT view has a simple explanation for **Similarity**.

The AIT view can also explain the differences, but before seeing that it is important to see that the AIT view, unlike all current one-nature views, does not conflict with the ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY of supposition. Recall, I described these as follows:

ESSENCE: We can suppose just about anything.

PHENOMENOLOGY: We experience as if we can suppose just about anything.

As we saw above, all current one-nature views imply that these are false. As I argued above, this is a problem because ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY together give us good reasons to accept the differences between supposition and imagination. In implying this, I argued, all current one-nature views fail to explain the **Ability Difference** and the **Emotional Difference**.

It should be evident that the AIT view does not imply that ESSENCE and PHENOMENOLOGY are false. This is because according to the AIT view, the core of supposition is as-if-true attitude without constraints. As a result, the as-if-true attitude does not need to turn off some mechanism in order to successfully suppose some content. When the as-if-true attitude is unconstrained, we can suppose just about anything, as in ESSENCE, and we experience as if we can suppose just about anything, as in PHENOMENOLOGY. It follows that the AIT view can explain the differences.

Consider, first, the **Ability Difference**. Again, the core of supposition is the as-if-true attitude without constraints. Imagination is the as-if-true attitude under constraints. Supposition and imagination belong to the same basic cognitive capacity. According to the AIT view, then, the differences between supposition and

imagination come naturally from the different constraints on the core of supposition, or the as-if-true-attitude. For instance, when the as-if-true attitude is constrained by the imagery mechanism, then there are contents that we cannot imagine simply because we cannot form an image of such content. However, imagery provides phenomenal content or a what it is like that the as-if-true attitude unconstrained does not provide. In this, we see the dual effects of the constraints—namely, a limiting effect and an embellishing effect. Additionally, when the as-if-true attitude is constrained by the conative and affective mechanisms, we might be unwilling to imagine certain contents because imagining such contents would move us to have desires and affections towards such contents that we do not want to have. For instance, imagining that one of my kids is missing may cause fear and anxiety. It is not simply that I do not want to experience fear, it is fear in relation to certain contents—e.g., one of my kids being abducted. This is an example of the limiting effects of constraints, but again many of those same constraints have an embellishing effect on our imaginings. For example some novels trigger desires and affections within us in such a vivid way that we experience what it is like to be in the world of the novel.

In contrast, when the as-if-true attitude is unconstrained by other mental mechanisms, then we can take any content as if it is true, especially for the purpose of seeing what follows logically from it being true. In such a case there are no (or few) constraints to provide limiting and embellishing effects on our imaginative activities. In this way, the AIT view offers an explanation for the **Ability Difference**.

Consider, next, how it also offers an explanation of the **Emotional Difference**. We are affected and moved in various ways by imagination. We, at times, may be motivated by our imaginings. Supposition neither moves us nor does it usually motivate us to do anything (except maybe to deliberate as Balcerak Jackson (2016) claims). This difference is easily explained on the AIT view. Given that imagination is the as-if-true attitude constrained by other mechanisms—among them, the conative and affective mechanisms—it is unsurprising that we can be affected and moved by our imaginings. For instance, imaginatively engaging a movie may trigger one’s cognitive mechanism as when we feel desire for the protagonist to win, and it also may trigger the affective mechanism as when we feel anger towards the antagonist. In contrast, given that supposition is the as-if-true attitude unconstrained by those same mechanisms, it also is unsurprising that we are *not* moved by supposition. Supposition does not usually take inputs from the conative and affective mechanisms. In this way, the AIT view offers an explanation for the **Emotional Difference**.

The AIT view—unlike all current one-nature views and all two-nature views—explains all of the features. Because of this, I argue that it is the correct answer to the Relation Question. In a slogan: imagining is a kind of supposing. In the final two sections, I reply to some objections to my view and I offer a response to an argument from Amy Kind (2013).

2.2.2 Objections:

Objection 1: At this point, one might object like as follows: In claiming that supposing is a kind of imagining, it need not follow that we hold that imagining is

always a constrained activity. All we are claiming is that once we turn off the mechanisms responsible for constraining the activity, we are still left with an imaginative activity. And we simply grant that what remains is supposition, thus supposition is a kind of imagination after all.

Reply 1: I think this is merely terminological. I can concede that left-over activity supposition-imagining. However, the AIT view still holds. All imaginings are supposition-imaginings, but not all supposition-imaginings are imagining-imaginings, where an imagining-imagining is the imaginative activity under various constraints. So while there might be a verbal agreement with other one-nature views when they state that supposition is a kind of imagination, there is also a substantive disagreement. They are *not* committed to, as I am, the view that all imaginings are a kind of supposition. Supposition, or better the core of supposition, is a constitutive part of all imaginative activities. All robust imaginings are also suppositions, but not all suppositions are robust imaginings.

Objection 2: According to the AIT view all imagining is a kind of supposing. But supposing is clearly a voluntary activity; we engage in it for the purpose of reasoning and deliberating about some content. However, imagining is not always a voluntary activity. We experience unbidden daydreams and imagery, such as earworms, rather frequently. Therefore, not all imagining is a kind of supposing.³⁵

Reply 2: This objection fails because it does not take into account the distinction I made above between the core of supposition and the purpose to which that core is put. And because it fails to take this distinction into account, it also fails

³⁵ Thanks to Anna Ichino for raising this objection to my view in conversation.

to recognize that there are at least two distinct meanings for the term ‘supposition’. ‘Supposition’ in the broad sense refers to what I have been calling the as-if-true attitude. ‘Supposition’ in the narrow sense refers to that same attitude being used for a specific purpose, i.e., reasoning to the consequences of taking some content as if it is true. This objection would work if I intended to claim that all imagining is a kind of supposing, where supposing is construed in the narrow sense. It is only in this sense of the term that supposition is a voluntary activity. The AIT view is not committed to that; rather, the AIT view holds that all imagining is a kind of supposing, where supposing is construed in the broad sense. Supposition in the broad sense is simply an attitude that treats content as if true. The voluntary aspect of supposing that the objection cites is tied to the purpose to which one uses the core of supposition—in this case, it is the as-if-true attitude under certain rational constraints. There is no reason to think that this as-if-true attitude with or without constraints does not make room for involuntary imaginings.

As one example, consider an unbidden day dream. An unbidden daydream is of a content that is not true. Although one does not voluntarily conjure up this content, arguably it still is an instance of the as-if-true attitude. Our architecture certainly treats it like an imagining. If not, we might exhibit strange behavior. For instance, if we are stuck in traffic daydreaming that we are on the beach and then act according to the daydream by laying on a beach blanket on top of our car, this would indicate that our architecture is not functioning properly treating a daydream as something more than an imagining—in such a case it would be treating it more like a belief. Because of this, it is plausible to treat involuntary imaginings as a kind

of supposing, where supposing is construed in the broad sense. Therefore, the objection does not go through.

Objection 3: The as-if-true attitude takes propositions as its content. Yet, arguably, we can have an image the content of which is not propositional. For instance, as we saw above, Bence Nanay (2016) argues that the content of mental imagery is the attribution of properties to a particular object. The image might depict information rather than describe information. But according to the AIT view, imagery is a constrained as-if-true attitude. But then similar to objection 2, we have an instance of imagination (forming an image) that is not a kind of supposition (as-if-true attitude without constraints).

Reply 3: This objection only goes through if the content of imagery is wholly non-propositional. My reply, then, is just to reject this. Granted, the nature of content for experiential states is still alive and contentious (cf. Fish 2010). Imagery, like perception, includes more fine-grained content than say supposition, but that does not rule out propositional content. In fact, arguably the dominant view in the philosophy of perception is that perceptual experiences have representational content (cf. Crane and Craig 2017). Our experiences represent the way the world is (or appears) to us. And the content of such representations just is a proposition. Taking propositions as content offers a plausible view of how different attitudes can share the same content. I can perceive that I am watching the Cubs at Wrigley Field. I can believe that I am watching the Cubs at Wrigley Field. I can remember that I watched the Cubs at Wrigley Field, and I can have a mental image of watching the Cubs at Wrigley Field. All of these share the same propositional content <I am

watching the Cubs at Wrigley Field>. Now the fine-grained content of imagery could be exhausted by the propositional content, or it could be due to something like qualia, which refer to the phenomenal character of experience that is not reducible to representational content (cf. Block 2003). Both views are argued for in the literature, and either way, the above objection will fail to go through. This is because on either view, the content of imagery is propositional. Until we have good reasons to accept that the content of imagery is wholly non-propositional, this objection does not go through.

In the final section, I further vindicate the AIT view by offering a response to an argument from Kind (2013). Many philosophers (e.g., Balcerak Jackson (2016), Miyazono and Liao (2016)) have credited this argument with showing us that there is not one capacity that can do all of the work that we call upon the imagination to do. The upshot of such an argument is that the *common nature thesis* is false and with it all one-nature views of the imagination and supposition. While I agree that Kind's argument threatens all current one-nature views, I will show that my one-nature view is immune from such a worry.

2.2.3 A Kind Worry

Kind's argument is straightforward. She highlights four paradigmatic instances of imagination and proceeds to show that there is a tension between the different explanatory roles of the imagination. She demonstrates how these four paradigmatic instances of imagination have very little in common. She refers to the lack of commonality between the instances of imagination as the heterogeneity of the imagination. The result, according to Kind, is that there is no way to unify the

distinct explanatory roles. The problem from this is that we should question whether there is one capacity that is the imagination. I will briefly summarize her argument and then show that this heterogeneity is not a problem for the AIT view.

