Introduction

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Abstract

We present the structure and guiding principles of this *Special Issue*, with a brief description of the participants' contributions and the relations holding between them. The intersection between aesthetics and ethics as a field of philosophical enquiry is presented under the guise of a 'layer cake': at the top layer we find the most general metaphysical and epistemological issues concerning the nature of value, aesthetic and ethical; the middle layer encompasses several normative issues about the interactions of aesthetic, moral and cognitive values in art; finally at the bottom layer we introduce issues of a more restricted focus, like the aesthetic peculiarity of political songs and the ethics of artistic appropriation.

Keywords

aesthetic value, art, cognitive value, moral value, theory of value.

Our main goal with this *Special Issue* is to lay out some of the various ways in which the fields of philosophical ethics and aesthetics intersect, how moral and aesthetic value relate, whether it be the way artistic practices raise moral issues, or how ethics plays a role within the production and appreciation of artworks. The articles gathered in this volume deal with different angles when one considers that intersection; hence the diversity of approaches is also part of what unifies all articles thematically—since we are trying to provide a vivid picture of the richness and complexity of questions that arise when we consider these two pervasive aspects of value in human experience (the aesthetic and the moral). Can we be sure it is two wholly separate spheres we are talking about here? And if not wholly separate,

then *how* separate? What lines are to be drawn and how sharply can they be drawn? Maybe every slice of human experience in whatever historical or social context is always suffused with ethical and aesthetic aspects, in such a way that a sharp dividing line between them is intractably difficult to trace. However, none of that means there are no distinctions to be made. In a similar fashion, Putnam once suggested that just because there is no *dichotomy* between fact and value and (as he held) these aspects are always *entangled*, that doesn't mean there is no *distinction* between fact and value.[1] The same applies to distinctions *within* the realm of value. And even if distinctions cannot always be *sharply* made, that doesn't amount to say that they cannot be *clear*. To be equipped with clear distinctions is a precondition of being able to think clearly; to think clearly is a precondition of further refining our distinctions and critically assessing our so-called 'intuitions', as well as making informed decisions and taking action. Even in a field that might seem far removed from practical matters we find the need for clear distinctions connecting practice with theory, and some articles in this volume are precisely examples of this.

The intersection between ethics and aesthetics is not a novelty as a field of research in its own right. There are at least two ways of substantiating this claim. One of them would be simply to list a few reference works published under that guise, such as the anthologies edited by Jerrold Levinson (1998) *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*—to which our own title, through paraphrase and deference, alludes—or by Bermúdez & Gardner (2003); monographies such as Elisabeth Schellekens' (2010) *Aesthetics and Morality* or the more recent *Intersections of Value*, by Robert Stecker (2019); more specific works within the field, such as Berys Gaut's (2007) *Art, Emotion and Ethics* or Marcia Eaton's (2001) *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical*; as well as a vast amount of articles that have been published on the general topic, or on specific topics within this field.[2] One could also point out the fact that in important reference anthologies the connection between aesthetics and ethics, as well as between aesthetics and politics, is rightly acknowledged.[3] Another approach would be to argue, quite straightforwardly, that the idea of a separate aesthetic field is a specifically *modern* idea, as old (one should say 'as young') as the coinage of the term 'aesthetics' into the philosophical vocabulary: what is called 'aesthetics' (ancient, medieval and early modern 'aesthetics') must

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[1] Putnam 2002.

[2] We point out here the recent research work by Panos Paris, who specializes in the intersection of ethics and aesthetics: https://www.panosparis.com/research.

[3] See Gaut & Lopes (eds.) 2013, Levinson (ed.) 2003.