As a foil, Kind focuses on a group of theories that she refers to as the simulationist treatment of imagination. Central to the simulationist treatment of imagination is the idea of imaginative projection. We met with such a view in chapter one, when considering Currie and Ravenscroft's one-nature view.

According to Currie and Ravenscroft, 'imaginative projection' can be defined as follows:

Imaginative Projection involves the capacity to have, and in good measure to control the having of, states that are not perceptions or beliefs or decisions or experiences of movements of one's body, but which are in various ways like those states—like them in ways that enable the states possessed through imagination to mimic and, relative to certain purposes, to substitute for perceptions, beliefs, decisions, and experiences of movements (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002, 11).

Important from this quote is that the imagination has an ability to simulate other mental states. As we will see, it is this ability that allows it to play an explanatory role in both our cognitive economy and our behavior.

Kind, then, highlights three aspects of the simulationist program. The first is that simulationists do not make a sharp distinction between supposition and imagination. Second, on the simulationist view, imagination produces many different states that mimic other mental states. There are belief-like imaginings, desire-like imaginings, perception-like imaginings, and so on. Third, when desire-like imaginings engage with belief-like imaginings, they do not produce action on the part of the imaginer. Sometimes this is described as the desire-like imaginings

and the belief-like imaginings interacting “off-line” from the action-generating mechanism. Having characterized the simulationist view, Kind then turns to her argument for heterogeneity.

First, Kind has us consider four paradigmatic instances of the imagination:

i. *Engagement with fiction*

Dennis is reading *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, and he’s completely caught up in the story. At the denouement, when Cedric dies in the graveyard in Little Hangleton, Dennis finds himself overcome by sadness. Then, as Voldemort begins to fight Harry, he feels anxious and desperately wants Harry to get away safely.

ii. *Pretense*

Christopher is pretending to be Obi-Wan Kenobi and his brother Sean is pretending to be Darth Vader. Each boy also pretends that the long tree branch in his hand is a light saber. Christopher forcefully swings his tree branch at Sean, who parries it with his own tree branch.

iii. *Mindreading*

Carole is playing the board game *Settlers of Catan*. In order to place her settlement in the most strategic location possible, she wants to determine what her opponent is likely to do on his next turn.

iv. *Modal epistemology*

Sam plans to rearrange the furniture in his living room, but before he moves any of the very heavy pieces, he wants to determine whether it’s possible for the piano to fit where the couch currently is (Kind (2013), 142).

According to Kind, all of these are instances of the imagination. Yet, each of these instances are quite different. This difference, alone, is not quite the heterogeneity.

That comes next.

Kind demonstrates the heterogeneity in two ways: (1) she shows that there is a tension among the explanatory roles of imagination in *Engagement with Fiction*, *Mindreading*, and *Modal Epistemology*. And (2) there is a difference in the role of

desire and action between *Engagement with Fiction* and *Pretense*. In both cases, Kind argues that the simulationists need to posit many distinct mental capacities in order to explain the imaginative activity, but this undermines the notion that there is one mental capacity that is imagination.

Consider (1) first. In this first way of demonstrating the heterogeneity, Kind focuses on the first aspect of the simulationists—namely, that they do not make a sharp distinction between supposition and imagination. On the simulationist account, according to Kind, supposition will have an explanatory role to play in *Mindreading*. This is because in mindreading, one is simulating beliefs and other mental states of another person, and supposition is belief-like imagining according to the simulationists. However, Kind argues that supposition does not have an explanatory role to play in *Modal Epistemology*. This is because, in modal epistemology, our imagination is said to play a role in our judgments of what is possible. Given that one can suppose anything, if supposition is found in modal epistemology, we would seemingly judge anything to be possible. But we do not do so. It follows then, according to Kind, that supposition does not play an explanatory role in *Modal Epistemology*.

Continuing, Kind also argues that supposition does not have an explanatory role to play in *Engagement with Fiction*. This is because imaginatively engaging fiction causes vivid affections and desires within us. As we have seen, supposition rarely ever causes affections and desires. It follows that whatever the explanatory role imagination plays in causing affect in *Engagement with Fiction*, that explanatory role will not include supposition. While imagination has an explanatory role to play

in causing affections in *Engagement with Fiction*, it does not play such a role in *Modal Epistemology*. As Kind argues, we can imagine philosophical zombies without being afraid, and we can imagine Jackson's color scientist, Mary, without feeling anger at her imprisonment (Kind 2013, 154). According to Kind, the simulationists' view that supposition is a kind of imagining, causes a tension in the explanatory roles of imagining. According to her, it appears as if the simulationists need to posit different mental capacities for each of these paradigmatic instances of imagination.

Next, consider (2) the second way that she demonstrates the heterogeneity. By focusing on the second and third aspects of the simulationists' treatment of imagination, Kind draws attention to a difference in the role of desire and action between *Engagement with Fiction* and *Pretense*. Recall that the second aspect of simulationists is that they posit various imaginative states that mimic other mental states, and the third aspect is that when desire-like imaginings interact with belief-like imaginings, they do not cause action on the imaginer's part—they are run "off-line". This aspect of the simulationists works well as an explanatory role for our desires and our engagement with fiction. When we engage with fictions, as already mentioned, our imaginings bring about all sorts of desires, but these desires do not lead to any particular action or behavior. When you are imaginatively engaged in a play, you might have desires that the "good guys" win, but those desires do not move you to "join the fight". According to the simulationists, given that desire-like imagining and belief-like imagining interact "off-line", it should not surprise us that our desires from fiction do not cause any particular action on the part of our imaginings. In contrast, though, the simulationists cannot offer the same account as

an explanatory role in *Pretense*. This is because in pretend play, our imaginings often bring about desires that *do* usher in particular actions and behaviors. When you are pretending to be Luke Skywalker fighting Darth Vader, you presumably have the desire to win and your actions convey such a desire. As Kind argues, if the desire-like and belief-like imaginings are run offline, then they do not play an explanatory role in *Pretense*. We see the same problem as above: the simulationists need to posit different mental capacities in order to account for the distinct explanatory roles of imagination.

It follows that the imagination is marked by a problematic heterogeneity. Because of this heterogeneity, Kind concludes that we have reason to doubt that the imagination constitutes one mental kind or that there is one capacity that is the imagination. Kind's argument is a problem for any theory of imagination that sees it as one mental capacity. If Kind is right, then, it follows that all one-nature views—including my own—are false. In fact, her argument is especially problematic for the AIT view because, as she argues, she has identified instances of the imagination that do not involve supposition. And, of course, the AIT view is that all imaginings are various kinds of supposings.

The AIT view offers a response to Kind's argument by providing an alternate explanation for the facts of her four cases. When we think of the core of supposition as the as-if-true attitude without constraints, and all other imaginings as the as-if-true attitude under various constraints, then we really have no reason to think that supposition is absent in most of Kind's cases. According to the AIT view, supposition, or the core of supposition, is actually present in *all* of them. It is just

that supposition, as we typically understand the term—where all we are concerned with is what logically follows from the content taken as true—is absent in all of them. All of Kind's four cases are instances of the as-if-true attitude under constraints; each of them are different because of different constraints on the as-if-true attitude.

First, consider *Engagement with Fiction*. Dennis is holding the as-if-true attitude towards the propositions of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. But he is not merely concerned with taking them as true. He is especially concerned or interested in taking on the perspective as a character in the story. That is to say, he himself wants to experience the unfolding of events at Hogwarts. Because of this, his attitude is constrained by all sorts of imagery. And his as-if-true attitude towards those propositions is also constrained by his affections and desires. Dennis is not an indifferent observer on the sideline. He feels certain desires—e.g., that Harry Potter win—, and he feels certain affections—e.g., fear towards Voldemort. While engaging fiction, the as-if-true attitude is clearly constrained, but the core of supposition remains.

Next, consider *Pretense*. Christopher and his brother Sean both have the as-if-true attitude towards relevant propositions (e.g., I am Obi Wan Kenobi) as well as towards the content of their true perceptual experiences. Both of them strive to imitate their respective characters; both of them desire to win in the battle. So like Dennis above, Christopher and Sean are not merely concerned with what follows logically from taking various propositions as true. Their as-if-true attitude is constrained by their intention to engage in this activity of pretense as opposed to

some other activity. Their as-if-true attitude is also constrained by their desires that follow from partaking in such a pretense. While engaged in pretense, the as-if-true attitude is clearly constrained, but, according to the AIT view, the core of supposition remains.

Next, consider *Mindreading*. Carole is holding the as-if-true attitude towards the propositions most relevant to reading her opponent's mind. However, again, she is not merely concerned with what follows logically from taking these propositions as true. Her as-if-true attitude is constrained by her desire to figure out what her opponent will likely do on his turn in the game. Her as-if-true attitude is also constrained by all of the constraints relevant to experiencing what it is like to think and decide according to her opponent. While engaged in reading other minds, the as-if-true attitude is clearly constrained, but, according to the AIT view, the core of supposition remains.

Finally, consider *Modal Epistemology*. Sam holds the as-if-true attitude towards the propositions relevant to discovering which furniture arrangements are possible. In this case, like the first three, it should be clear that he is not merely concerned with what follows logically from taking these certain propositions as true. His as-if-true attitude is constrained by relevant imagery, as well as by the practical desire to fit specific furniture in a particular room. His as-if-true attitude is also constrained by non-architectural constraints, such as Kind's Reality Constraint. While engaged in thinking about what is possible, the as-if-true attitude is clearly constrained, but the core of supposition remains.

It follows, then, that on the AIT view, the heterogeneity that Kind alleges is not threatening at all. It does not give us a reason to reject that there is one capacity for both supposing and imagining. All of these paradigmatic imaginative activities are instances of the as-if-true attitude. The heterogeneity comes from the different constraints on that same as-if-true attitude.