in fact be thought of within the intersection of ethics and aesthetics.[4] This is due not only to the premodern absence of a clear cut distinction between 'the good and the beautiful' but also to the fact that the category of art itself (the main focus of so much of modern and contemporary aesthetics) may be, as some have been arguing from Kristeller (1951, 1952) to Shiner (2001), and, more recently, Clowney (2011) and Wolterstorff (2015), a modern *invention*.[5] Furthermore, contemporary aesthetics, even in the analytical tradition, has been increasingly interested in the intersection of both domains, as a consequence of the fact that the very two categories on which what we may call the 'project' of modern aesthetics has revolved—the aesthetic and art—are put into question. The modern project has consisted, to a large extent, in attempts to 1) show how these two concepts specify distinct spheres of human experience, 2) explain one of those distinct spheres through the other (e.g. to provide an aesthetic theory of art;[6] and the contrasting view that only because we have art are we also able to see nature and everyday life aesthetically).[7] It is an open question what the boundaries of the aesthetic are; and not only do we still have disputes about the nature of art and scepticism about the prospects of reaching a definition of it, we also have eliminativism about the art concept.[8] So, depending on what theory of the aesthetic and of art we end up with, the 'intersection' might turn out to be simply a placeholder for the field's genuine and perhaps still to be invented name, while the idea of a separate sphere of aesthetics and art is but a province, a regional oddity within that field. We do

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[4] In fact, even a lot of modern aesthetics must, if we are not blinded by the influence of Burke and Kant on this topic. See Norton 1995.

[5] But see Porter 2009 and Young 2015 for an interesting contrarian approach on this. Young disputes Kristeller's reading of classical sources (which he claims has become 'orthodoxy') and holds that the modern idea of 'fine arts' corresponds quite closely to the ancient idea of 'mimetic arts', as well as descending from the latter.

[6] In the way different philosophers such as Bell (1914), Fry (1909), Beardsley (1982) or Zangwill (2007) do.

[7] An extreme example of this would be Oscar Wilde's reversal of the mimetic theory of art: "life imitates art far more than art imitates life." (1904: 32). A more moderate view is that only when in the possession of what Kendall Walton (1970) calls 'categories of art', in virtue of which we spontaneously organise the properties of artifacts into standard, variable, and contra-standard properties depending on the artistic categories under which we subsume the object, and only when our experience is thus organised, are we able to see any aesthetic qualities in them. The extreme view is to say that all aesthetic experience depends on our possession of such artistic categories.

[8] See Bartel & Kwong 2021.

not know because these are open questions, which lends further force to the intersection as a promising 'research program'.

As James Shelley (2019) has put it nicely (and Derek Matravers in this Issue reminds us), the two main questions in aesthetics are the following: 1) what makes aesthetic value *aesthetic*? 2) what makes aesthetic value *value*? (The two corresponding questions in ethics would be the following: a) in what does moral goodness consist? b) why should one choose to live morally?) Whether or not we are to conclude that there is a special sort of value which is 'aesthetic' by contrast with other values, such as moral value, any route we take towards the right conclusion must go through the intersection of both philosophical subjects. It is not difficult to see why if we consider that what Kant was striving to accomplish in his *Critique of Judgement* (1790/2000), a foundational text of modern aesthetics, was to clearly distinguish 'judgements of taste' (aesthetic) from both theoretical and moral judgements (judgements of pure reason and judgements of practical reason). This brief apologetic remark already allows us to start sketching a map of the field, according to topics/questions and the relationships holding between them.

With the intersection of ethics and aesthetics things behave pretty much the way they do in the rest of philosophy, from the rarefied heights of general metaphysics and epistemology to the earthier (though no less puzzling or dizzyingly abstract) nether regions of the various 'philosophies of…' something (action, perception, law, science, religion, history, etc.). We can imagine philosophy as a sort of layer cake in which questions are assigned to a certain layer by level of generality or dependence relationships (what is explanatorily dependent on what), etc.[9] Each layer is made up of two essential ingredients: 'what is…' questions and 'how do we know…' questions (i.e. metaphysical and epistemological), and differs from other layers according to what else is 'mixed' with those ingredients: 'what makes an action morally good?', 'how do we know?', 'what makes something aesthetically good?', 'how do we know?' etc. With this in mind, we can now ask about the 'top' layer at the 'intersection': what is it all about? And the natural answer to this question is: the metaphysics and epistemology of *value*. The nature of value, the varieties of value, the objectivity of value judgements, the relationships that hold between aesthetic and moral normativity, what is explanatorily prior, what is metaphysically more fundamental, etc.

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[9] With the exception of the layer cake metaphor, we owe much of this way of framing the structure of philosophical enquiry to our colleague, Desidério Murcho. Of course, nothing of this implies he has any particular conception of the relationship between ethics and aesthetics.

Moving to the lower layers, we find questions like the following: is there such a thing as *aesthetic experience*? How is it related to our *moral experiences*? What is the role of thick concepts in both aesthetic and moral descriptions of the world? How to make sense of the apparent entanglement of the aesthetic and the moral in certain predicates and descriptions? Can artworks have moral properties? How are the aesthetic properties of artworks related to their moral properties if they have any? Can we acquire knowledge through art (and particularly *moral knowledge*) in a way that is specific to art?

Move a bit lower and find questions such as the moral status of artistic appropriation (borrowing material from existing work), the moral status of cultural appropriation in general (e.g. the turning of 'indigenous craft' into 'art' by 'museification' and other practices), whether or not art and pornography are mutually exclusive, whether specific artistic genres have an effect on moral character[10] (which is different from asking about connections between moral and aesthetic properties in works), the moral status of destroying works of art, the aesthetic and moral status of forgeries in art, etc. These are what we could call, without too much imprecision, questions of 'applied ethics/aesthetics'. To expand just a little bit on the first of these examples: how we think about copyright in artistic productions will inevitably be bound up with *ontological* questions about the status of a work and its 'versions', in what circumstances we have a separate though derivative work, as opposed to different versions of a single work, e.g. how exactly a 'cover' differs, if it does, from any run-of-the-mill *performance* of a song, and so on. Supposing there can be no 'creativity' *without* the borrowing of pre-existing material at some point, then *how much* borrowing is ethically permissible and how to impose limits on it without compromising creativity, under which criteria? Such practical questions are riddled with philosophical ballast and only by ignoring it can we sustain the illusion that philosophy plays no role in them.

Perhaps the most venerable question concerning the intersection, one that goes back at least to Plato and Aristotle, is that of the *moral effects* of the 'mimetic arts' on people's behaviour. This is the problem of whether art really has the power often ascribed to it of improving (or perverting) human character. Though this question most often arises in the context of representational art, particularly literature, it has been a topic of interest since classical antiquity whether *instrumental music* can have such effects—of course, both Plato and Aristotle considered even instrumental music to be 'mimetic' and thus representational,

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[10] A question not all aspects of which are strictly philosophical.

but that is another matter. A closely related topic to this one is the question of the value of 'aesthetic value' itself—this is the sort of question implied in discussions of 'resource allocation' in what concerns public funding of the arts—although that is a quite simplified way to put it, and it assumes we have a clear enough distinction between aesthetic and moral values to work with. Also, conceptions of aesthetic value are *normative*; they are not simply gathered from empirical observation or inferred from 'natural facts'. We should ask whether our conception of aesthetic value is the *best* we could have, whether it is the one we *should* have; the one we *need* in order to think properly. The only way to go about dealing with such problems is to rehearse different conceptions and see whether or not they allow us to solve problems, or at least make things clearer. Perhaps aesthetic and ethical values, even if conceptually distinguishable, are somewhat like the components of *aqua regia* (nitric and muriatic acid): only together can they dissolve gold, and the metaphorical focus of this simile lies in the correspondence between 'dissolving gold' and 'constituting meaningful human experience'.

Another topic closely related to the previous ones is whether artworks can afford knowledge *as art* (a painting may inform us that Napoleon had a nose and that at some point he was in Moscow, but such knowledge can be gathered by non-artistic means; it is hardly *specific* to art), and this is also deeply connected to *representation*: if we are to learn something from art, it must be through what it *conveys* us; and imparting knowledge is a privileged way we might think artworks would have a moral impact on our character. If art is to exert an impact over our moral character, then a specific way through which we would gather *moral* knowledge from art would be the natural way to think that might happen. This opens up to yet another topic: are *artworks themselves* to be assessed *morally*? For instance, if an artwork may be said to be 'immoral' to the extent that it invites from the audience certain morally questionable *responses* in order to achieve its purposes (such as empathising with morally perverted characters), does this affect its *aesthetic* value? And here is yet another issue: we often use moral vocabulary to describe and understand the inner workings of a novel, poem, or short story. Is that evidence that we actually assess those works morally or is this practice internal or subservient to the aims of aesthetic evaluation, as an autonomist on the relationship between moral and aesthetic value would defend?