This concludes the defense of the AIT view. As I have argued, this view offers the correct answer to the Relation Question (i.e., what is the relation between supposition and imagination). Both imagining and supposing, as the terms ‘imagining’ and ‘supposing’ are typically used, belong to the as-if-true attitude. As I have argued, there is a core of supposition, which is the as-if-true attitude without any constraints. With this, one can take any content and treat it as true. Imagining, as it is usually understood, is the as-if-true attitude under various constraints. Because of this, we might sum up the AIT view as the view that *all imagining is a kind of supposing*.

2.2.4 The Unification Question

Having answered the Relation Question, and having also responded to Kind (2013), I am now in a position to show how the AIT view also provides an answer to the Unification Question (i.e., what is the imagination). Recall from the dissertation overview, where I discussed Amy Kind’s suggestion that one’s answer to the Relation Question will likely depend on one’s answer to the Unification Question. There is dependency relation between these two questions. However, unlike Kind’s suggestion, the answer to the Unification Question instead depends on the answer to the Relation Question. The bulk of this paper has developed and argued for an

answer to this question: the AIT view—all imagining is a kind of supposing. I argue that the AIT view also provides an answer to the Unification Question. The imagination just is the as-if-true attitude—the core of supposition—under various constraints. This provides a way of unifying all paradigmatic instances of the imagination. All are instances of the as-if-true attitude. It also provides a way of accounting for the differences between various paradigmatic instances of the imagination. Each are different instances of this as-if-true attitude because of the different constraints.

Many will object that this answer is too easy. My response is that we have missed seeing an easy answer to the Unification Question because we have not had the correct answer to the Relation Question. The AIT view—that all imagining is a kind of supposing—provides answers to both.

Resisting under Constraints

Chapter Three

We have seen that the *Relation Question* is motivated in part by the differences between supposition and imagination. And we have seen that one of these differences concerns imaginative resistance. In short, imaginative resistance refers to the systematic difficulties that people have in engaging in certain prompted imaginative activities (Liao and Gendler 2016 and Liao 2016). In this chapter, I argue that the AIT view³⁶ can explain a set of features of imaginative resistance that current views cannot. The set of features—to be developed fully below—is this: imaginative resistance varies from person to person in that some people report experiencing it and some do not. Even among those who report experiencing imaginative resistance, it seems to arise from different causes. And also among those who report experiencing resistance, the resistance varies in degrees. Finally, even within one person, imaginative resistance can vary in degrees. For ease of reference, call these four features **Variation**. As I will argue, some views of imaginative resistance cannot explain any of the four features of **Variation** and some views can only explain some of the four features of **Variation**. I will argue that the AIT view can explain all four features of **Variation**.

Earlier views of imaginative resistance were primarily concerned with explaining the nature or cause of resistance—namely, why is it the case that we even experience resistance. For reasons that will be clear below, many think that

³⁶ Recall that AIT is short for “as-if-true attitude”.

trying to establish one nature or cause of imaginative resistance fails because there seem to be many different causes of resistance for different people. In light of this, it is important to not read me as offering the AIT view as a theory about the nature of imaginative resistance. However, I will argue below that the AIT view makes room for all of the causes of resistance. Because these earlier views were focused on establishing the nature or cause of resistance, such views did not attempt to explain **Variation**.

However, recently there has been an emerging group of views that are concerned with explaining **Variation**. Each of the views have explored the role that contextual factors such as genre play in imaginative resistance.³⁷ Because of this, I call these *Contextual Variant Views*. While I think that these views have made progress, I argue that they cannot fully explain **Variation**. The AIT view draws our attention to another view that I call the *Constraint Variant View*. As the name implies, the variation of imaginative resistance is due to the constraints. I argue that this view does explain all of **Variation**.

This chapter proceeds in three sections. In section 3.1, I focus on set-up by giving a brief overview of the phenomenon of imaginative resistance. I also summarize the earlier views. I argue that either they did not have the resources to explain **Variation**, or they did not exploit those resources. In section 3.2, I elaborate on **Variation** and discuss those emerging views that offer explanations of it. I argue that they fall short of fully explaining **Variation**. In section 3.3, I complete my

³⁷ Context gives a cohesiveness to any text providing cues to proper understanding and interpretation. Genre gives a cohesiveness to works of art. We could think of genre as a broad contextual factor.

argument. Building on the AIT view of imagining, I propose a view that explains all of **Variation**.

§ 3.1 Imaginative Resistance: An Overview

Recall from chapter one that Gendler (2000) uses the phenomenon of imaginative resistance as a way to distinguish imagination from supposition. Unlike some imaginative activities, people do not experience systematic difficulties when prompted to engage in supposition. By way of illustration, recall that Gendler has us consider the following two statements:

- (1) I am asked to make-believe that *P* holds (where *P* is some non-moral proposition that I do not believe holds).
- (2) I am asked to make-believe that *M* holds (where *M* is some moral proposition that I do not believe holds).

Consider an example of (1). Suppose that I am asked to make-believe that *Hobbits live in Middle Earth*. I do not believe that there are Hobbits or that there is a Middle Earth, yet I have no trouble complying with the request. Now consider an example of (2). Suppose that I am asked to make-believe that *female infanticide is a good*. I do not believe that female infanticide is good, and I face resistance (in some pre-theoretical sense) to complying with this request. This is the phenomenon of imaginative resistance.

Interestingly, other hypothetical attitudes such as supposition seem immune to this phenomenon. In order to illustrate this, Gendler has us consider the following two statements:

- (3) I am asked to *suppose for the sake of argument* that *P* holds (where *P* is some non-moral proposition that I do not believe holds).

(4) I am asked to *suppose for the sake of argument* that M holds (where M is some moral proposition that I do not believe holds).

Consider an example of statement (3). With no difficulty, I can suppose for the sake of argument that *Cantor's Theorem is false*, even though I do not believe that *Cantor's Theorem is false*. And as an example of statement (4), I can suppose for the sake of the argument that *female infanticide is a good* likewise with no difficulty even though I do not believe that *female infanticide is a good*. It follows that supposition is immune to imaginative resistance, whereas, the imagination is not.

Given that imaginative resistance is one of the differences between supposition and imagination, and given that the AIT view explains the differences by appealing to constraints, the AIT view also appeals to constraints in explaining the phenomenon of imaginative resistance. In general, the AIT view implies that the phenomenon of imaginative resistance is due primarily to the constraints. I will return to that idea in section 3.3. In the remainder of this section, I give an overview of the phenomenon and the different accounts of the nature of resistance.

3.1.1 The Phenomenon of Resistance

According to Gendler and Liao (2016), imaginative resistance is a phenomenon in which competent imaginers have difficulty engaging in some prompted imaginative activities. As we will see, the exact nature and cause of this phenomenon is unclear. Most credit Hume with first describing this phenomenon near the end of his "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757):

Where speculative errors may be found in the polite writings of any age or country, they detract little from the value of those compositions. There needs to be but a certain turn of thought or imagination to make us enter into all the opinions which then prevailed and relish the sentiments or

conclusions derived from them. But a very violent effort is requisite to change our judgments of manners, and excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love or hatred, different from those to which the mind from long custom has been familiarized...I cannot, nor is it proper that I should enter into such [vicious] sentiments.

Hume acknowledges that there are cases that are easy to imagine (e.g., “speculative errors”) and cases that are difficult to imagine (e.g., “changes in judgments of manner”). Examples of easy cases are ones in which we are asked to imagine factual errors, such as imagining that humans can fly like Superman. Examples of hard cases are ones in which we are asked to imagine what we would take to be deviations from our moral, and even aesthetic, norms. Contemporary philosophical literature provides us with examples of hard cases:

Walton (1994)

Giselda: In killing her Baby, Giselda did the right thing; after all, it was a girl.

Weatherson (2004)

Death on a Freeway. Jack and Jill were arguing again. This was not in itself unusual, but this time they were standing in the fast lane of I-95 having their argument. This was causing traffic to bank up a bit. It wasn't significantly worse than normally happened around Providence, not that you could have told that from the reactions of the passing motorists. They were convinced that Jack and Jill, and not the volume of traffic, were the primary cause of the slowdown. They all forgot how bad traffic normally is along there. When Craig saw that the cause of the bankup had been Jack and Jill, he took his gun out of the glove box and shot them. People then started driving over their bodies, and while the new speed hump caused some people to slow down a bit, mostly traffic returned to its normal speed. So Craig did the right thing, because Jack and Jill should have taken their argument somewhere else where they wouldn't get in anyone's way.

Both *Giselda* and the last sentence of **Death on a Freeway** are puzzling when we attempt to imagine them as true in the respective stories. Weatherson has argued that reaction to the last sentence of **Death on a Freeway** gives rise to at least four

distinct, but related puzzles. Gendler and Liao (2016) give a succinct summary of each puzzle:

- (1) One has difficulty *imagining* that Craig's action is really morally right. This raises the **imaginability puzzle**: why, in certain cases, do readers display a reluctance or inability to engage in some mandated act of imagining so that typical invitations to make-believe are insufficient? (2) One has difficulty accepting that it is *fictional*, or true in the story world, that Craig's action is really morally right. This gives rise to the **fictionality puzzle**: why, in certain cases, does the default position of authorial authority break down, so that mere authorial say-so is insufficient to make it the case that something is true in the story? (3) One *experiences* a sense of jarring confusion in response to the sentence. This raises the **phenomenological puzzle**: why do certain propositions tend to evoke a particular phenomenology, sometimes described as 'doubling of the narrator' or 'pop-out' (Gendler 2000, 2006a) (4) One thinks that the story would be *aesthetically* superior if its final sentence were deleted. This gives rise to the **aesthetic value puzzle**: why, in certain cases, are texts that evoke other sorts of imaginative resistance thereby aesthetically compromised? (406)

Given that there are now four distinct but related puzzles, it should not be surprising that there are disputes over the nature of imaginative resistance. As we will see below, different theories of imaginative resistance disagree over which of the four puzzles are fundamental to the phenomenon. I turn to those theories next.

3.1.2 Which Nature?

Gendler and Liao (2016) discuss three distinct theories of the nature of imaginative resistance: what they call *cantian* theories, *wontian* theories, and *eliminativist* theories. As we will see, *cantian* and *wontian* theories have not traditionally been concerned with **Variation**. However, as we will see, the worries raised by the *eliminativists* began to force philosophers to consider **Variation**. I summarize each of these theories next.

According to *cantian* theories, imaginative resistance is due to some sort of *impossibility* to engaging in the prompted imaginative activity. One somehow *can't* imagine what one has been invited to imagine. According to Gendler and Liao (2016), *cantian* theories take the **fictionality puzzle** as more fundamental than the other three puzzles suggesting that the other puzzles derive from the breakdown of authorial authority. What causes the breakdown such that we are *unable* to engage in the prompted imaginative activity? Some *cantian* theories suggest that the inability is due to an impossible dependence or supervenience claim that the author is attempting to make. For instance, it is plausible to think that moral facts are higher-level facts that supervene lower-level non-moral facts. Change the lower-level facts and you also change the higher-level facts. Yet if an author of a story tries to keep the lower-level facts intact and change the higher-level facts, then she creates an impossible supervenience claim. Gendler (2000) attributes such a view to Walton (1994)³⁸ Here is Walton's explanation:

Moral Properties depend or supervene on "natural" ones and, I believe, in the relevant manner (whatever that is); being evil rests on, for instance, the actions constituting the practices of slavery and genocide. This, I suggest, is what accounts (somehow) for the resistance to allowing it to be fictional that slavery and genocide are not evil...Our reluctance to allow moral principles we disagree with to be fictional is just an instance of a more general point concerning dependence relations of a certain kind (1994: 45-46).

Gendler names this view *The Impossibility Hypothesis*. According to this view, imaginative resistance can be explained by the fact that cases that evoke imaginative resistance are conceptually impossible. If supervenience is a necessary relation, then there is no possible world where that relation fails to hold—it is impossible to

³⁸ Though she admits that he only tentatively endorses it.

conceive of a situation where the supervenience relation is different. This is what makes them unimaginable.³⁹

Related to Walton's view, Weatherston (2004) argues that imaginative resistance is due to a violation of a principle about dependence relations. He calls the principle *Virtue*:

If *p* is the kind of claim that, if true, must be true in virtue of lower-level facts, and if the story is about those lower-level facts, then it must be true in the story that there is some true proposition *r* which is about those lower-level facts such that *p* is true in virtue of *r* (Weatherston 2004: 18).

According to this principle, an author cannot create just any dependency relation. Given that it is plausible to think that moral facts depend on lower-level facts, we have a plausible explanation of imaginative resistance, at least in terms of a breakdown in authorial authority—authors cannot just create any dependency relation. For instance, **Death on a Freeway** violates *Virtue*—the author attempts to create a deviant dependency relation between moral and non-moral facts. That is, the author tries to keep lower-level facts (a world similar to our in terms of cars, roads, drivers, traffic jams, and so on) intact while changing the higher-level facts (it being permissible to murder someone who causes a traffic jam).

Weinberg and Meskin (2006) provide a different answer to what causes authorial breakdown such that we are unable to comply with the prompted imaginative activity. They develop a *cantian* theory according to which the inability arises from a conflict between distinct cognitive mechanisms. In chapter one, I

³⁹ This explanation, of course, presupposes some kind of conceivability-possibility thesis. The relation between conceivability and possibility is still a live and contentious debate (for a good overview, cf. Hawthorne and Gendler, 2002).

summarized their cognitive architecture account of the relation between supposition and imagination. They also use that account to explain how imagination, but not supposition, is susceptible to imaginative resistance.

Central to their explanation of imaginative resistance (what they call the puzzle of imaginative blockage) is a claim that there is a conflict between select cognitive mechanisms interacting with the imagination box. These select cognitive mechanisms are what they call our moral judgment system, the Inputter, and the Updater. Recall that the imagination box is where propositions central to our imaginative activities functionally interact with distinct cognitive and conative mechanisms. The moral judgment system contains our folk moral beliefs, and the Inputter is what allows us to insert just about any content into the imagination box, and the Updater is responsible for maintaining order and consistency within the imagination box. The Updater does this by deleting or altering imaginings when new imaginings are inserted.

With these mechanisms in place, here is how they describe a case of imaginative resistance. Suppose a person is engaging a novel and is invited to imagine some morally absurd proposition p (e.g., that female infanticide is good). At the cognitive architecture level, the Inputter attempts to insert p into the imagination box. According to Weinberg and Meskin, the moral judgment system responds to the scenario and automatically places $\sim p$ (e.g., that it is false that female infanticide is good) into the imagination box. The Updater then registers the conflict between p and $\sim p$ and so tries to remove the conflict. If this account is correct, then it reveals that the conflict is not easily dissipated because the Inputter keeps

attempting to insert p , while the moral judgment system keeps attempting to insert $\sim p$, and the Updater keeps attempting to remove the conflict. The tension created by these distinct cognitive processes lead to what they call imaginative blockage. This illustrates why we should group them as *cantian*—the imaginative blockage makes us *unable* to imagine the puzzling propositions. The conflict between the mechanisms prevents the puzzling propositions from remaining in the imagination box.

As this summary makes clear, the *cantian* views to date have not been concerned with explaining **Variation**. In fact, I argue that *cantian* views cannot explain **Variation**. This is primarily because such views predict that there should not be any variation. Imaginative resistance is an all or nothing phenomenon. The resistance arises either because the author asks you to imagine some impossible proposition, or it arises because of a conflict within one's cognitive architecture. But impossibility does not admit of variation. And it is not clear that the conflict within one's cognitive architecture admits of variation. But as we will see below, there are good reasons to think that **Variation** is true, and that we should be able to explain it. It follows, then, that *cantian* views cannot explain **Variation**. I next turn to the second group of theories which Gendler and Liao (2016) call *wontian*.

According to Gendler and Liao (2016), *wontian* theories hold that central to imaginative resistance is an *unwillingness* to engage in the prompted imaginative activity. According to them, *wontian* theories take the **imaginability puzzle** as fundamental. One experiences the other puzzles because one simply *won't* imagine what one has been prompted to imagine—one finds the request to be improper.

Gendler (2000) argues that resistance arises when a person takes the author to be asking her to export a way of looking at this world (as opposed to the world of the fiction) that she *does not want* to imagine. Central to this explanation is the idea that storytelling is similar to conversations with regards to certain Gricean assumptions. That is, storytelling is a shared activity between narrator and reader that is guided by a sort of cooperative principle. Different acts of storytelling might be guided by different cooperative principles. Related to this Gricean notion, Gendler discusses how different fictions or genres operate with different laws of import and export. 'Import' refers to the truths or background beliefs that we bring in to a story. 'Export' refers to the fictional truths from the story that we take as also being true in the actual world. A realistic fiction will allow us to both import and export more truths than, say, science fiction. Gendler makes a distinction between what she calls *distorting* and *non-distorting* realistic fictions. A realistic fiction is 'non-distorting' when I am free to export truths from the story in a rather straightforward manner. For instance, when reading certain realistic fictions, I may learn (export) truths about a particular time in history. A realistic fiction is 'distorting' when the relation between the fictional world and the actual world is more complex. The result is that there are more restrictions on what we readers can export. Distorting fictions tend to indicate that the reader is not meant to export certain truths from the story. As an example of this, Gendler modifies Walton's *Giselda* to read like this:

(7) "In killing her baby, Giselda did the right thing; after all it was a changeling (2000: 77).

Gendler considers this modified *Giselda* to be an instance of a distorting fiction. It is clear that we are not supposed to export a truth about the actual world—there are no such things as changelings. However, the original *Giselda* is understood as a non-distorting fiction. There is no indication that we should *not* export that as a truth about the actual world and because we are unwilling to export such a truth, we resist imagining it.

Similar to Gendler, Currie (2002) and Stokes (2006) offer views that can be grouped as *wontian*. They argue that we resist imagining in ways that diverge from our actual values and desires. Both Currie and Stokes posit imaginative analogues to our conative attitudes. As we saw in chapter one, Currie holds that there is what he calls *desire-like imaginings*. And although we do not have a problem imagining things that we do not believe, we do have a difficult time imagining things that we do not desire. Stokes (2006) posits what he calls *value-like imaginings*. Following Lewis (1989), Stokes holds that to value something is to desire to desire it. Value-like imagining can be thought of as second-order *desire-like imagining*. Thus Stokes' explanation is similar to Currie, we find it difficult to imagine things that we do not value. For instance, I would never desire to desire that the world be such that female infanticide is a good. Given my value-system, I am unwilling to imagine such a world.