To provide the reader with a useful 'map' here: in the philosophical literature, *aesthetic autonomism* is the view that *in an artwork* aesthetic value is independent from moral value; that it is not affected, either positively or negatively, by moral value. Radical autonomism (Oscar Wilde) will hold that artworks are not to be morally evaluated at all, whereas moderate autonomism will hold that even if artworks can be morally virtuous or vicious in

some ways, this bears no connection with their aesthetic value. *Moralism* in aesthetics comes in different versions: it is either the view that, in an artwork, moral virtues *always* constitute aesthetic success, and moral vices are *always*, *ipso facto*, aesthetic 'blemishes' (Berys Gaut's 'ethicism' is of this form);[11] or the view that *sometimes*, in certain circumstances, positive and negative moral values in art constitute aesthetic 'pluses' and 'minuses', respectively. These are all nuances of scope within *moderate moralism*. There have been very few *radical* aesthetic moralists, and just listing the two most prominent ones is almost self-explanatory: Plato and Lev Tolstoy. Finally, a position sometimes misleadingly referred to as *immoralism*, or, in Robert Stecker's less misleading term, 'anti-theoretical view',[12] claims that positive and negative moral values *sometimes* determine aesthetic value, but this can flow in *either direction*, which means that sometimes, in certain circumstances, aesthetic virtues may flow from morally negative qualities in artworks (hence the misleading term *immoralism*). A leading proponent of such a view has been Matthew Kieran. [13] In practice, this view is a form of *cognitivism*, since the way in which a moral 'minus' in an artwork is said to constitute an aesthetic 'plus' is by way of affording *insight*. This is in line with those philosophers who see aesthetic/artistic value in close connection with cognitive value.

While all these issues are often debated by contemporary aestheticians and ethicists in the analytical tradition, there is also an important historical dimension to them that we should not overlook. The concepts we now employ such as *art* and *aesthetic* are the result of 18th century developments in both philosophy and society at large, concepts which we inherited and apply as if they are as 'consensual' or 'pre-philosophically established' as, for instance, the concept of morality or moral value. We must not ignore that the overwhelming influence exerted on the development of aesthetics as a discipline by Kant's ideas in his *Critique of Judgement*, for instance, play an important explanatory role in shaping many of our contemporary debates, when, in fact, the 18th century, like any other, was the site for a clashing of different conceptions. If it is 'intuitive' nowadays to take the phrase 'moral beauty' as a metaphor with no deep philosophical implications, that has in part something to do with Kant's influence on later philosophy. However, moral beauty was still an important concept in the rise of modern aesthetics, throughout the 18th century, running through Shaftesbury, Hume, and Reid, for all of whom 'beauty of soul' was not

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[11] Gaut 2007.

[12] Stecker 2008.

[13] Kieran 2003. See also Eaton 2001.

such a misleading metaphor. And if we think of aesthetic evaluations, as opposed to moral ones, as independent of desires and interests, that also has something to do with Kant's influence. Thus, and since aesthetics is, to a great extent, an invention of the 18th century, it is well worth revisiting not only the details of Kant's aesthetic theory but also some of those conceptions that did not become as overwhelmingly influential as Kant's, to see what we stand to learn from them about the way we go about doing aesthetics in our own time.

Finally, despite the growing notoriety, since the 1990s, of phenomena like 'artivism' or street and performance art groups with a marked political aspect, the relationship between art and politics remained on the whole far removed from the concerns of philosophers working in the tradition of analytical aesthetics (in contrast with what has been the norm in the continental tradition), with marginal though important exceptions. One such notable exception is Noël Carroll, who writes generously (by comparison) not only on the general connections between art, society and politics, but on such specific issues such as cinema and 'nation building' (apropos Eisenstein) (Carroll: 2003). However, it would not be far-fetched to say that ethics is a mediating link between art and politics, since so many of our paradigmatic examples of 'political art', from a variety of historical contexts, are political in virtue of making a *moral point* (namely, 'protest' art) which also articulates the collective experience of social groups and not just isolated episodes in the lives of individuals. On the whole, scarcely any attention has been given to forms of art making like 'social protest' songs, but also forms which are now perfectly traditional, such as the political mural or the role of politics in cinema. Maybe one explanation for this is a widely shared assumption that such issues have no bearing on aesthetic matters. And maybe it is about time one should question such assumptions and, so to speak, *probe deeper*.