Gendler (2006a) offers a refinement to her earlier view (2000). Her more recent view concedes a point from Weatherson (2004). She acknowledges that imaginative resistance does involve an impossibility; though, she still argues that the impossibility is due to our unwillingness to imagine certain content. Cases of

imaginative resistance (what she now calls Humean Resistance) are now analyzed as having two features: imaginative impropriety and imaginative barriers. She states, “[i]maginative impropriety is present because the content in question strikes us as somehow repugnant; and imaginative barriers are present because the content in question strikes us as somehow incoherent” (Gendler 2006a: 157). The “imaginative impropriety” is the wontian aspect; whereas, the “imaginative barrier” is the cantian aspect. Although the problems of imaginative barriers and imaginative impropriety are central to Humean Resistance, the two can come apart. We can experience one without the other. According to Gendler, then, there are four distinct types of cases to consider:

- (i) Cases that evoke feelings of imaginative impropriety without imaginative barriers: call these *pure won't* cases;
- (ii) Cases that evoke imaginative barriers without feelings of imaginative impropriety: call these *pure can't* cases;
- (iii) Cases that evoke both feelings of imaginative impropriety and imaginative barriers, but where it is the imaginative impropriety that explains our failure to imagine the world (the felt imaginative impropriety eclipses the imaginative barriers, so the doomed imaginative project is not even attempted): call these *won't-couldn't* cases;
- (iv) Cases that evoke both feelings of imaginative impropriety and imaginative barriers, but where it is the imaginative barriers that explain our failure to imagine the world (the imaginative barrier eclipses the motivating force of the imaginative impropriety, so that the unappealingness of imagining such a world does not become apparent); call these *can't-wouldn't* cases. (Gendler 2006a: 156)

According to Gendler, examples of (i) are invitations to adopt metaphorical perspectives that we do not want to adopt. For instance, as she describes, it is not impossible to imagine your child as a dung beetle, but most of us would rather not imagine such a thing. Some examples of (ii) that She considers is Weatherson’s fork-tables (2004)—where the reader is invited to imagine that an actual dinner fork is a

table—, and Yablo’s five-pointed oval (2002)—where the reader is invited to imagine that what counts as an oval in the story is a maple leaf. It is not that we are unwilling to imagine such things; we just simply cannot.

Gendler’s modified wontian view now takes instances of (iii) to be paradigmatic cases of imaginative resistance.⁴⁰ In such cases, the impossibility is due to the impropriety. This is primarily because she still holds that fundamental to imaginative resistance arises is unwilling to export a way of looking at the actual world, and she takes the fiction to be inviting such an exportation. In her revised view, she calls this invitation to export a way of looking at the actual world, ‘pop-out’. Pop-out happens when a reader takes the author to be asking her to not only imagine the puzzling proposition in the story, but also to believe that the same proposition is true or that it applies in the actual world. Recall above Gendler’s distinction between distorting and non-distorting fictions. Distorting fictions have indicators that prevent pop-out—such indicators signal that the reader is not supposed to export this way of looking at the actual world.

As we saw above, Gendler also thinks that supposition is similar to distorting fictions in that it prevents pop-out from happening. Instead of talking about laws of import and export, Gendler now just refers to them as ‘principles of generation.’ When the principles of generation preclude the puzzling proposition from being true in the story, the result is imaginative barriers. When the reader refuses to

⁴⁰ Gendler does not offer an example of case (iv). If there were examples of this case, they might be explained by Weinberg and Meskin’s imaginative blockage. Because of the conflict between the cognitive mechanisms, one cannot imagine the proposition. Though if one could, one would not want to.

adopt the requisite set of generation principles that would allow the proposition to be true, the result is imaginative impropriety. According to Gendler, it is the latter that causes the former—imaginative resistance arises when we can't imagine some proposition as true because we won't imagine that proposition as true.

This concludes the summary of *wontian* views. Similar to *cantian* views, none of the *wontian* views have been concerned with explaining **Variation**. Yet, unlike *cantian* views, arguably, *wontian* views have the resources to explain some of **Variation**. Given that according to *wontian* views, the primary cause of resistance is due to an *unwillingness* on our part to comply with the invitation to imagine a certain content and given that what we are unwilling to do varies, it follows that *wontian* views can give an explanation of, at least, some of **Variation**. This is also evident in Gendler's ideas about principles of generation causing or diminishing imaginative resistance. Such ideas, as we will see below, play a critical role in helping us both to see **Variation** and to account for **Variation**. I, next, turn to the last group of theories that Gendler and Liao (2016) call *eliminativists*.

The *eliminativists* are skeptics when it comes to imaginative resistance. They are not convinced that it is a real phenomenon. Todd (2009), Stock (2005), Mothersill (2003), and Tanner (1994) all give reasons to question whether the puzzle of imaginative resistance is a genuine puzzle. For instance, Stock argues that the right context can make puzzling propositions such as *Giselda*, imaginable:

To demonstrate the conceptual coherence for [*Giselda*], the right sort of fictional context needs to be supplied: for instance, the conceptual coherence of [*Giselda*] is demonstrated once one imagines that in the town in which

Giselda lives, girl children inevitably face atrocious lives—are placed in to unspeakable slavery, for instance—it they are allowed to live (2005: 617).⁴¹

With the right context, we do not resist imagining *Giselda*; thus, the phenomenon of imaginative resistance is not very puzzling. Stock argues that any imaginative failure that we experience is due to the fact that with so little context, there is what she calls a ‘contingent incomprehensibility’ for the proposition—we simply fail to understand the proposition.

Building on observations such as these from Stock, Todd (2009) argues that the so-called examples of imaginative resistance arise from single propositions or one-page stories created to make a philosophical point. Todd (2009) articulates this well:

For fictional worlds in general do not consist of isolated, a-contextual single propositions, and the few that have been mustered—or rather invented—in the literature as supposed examples of the phenomenon of imaginative resistance are testimony rather to the paucity of such cases in genuine fiction, whatever the situation might be in respect of propagandistic, simplistic and straightforwardly poor creations of impoverished skill and imagination (191).

According to Todd, every puzzling proposition is the result of philosophers’ poor attempts at writing fiction. The point is that the phenomenon of imaginative resistance seems contrived and therefore not a genuine puzzle. It is the creation of philosophers who cannot offer genuine examples from fiction or who cannot write good fiction. If there few if any examples from genuine fiction, and if the alleged cases disappear when appropriate context is given, then we have little reason to think that the phenomenon of imaginative resistance is a genuine puzzle.

⁴¹ Tanner (1994) and Mothersill (2003) both make similar points regarding context.

Although the *eliminativists* have raised significant problems, proponents of imaginative resistance take these problems as warrant for the need to revise the puzzle rather than as warrant for eliminating it. Proponents of imaginative resistance have begun developing accounts of imaginative resistance that build on the insights of the *eliminativists*. By developing accounts that take context into consideration, these more recent views have also begun to offer (even if implicitly) explanations for the variation of imaginative resistance. In the next section, I say more about this variation. I also, briefly, characterize these recent accounts, and I show that these accounts fall short of fully explaining the variation in resistance.

§ 3.2 Imaginative Resistance, Context, and Variation

Building on insights from the *eliminativists*, philosophers are now treating the variation in imaginative resistance as a feature in need of explanation. Weinberg (2008), Nanay (2010), Willard (2013), Liao, et al. (2014), and Liao (2013, 2016) have all offered accounts that focus on contextual factors, especially genre, in attempting to explain variation. Hence, I label them *Contextual Variant Views* of imaginative resistance. As I mentioned above, these views offer insights that bring much progress in explaining **Variation**. However, I argue that they fail to explain all of the variation that is characteristic of imaginative resistance. In order to see why, I need to clarify what is this variation.

As I mentioned above, one feature of this variation is that imaginative resistance varies from person to person. Some people report experiencing it and some don't. This can be seen among the eliminativists who doubt whether it is a

real phenomenon. Similar to this, I have engaged in conversations with philosophers and non-philosophers who insist that they do not experience resistance. The second feature is that the causes of resistance seem to vary. For instance, some people may resist because they have an aversion to the content of the puzzling proposition. Others may resist because of some conflict of architectural mechanisms as Weinberg and Meskin (2006) describe. Others may resist because they do not understand what the author is asking them to do. The third feature of variation of imaginative resistance is that even among those who report experiencing imaginative resistance, the resistance varies in degrees. As an example of this, it is likely that two people might have varying degrees of resistance towards the same invitation to imagine some morally alien world. The degrees of resistance might be due to their differing perspectives of the nature of norms. Arguably, an absolutist is going to experience a more vivid resistance than, say, a conventionalist. The fourth feature is that even within one person, imaginative resistance can vary in degrees across encounters with the same fiction. Such a person might have an initial resistance towards a puzzling proposition within a story, but that person might be motivated to work through the resistance. What may be an initially puzzling proposition for this one person may become less puzzling through effort and over time. For ease of reference, we can name this set of features:

Variation:

- (i) **Interpersonal Variation:** Not every person experiences resistance.
- (ii) **Cause Variation:** There are different causes of resistance for different people.

(iii) **Degree Variation:** Not every person experiences resistance to the same degree.

(iv) **Intrapersonal Variation:** One person can experience varying degrees of resistance for any particular case.

Some of these are discussed in the literature, though not as I name them (Nanay 2010, Willard 2013, Liao 2013, Gendler and Liao 2016). Nanay (2010) argues that the “set of sentences that trigger imaginative resistance varies from person to person and context to context” (589). Nanay’s person variation and context variation captures my **Interpersonal Variation** and at least part of **Cause Variation**, respectively. I say part of **Cause Variation** because context would be just one cause of variation. One example of this is how puzzling propositions in one context might not be so puzzling in another context. As a result, some contexts cause resistance and some contexts mitigate the resistance. Nanay adds that any solution to the problem of imaginative resistance ought to explain this variation. Finally, no view currently discusses **Degree Variation** or **Intrapersonal Variation**. There are good reasons to think that there both is degrees of resistance and that there is intrapersonal variation. I show this below as it requires some development.

Together (i)-(iv) comprise a set of features of imaginative resistance that we should be able to explain. While different views of imaginative resistance can offer different insights that can explain some of the aspects of **Variation**, none can offer a unified explanation for all of **Variation**. In the rest of this section, I discuss what I call the *Contextual Variant Views*, and I argue that they fail to explain all of **Variation**. In the final section of this paper, I establish what I call the *Constraint Variant View* and argue that it can explain all of **Variation**.

3.2.1 *Contextual Variant Views*

For reasons that will become clear, some preliminary remarks are required. One concerns the name, *Contextual Variant Views*. I consider any view a *Contextual Variant View* if it appeals to contextual factors in order to account for the whole or any part of **Variation**. Most *Contextual Variant Views* appeal to the contextual factor of *genre* in order to explain some of the variation of imaginative resistance. Because of this, one may wonder why I don't simply call the views *Genre Variant Views*. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that there are nuanced differences about the role of genre between some of the views. For instance, as we will see below, for Liao (2016), genre plays a primary role both to account for the existence and the variation of imaginative resistance. In contrast, for Nanay (2010), the work of genre is not primary in accounting for the existence of imaginative resistance, though on his account it does play role in explaining the variation of imaginative resistance between persons and across contexts. Thus naming them *Genre Variant Views* can be misleading in terms of the role of genre in each account.

The second reason is that there are contextual factors other than genre that play a role in imagination and imaginative resistance. For instance, Liz Camp (2009) makes a distinction between literary imagining and metaphorical imagining. To see this distinction, consider the proposition "Bill is a snake". Imagining this proposition in the context of make-believe requires that we imagine Bill *as* a snake. But if in an ordinary conversation with co-workers, someone utters that "Bill is a snake," imagining Bill *as* a snake would result in misunderstanding. The point of the utterance is to reveal something about Bill. According to Camp (2006, 2009),

metaphors, in general, use characterizations about certain objects to structure our thinking about other objects. Thus, with the utterance “Bill is a snake” we use one salient characterization of snakes (sneaky) to frame how we think about Bill (untrustworthy). Suppose she is right. Then metaphor may be an example of a non-genre contextual factor that guides our imaginings and presumably can play a role in imaginative resistance.

The second preliminary remark concerns justifying an intentional restriction of the discussion that follows. My main foil in this section is Liao (2016). This is primarily because it is one of the most developed of the *Contextual Variant Views*. This is also because, as I will argue below, there is no amount of contextual factors that can account for all of **Variation**. In light of these preliminary remarks, I offer a summary of Liao’s *Contextual Variant View*.

Recall first, that it was the *eliminativists* who brought our attention to the importance of context in the debate over imaginative resistance. Liao, et. al., (2014) calls them **imaginative resistance doubters**. They are opposed to **imaginative resistance believers**. As with most skeptical arguments, rather than convince the **believers**, the **doubters’** arguments have forced the “believers” to refine their understanding of the phenomenon. Such refinement has been proffered in both Liao (2016) and Liao, Strohminger, and Sripada (2014). The latter uses methods of experimental philosophy in order to shine light on the debate between the **doubters** and the **believers**. And the former develops one of the findings of the latter. I summarize each of them below.

Liao, Strohminger, and Sripada (2014) use empirical methods to adjudicate between **imaginative resistance doubters** and **imaginative resistance believers**. The results are somewhat inconclusive. Rather than declaring a clear winner, their studies reveal that both **believers** and **doubters** get some things right and some things wrong about imaginative resistance. They conducted two studies where they had participants read one or two short stories and then answer questions based on the readings. In study 2, they used stories with the same plot, but couched them in clearly distinct genres.⁴² Here is study 2:

(police procedural)

Seeing the Light. February 14th, 2010. Texas. There was only darkness. Everyone gathered around the preacher, Wayne Howell, for an announcement. “A message from the almighty came to me. The youngest girl must be sacrificed in order to bring back the light.” They believed his every word. All eyes then turned to Mary, who had just given birth to a baby girl. Reluctantly, Mary gave her baby to the preacher to be sacrificed.

(Aztec myth)

The Sun of the Second Creation. A long, long time ago, in the valley of Mexico, there was only darkness. Everyone gathered around the high priest, Cihuacoatl, for an announcement. “A message from the gods came to me. The youngest girl must be sacrificed in order to renew the sun.” They believed his every word. All eyes then turned to Ixchel, who had just given birth to a baby girl. Reluctantly, Ixchel gave her baby to the high priest to be sacrificed.

Participants read the two stories and were then asked to rate whether or not they agreed with the following two statements:

Belief. Mary/Ixchel believed she did the right thing.

Morality. In the world of the story, Mary/Ixchel did the right thing.

⁴² I focus only on the results of Study 2 because they are clearer and more pertinent to my argument.

Most of the participants agreed that both Mary and Ixchel believed that they did the right thing. The participants also agreed that Ixchel did the right thing in *The Sun of the Second Creation*; however, the participants disagreed that Mary did the right thing in *Seeing the Light*. According to Liao, et al (2014), these results demonstrate the existence of imaginative resistance as a real phenomenon, which seems to vindicate the **imaginative resistance believers**. This is because the participants rejecting that Mary did the right thing reveals that they do not accept everything that the author claims as fictional. This is at least a version of the **fictionality puzzle**. However, the results also show, at least in this case, that the imaginative resistance is mostly triggered in the “police procedural” genre, and this vindicates the **imaginative resistance doubters**⁴³ at least in their contention that given the right context, the so-called imaginative resistance is not triggered. This is because the participants did not have trouble following the author in regards to Ixchel, but did have difficulty in regards to Mary. As a result, this study can be read as offering empirical support for the claim that genre can make or break imaginative resistance. Liao (2016) develops this idea systematically into what he calls the Genre Account of Imaginative Resistance. I turn to that next.

In his (2016), Liao defines ‘genre’ in a broad sense as “simply groupings of narratives that are recognized by the relevant community as special” (2016, 469). Genre is “special” for two reasons: (1) the role it plays in classifying works of art, and (2) the role it plays in the normativity and psychology of narrative engagement. According to Liao, the normative role of genre is to establish conventions that

⁴³ Recall that these are formerly known as *eliminativists*.

constrain what can be made fictional, and the psychological role of genre is to provide readers with expectations that govern their imaginings. Liao suggests, admittedly speculatively, that genre expectations are story *schemas* that readers generally employ with high fluency, meaning that it is quick, automatic, and unconscious. The presence of such schemas allows readers to be carried along in the story. And of course, the absence of such schemas would make it difficult for certain readers to be carried along; such readers would lack the fluency to engage with the narrative. This would make it difficult for them to engage and would increase the chances that they would simply disengage from the narrative.

Liao, next, uses these features of genre along with the two stories from study 2 in order to refine three of the four puzzles discussed in section 3.1 above. Recall that central to the **fictionality puzzle** is the difficulty in accepting certain propositions as fictional. Central to the **imaginative puzzle** is the difficulty is actually imagining certain propositions. And central to the **phenomenological puzzle** is fact the people experience a jarring sense of confusion when they attempt to imagine a puzzling proposition.

According to Liao, the proposition that *Mary did the right thing by giving up her baby to be sacrificed* causes the **fictionality puzzle** because it is **convention-discordant**. The conventions that govern the fictional world of *Seeing the Light* do not permit such violations of real-world norms. The conventions that govern the fictional world of *The Sun of the Second Creation*, on the other hand, do permit such violations of real-world norms. As a result, the proposition that *Ixchel did the right*

thing by giving up her baby to be sacrificed does not cause the **fictionality puzzle**.

This proposition is what Liao calls **convention-concordant**.

Liao gives a similar explanation of the **imaginative puzzle**. In this case, the proposition *Mary did the right thing by giving up her baby to be sacrificed* would cause the imagination puzzle because the proposition would be **expectation-discordant**. The proposition is one that we do not expect, given the genre. Thus *Mary did the right thing by giving up her baby to be sacrificed* in the genre of *Seeing the Light* strikes us as odd in that we do not expect it, and so we have a comparative difficulty imagining it. Whereas *Ixchel did the right thing by giving up her baby to be sacrificed* in the genre of “The Sun of the Second Creation” does not strike as odd; it is **expectation-concordant**.

And finally, Liao suggests that genre expectations play a role in explaining the **phenomenological puzzle** as well. When we lack the requisite genre expectations, or schemas, our narrative engagement becomes less fluent. This demands more effort than we are used to and this, at least, partly contributes to the jarring sense of confusion, which characterizes the **phenomenological puzzle**.

As Liao argues, the attraction of his account is that it can show why earlier diagnoses of imaginative resistance remain incomplete. Recall from above that even though there are differences between accounts, they all emphasize that there is a certain dissonance between the puzzling proposition, on the one hand, and real-world norms and reader’s actual evaluative attitudes on the other. Different accounts appeal to different mechanisms in order to explain the dissonance. As Liao notes, Gendler (2000, 2006) and Yablo (2002) focus on the concepts that are central

to the puzzling propositions. The dissonance, then, follows from authors applying moral concepts in a deviant way. Liao also mentions Walton (1994, 2006) and Weatherston (2004) who focus on supervenience relations between higher-level claims and lower-level bases. According to them, the dissonance is a result of authors attempting to change the supervenience relations. The problem, according to Liao, is that by focusing on the real world norms and actual responses, these earlier accounts cannot explain why the same moral proposition can evoke imaginative resistance in “Seeing the Light” but may not when it is in “The Sun of the Second Creation.” Or to put it more simply, as I argued above, these earlier accounts cannot account for variation. The Genre Account avoids the problem because distinct genre conventions can allow for fictional worlds to have different concept-applicability conditions and different fictional supervenience relations. As a result, the Genre Account is able to explain why some contexts cause imaginative resistance and others do not.

This constitutes Liao’s Genre Account. As he argues, any explanation of imaginative resistance that does not accept it will remain incomplete. Liao sees himself as complementing earlier views. In fact, he calls for an “explanatory cosmopolitanism”. Complete explanations must take into account *many* factors given the complex nature of the normativity and psychology of narrative engagement.

I am inclined to think that all of this is correct. Yet, I think that Liao’s “explanatory cosmopolitanism” needs to be broadened. This is because the Genre Account is incomplete with regards to **Variation**. I show this in the next section.

3.2.2 Contextual Variant Views and Variation

It is clear that the Genre Account has the resources to explain some of the aspects of **Variation**. Consider (i) **Interpersonal Variation**. For any particular puzzling proposition, there will be people that experience resistance and people that do not.⁴⁴ A simple explanation, according to the Genre Account, is that those who experience resistance lack the requisite genre schema, while those who do not experience resistance do have the requisite genre schema. For instance, consider the variation over the Aztec Myth: *The Sun of the Second Creation*. Those who understand that the genre of an Aztec Myth carries its own normative principles would likely not experience resistance to *The Sun of the Second Creation*. In contrast, those who do not understand that the genre of an Aztec Myth carries its own normative principles would likely experience resistance to *The Sun of the Second Creation*. It follows that the Genre Account offers a good explanation of (i) **Interpersonal Variation**. This strength, however, may in fact also be a weakness. This is because, in certain cases, the Genre Account predicts no variation when there is in fact variation of a certain kind. That variation is what I called (ii) **Cause Variation**: there are different causes of resistance for different people.

To be clear, the Genre Account can explain some aspects of (ii). This is because, as I said above, some aspects of cause variation concerns the same puzzling proposition causing resistance in one context and not causing resistance in another context. It should be obvious that the Genre Account has an explanation of that type of cause variation. In order to see this, let's focus on those who experience

⁴⁴Cf. Nanay (2010) and Liao, et al. (2014).

resistance to *Seeing the Light*. According to the Genre Account, those who do experience resistance to *Seeing the Light* have the requisite genre schema. Those who experience resistance, do so because the last sentence of *Seeing the Light* is both genre **convention-discordant** and genre **expectation-discordant**. Yet, those same people will not normally experience resistance to *The Sun of the Second Creation*. This is because the last sentence is both genre **convention-concordant** and genre **expectation-concordant**. However, some causes of resistance are independent of genre. It is plausible to suppose that someone might experience resistance to *Seeing the Light* without having the requisite genre schema. Maybe they find the last sentence repulsive and simply won't imagine such a thing even in a story. Here the cause of the resistance does not have anything to do with genre. Additionally, it is also plausible to suppose that some people might have the requisite genre schema and realize that what they are being asked to imagine is concordant with that genre, but they still might resist for other reasons. For instance, they simply do not desire to imagine what they are being asked to imagine. As a result, the Genre Account can explain some of the variation due to different causes, but it is unable to explain all of (ii) **Cause Variation**.

The Genre Account, on its own, also cannot explain the last two aspects of **Variation**. Recall that these are the following:

- (iii) **Degree Variation:** Not every person experiences resistance to the same degree.
- (iv) **Intrapersonal Variation:** For any particular case, one person can experience varying degrees of resistance.

Consider (iii) first. It is likely that, among those who experience resistance within a particular genre, not all will experience the same degree of resistance. Here is an argument:

Premise 1: The Genre Account explains variation of resistance by appealing to genre.

Premise 2: There can be degrees of resistance between two people within one particular genre (iii) **Degree Variation**.

Therefore, the Genre Account cannot explain (iii) **Degree Variation**.

As a way to see that (iii) **Degree Variation** is true, consider the following example. Suppose that there is a person named Sally who has a strong moral belief that all female infanticide is immoral and should never be permitted for any reason. This belief influences the things that she values (all humans, which include females, have a right to life), and it influences the things that she desires (a world free of female infanticide). Suppose further that she understands that the genre conventions of *The Sun of the Second Creation* include a sort of divine command morality and that it is inappropriate to import her norms into the story. Yet, she still experiences resistance. In such a case, the resistance is due to her specific beliefs and desires concerning female infanticide. It is not due to a misunderstanding of the genre.

We can contrast Sally with another person who experiences resistance to *The Sun of the Second Creation*. This person, call her Jane, agrees with Sally about female infanticide. However, she is not so absolute. Though it makes her uncomfortable to think about it, she does admit that there might be exceptions that would allow for female infanticide. Jane, like Sally, understands the genre conventions of *The Sun of the Second Creation*. Here it is plausible to suppose that because Jane's beliefs and

desires concerning female infanticide vary slightly from Sally's, Jane would not experience the same degree of resistance as Sally. This, then, reveals that the resistance can vary by degrees between persons. Some will experience a more vivid resistance than others within a particular genre.

The Genre Account, on its own, cannot explain this aspect of **Variation**. Nothing about genre *per se* can explain why resistance within one genre can vary in degrees. Finally, I also think that the Genre Account fails to explain the last aspect of **Variation—Intrapersonal Variation**. My reasons for why this is the case, however, will come out in the next section when I show that my view can explain this aspect of **Variation**. The reason for this delay will be apparent below.

In general, we can summarize the problem for the Genre Account like so: the Genre Account has too few resources to account for all four aspects of **Variation**. While it does offer resources to explain (i) **Interpersonal Variation** well, and while it can explain some of (ii) **Cause Variation**, it cannot account for all of (ii) **Cause Variation**, and further it cannot account for aspects (iii) and (iv) of **Variation**. In the next section, I develop a view that can account for all four aspects of **Variation**.

§ 3.3 Imaginative Resistance, Constraints, and Variation

In this final section, I apply the AIT view of imagining in order to account for all of **Variation**. Recall that central to this view is the notion of 'constraints'. Appealing to these allowed me to explain the differences (and similarities) between supposition and imagination. I argue that it is constraints that also allow me to explain the forms of **Variation** that escape analysis of the Genre Account. For this

reason, I call the view the *Constraint Variant View*. In what follows, I first review the notion of ‘constraints’ showing that this notion is particularly apt for applying to the phenomenon of imaginative resistance (3.3.1). I, then, review my As-If-True Attitude view of imagining showing that the *Constraint Variant View* naturally follows from it (3.3.2). Finally, I argue that the *Constraint Variant View* can explain all of **Variation** (3.3.3).

3.3.1 Constraints and Resistance

Miyazono and Liao (2016) characterize imaginative resistance as follows:

[it is] the phenomenon in which we, who are otherwise competent imaginers, experience a *constraint* in taking part in an imaginative activity (233, emphasis mine).

This is a standard way of characterizing imaginative resistance. However, what is interesting about this characterization is that they are the first to explicitly mention ‘constraint’ as central to imaginative resistance. As we we have seen in chapter two, appealing to constraints to solve or clarify problems related to the imagination is becoming more prevalent. Kind and Kung (2016) have argued that constraints are required as a solution to what is called *the puzzle of imaginative use*, which is the puzzle of explaining how the same capacity that allows us to escape reality can also inform us about reality. Kind (2016) has also argued that they are required to give an account of the epistemic significance of imagination. One meaning of ‘epistemic significance’ is that the imagination can sometimes justify our contingent beliefs about the world.⁴⁵ Kung (2010, 2016), Ichikawa and Jarvis (2012), and Balcerak Jackson (2016) have all argued that constraints are required to give a plausible

⁴⁵ See also, Currie (2016).

account of the relation between imagination and possibility. Finally, we have seen that, on my view, constraints are essential to properly characterizing the relation between supposition and imagination and the nature of imagination itself.

Given this workload for the constraints, it should not be surprising that they can speak to the puzzle of imaginative resistance. Recall from chapter two, a constraint is something that limits or prevents us from imagining certain content. This is a natural way to characterize the puzzle of imaginative resistance—imaginative resistance occurs when something constrains or prevents us from partaking in an imaginative activity. While it is natural to connect imaginative resistance to constraints, it has not always been made explicit as to why or how imaginative resistance is connected to constraints. The AIT view of imagining makes this explicit or so I will argue below.

Recall from chapter two that according to Kind and King (2016), there are two classes of constraints: architectural and non-architectural. Architectural constraints are mechanisms of our cognitive architecture such as the imagery or the conative mechanism. In chapter two, I argued that these constraints constrain in virtue of the various relations that obtain between various mental mechanisms and mental states that make up our cognitive architecture. I also argued that the imagery mechanism is limited by our perceptual mechanisms. Because of this, we cannot form images of content that we could not also, in principle, perceive. We do not have direct control over the architectural constraints. These are the kinds of constraints, as we saw above in Weinberg and Meskin, that some *cantian* views appeal to in order to explain imaginative resistance.

In contrast, the non-architectural class of constraints constrain by providing norms that guide the imagining. As we saw in chapter two, both the reality and the change constraints of Kind (2016) belong to the non-architectural class. The reality constraint, for instance, provides a norm that demands that our imaginings must track the world as it really is. And, as we have seen in chapter two, genre is also a non-architectural constraint. By establishing norms of convention and expectation, genres establish what is appropriate to imagine and what is not appropriate to imagine while one is engaging some narrative.

Finally, recall also from chapter two, that I demonstrated how some of the distinct types of constraints relate and interact. Given the way that our affective and conative mechanisms relate within our cognitive architecture, there are some things we are unable or unwilling to imagine. Although these are architectural constraints, they are sensitive to non-architectural constraints, such as genre. More specifically, the non-architectural constrains can influence how the architectural constraints constrain. Recall from chapter two, the example from Liao (2013) about laughing at a head decapitation.

In light of this review of the constraints, it is important to see that, because imaginative resistance is a complex phenomenon, for any particular case, imaginative resistance can be due either to architectural constraints, non-architectural constraints, or the interaction between the two. This is another reason why earlier views remain incomplete. Arguing for the nature of resistance as consisting of one cause (e.g., architectural constraints) overly simplifies what we have seen is a complex phenomenon. In the next section, I show that from the AIT

view of imagining comes what I call the *Constraint Variant View* of imaginative resistance. I, then, argue that this view can account for all of **Variation**.

3.3.2 The Constraint Variant View

Recall from chapter two that according to the AIT view, all imagining is a kind of supposing. Central to this view are two basic commitments: first, there is a basic cognitive attitude that I call the as-if-true attitude. This cognitive attitude is distinct from other familiar attitudes such as belief and desire. Second, this basic cognitive attitude can be constrained in various ways. When this as-if-true attitude is unconstrained, it just is the core of supposition—taking a content as-if-true. When this same as-if-true attitude is constrained by various constraints, I argue that it is imagining. Imagination, then, is the as-if-true attitude under constraints.

The AIT view of imagining can explain two things with regards to imaginative resistance. The first is that imaginative resistance is primarily due to the operation of the constraints. This is implied in much of the literature, especially those who count imaginative resistance among the many differences between supposing and imagining. My view gives us a natural account of why there is a difference between supposing and imagining with regards to imaginative resistance. The as-if-true attitude without constraints does not trigger imaginative resistance. Yet, the as-if-true attitude under the operation of various constraints can often trigger imaginative resistance. The second thing that my view can explain is **Variation**. *Contextual Variant Views* such as the Genre Account appeal to one constraint, genre. They can account for one aspect of **Variation**—(i) **Interpersonal Variation**—very well. They can account for some parts of (ii) **Cause Variation**. Yet, as we have seen,

appealing primarily to the one constraint of genre alone cannot account for all of **Variation**. By casting our net wider to include any of the constraints, we can arrive at an explanation for all of **Variation**. This is what the *Constraint Variant View* attempts to do. I show this next.

3.3.3 Variation Explained

The *Constraint Variant View* holds that the variation of imaginative resistance is due to the constraints, and thus in order to explain the variation one must appeal to the constraints. One nice takeaway of the *Constraint Variant View* is that it can embrace and appeal to the strengths of the *Contextual Variant Views* such as the Genre Account. Thus the *Constraint Variant View* explains the first aspect of **Variation**—(i) **Interpersonal Variation** by appealing to genre. Whether or not people experience resistance to a particular puzzling proposition depends on the presence or absence of the requisite genre schemas. Yet, unlike the *Contextual Variant Views*, the *Constraint Variant View* can explain the rest of the aspects of **Variation**.

Consider (ii) **Cause Variation**. As we saw above, the Genre Account cannot account for all of this aspect of **Variation** primarily because the causes of imaginative resistance are too diverse. Plausibly, the Genre Account can explain causes of resistance that are related to genre. However, it is also plausible that some may experience resistance even if they have the requisite genre schemas. People may experience resistance because they have an aversion to the content of the puzzling proposition. This aversion could be due to disgust or moral qualms, and in either case such people would not desire to imagine the content of the puzzling

proposition. The resistance may also be due to our cognitive architecture similar to Weinberg and Meskin (2006). But notice that each of these causes are due to constraints, some non-architectural (e.g., genre) and some architectural (e.g., conative and affective mechanisms, and so on). Because of this, the *Constraint Variant View*, through appealing to any and all of the constraints, will naturally be able to account for all of (ii) **Cause Variation**.

Now consider (iii) **Degree Variation**. Recall the case above about Sally and Jane. They both experience resistance to the last sentence of *Sun of the Second Creation*—"Reluctantly, Ixchel gave her baby to the high priest to be sacrificed". But they plausibly do not experience the same degree of resistance. Sally has stronger moral beliefs about female infanticide than does Jane. This would contribute to a much more vivid and intense resistance for Sally than it would for Jane. Again appealing to genre does not help here because we stipulated that both Sally and Jane have the requisite genre schema. In this case, the degrees of resistance are the result of the different degrees of their moral belief about female infanticide as well as the different degrees of their desires. Both Sally and Jane do not want to imagine a world where female infanticide is good. But given the difference in their degrees of desire, Sally's resistance will be more vivid. The *Constraint Variant View* will be able to explain the degrees of resistance by appealing to the specific desires and beliefs of both Sally and Jane.

Finally consider **Intrapersonal Variation**—one person can experience different degrees of resistance across encounters with the same fiction. This aspect of **Variation** is rarely discussed. This is not too surprising. As we have seen, older

views treated imaginative resistance as an on or off phenomenon. Later views challenged this pointing out that for any person and for any particular puzzling proposition, whether or not she experiences resistance is the wrong question; instead, we should ask in what manner of imagining does she experience resistance. And as we have seen the “manner of imagining” is cashed out in terms of contextual factors such as genre. We have also seen that appealing only to contextual factors is not sufficient to account for all four aspects of **Variation**. This could be another reason that there has not been much focus on what I am calling intrapersonal variation. By focusing on contextual factors, philosophers did not see just how deep the variation of resistance could go. The *Constraint Variant View* allows us to see it by broadening our view beyond contextual factors. Thus the *Constraint Variant View* both predicts and explains **Intrapersonal Variation**.

In order to see this, let’s consider Sally again. Sally is experiencing resistance to the last sentence of *The Sun of the Second Creation*. She is quite interested in continuing to engage imaginatively with this narrative. However, as long as she keeps experiencing resistance, she will not be able to continue with this particular narrative engagement. Given that, according my view, all constrained imaginative activities include the core of supposition, and given that the resistance is due to constraints, it follows that Sally has a few options with regards to the resistance. What remains for Sally, then, is the option of removing or shutting down the constraints that are causing the resistance. Though this will take effort, it seems possible that she can eventually get to a place where she is simply supposing the

propositions of the story.⁴⁶ She will just be holding the as-if-true attitude without constraints towards the propositions of the story, including the puzzling propositions. This will count as a minimal narrative engagement. This minimal narrative engagement will be temporary until she can begin filling in the requisite genre schema, or find some ways to temper her aversion, and so on. Once she is successful in this, she can begin to engage in a more robust manner, where the disruption to being carried along by the narrative would dissipate until it was gone.

We can illustrate this with talk of levels. For the sake of illustrative purposes only, let's call the core of supposition (the as-if-true attitude without constraints) the *base level*. And for all of the higher levels, we will just assign a number. These will represent the as-if-true attitude under constraints. Let's arbitrarily assign the level of imagining where one is being carried along by a narrative, *level 5*. *Level 5* represents a robust level of imagining having many constraints activated. *Level 4* then would represent fewer constraints than *level 5*; *level 3* even less than *level 4* and so on until we reach the *base level*. To see how this works, first consider a case of constrained imagining that is not resistance. Suppose that you are prompted to imagine a round-square tower. You likely could comply, but only at the *base level*. Now suppose that *level 1* includes the imagery mechanism. If this is the case, then you would not be able to comply with a *level 1* imagining.

⁴⁶ This might sound strangely familiar to the objection I raised in chapter one against one-nature views (i.e., that they imply that supposition takes effort due to the fact that one has shut down or turn off various mechanisms). There is a significant difference, however. The objection against one-nature views is that any act of supposition takes effort. This is problematic. The fact that when one is engaged in an imaginative project, it takes effort or time to turn off mechanisms is not a problem on my view. This is a phenomenon that many of us have experienced. Think about the times when you have finished a novel or a movie and you still find yourself with anxiety, or sadness, or joy that the story has caused within you.

Next, consider a case of imaginative resistance. Suppose you are engaging a novel and you are being moved in powerful ways by the story. You experience desires, affections, and imagery that are coloring your imaginative engagement. Presumably, you are engaged at a higher level of imagining, say *level 4*. You then come across a puzzling proposition that invites you to imagine a content as true that you do not desire to imagine. What this illustrates is that in order to continue imagining, even minimally, may require you to drop down a level by removing or temporarily putting on hold certain constraints.

In order to see how this might work, consider again Sally. She is experiencing resistance while attempting to engage at a *level 5* imagining. She can attempt to drop down a level and determine whether the resistance remains. If at *level 4* she does not experience resistance, then she can continue with the narrative. If she does experience resistance, then she drops down to *level 3* and determines whether or not she is still experiencing resistance. Naturally, she can continue this if need be all the way to the *base level*, where there would be no constraints to cause any resistance.

This illustrates how one person can experience differing degrees of resistance across encounters with one fiction. It also shows clearly that the variation would be due to varying constraints. As a result, my view of imagining shows us how we can expect **Intrapersonal Variation**, and it shows us how the *Constraint Variant View* offers a way of explaining it.

This completes my argument. Earlier views of imaginative resistance either did not have the resources to explain **Variation** (e.g., *cantian* views), or they did not

exploit those resources (e.g., *wontian* views). *Contextual Variant Views* can explain some of the four aspects of **Variation**. Out of the AIT view of imagining comes the *Constraint Variant View*. By appealing to the constraints, the *Constraint Variant View* can account of all of **Variation**. Seeing what the AIT view does for the phenomenon of imaginative resistance offers at least one more reason to think that it is true. Thus, again in a slogan, all imagining is a kind of supposing.

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