With that goal in mind, we assembled an equally diverse group of authors, most of them seasoned specialists with longstanding and widely acknowledged contributions in the fields of either aesthetics or ethics, but also less experienced researchers with their own thoughts to share on the matter. We present here each individual contribution with a summary of their topics and goals, the specific focus of each article, pointing out the different ways in which some of the articles relate with one another, by way of either contrast, continuity, or both. Contributors are distinguished from other authors mentioned in this introduction by having their names in bold fonts.

We hope the 'map' we provided the reader in the previous pages will help to make it clear how the different contributions to this *Special Issue* not only form a cohesive whole but also represent the wide spectrum of issues raised by the intersection between ethics and aesthetics. These include highly general questions concerning the nature of moral

and aesthetic value; epistemological issues concerning our experience and appreciation of artworks; normative issues concerning the relationship of moral and aesthetic values as features of artworks; and practical issues concerning the moral effects of art in our lives and the place of aesthetics in them, as well as the moral status of certain artistic practices.

Nick Zangwill ("Kant on Pleasure in the Good") is well-known as a major proponent of both aesthetic realism (aesthetic judgments are belief-like, not imagination-like, and justified by objective, mind-independent aesthetic states of affairs) as well as a formalist account of the nature and experience of beauty and the value of art in general, and specifically of instrumental music.[14] As a formalist, Zangwill strongly opposes a literal understanding of 'moral beauty' as well as any form of connection between aesthetic and moral normativity. For him, as for Kant, judgements of beauty and judgements of moral goodness are fundamentally different, since their attendant mental states are also different, namely, —pleasure in the beautiful' and 'pleasure in the good'. This sets him in stark contrast with other philosophers working in both aesthetics and ethics (two examples are Panos Paris[15] and Levno von Plato[16], the latter being a contributor to this volume) for whom 'moral beauty' is to be taken quite literally as a real phenomenon. At the heart of the divergence lies precisely, on the one hand, the 'urge to purge' aesthetics from layers of 'conceptual clutter' and confusion (of which the idea of moral beauty would be one example), and, on the other hand, the idea that far from 'muddling the waters', connecting morality and aesthetics is required if one is to have a complete image of either.

Zangwill examines the Kantian notion that moral pleasure is interested, as opposed to the *dis*interestedness of pleasure in the beautiful. Here is how one could describe the gist of his argument: as a formalist, his aim is to keep aesthetic and moral *pleasures* neatly apart. In Kantian terms, pleasure in the beautiful *grounds* aesthetic judgements, whereas moral pleasure is grounded by moral judgements. One threat to the aforementioned separation would be the idea that aesthetic pleasures, like moral and 'agreeable' pleasures, are interested. Zangwill is a Kantian to the extent that he sees this separation as a basic tenet of aesthetics. Another sort of threat would be that moral pleasure (i.e. pleasure in the morally good) turned out to be disinterested. So, his specific aim in this article is to show how the Kantian characterization of moral pleasure as 'interested' would survive

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[14] See Zangwill 2001, 2007, 2015.

[15] See Paris 2018.

[16] See von Plato 2018.

even some fundamental changes, e.g., if one were to abandon Kant's 'internalist' view of moral motivation (i.e. the view that moral judgements are 'intrinsically motivating') for an externalist position (the view that moral motivation depends on desires that are 'distinct and independent' from the moral judgement). While it is debatable whether or not pleasure in the morally good flows exclusively from moral judgements (Kantian internalism about moral motivation), Kant's argument, at any rate, is that reason alone is practical within the moral domain. And when reason is practical, pleasure is not separable from the will, as it is in the aesthetic realm, where pleasure is merely contemplative and not practical—which is at odds with what Schiller (and von Plato through Schiller) claims when considering that self-determination entails full harmony between sensibility and reason. The bottom line is that disinterestedness allows us to draw a fundamental distinction between pleasure in the beautiful and pleasure in the good (be it moral, instrumental or prudential good), and this entails a separation of the two realms and the autonomy of the aesthetic. That is the focus of the article.

Derek Matravers' article ("The Value of Aesthetic Value: Aesthetics, Ethics, and the Network Theory") has a different focus from Zangwill's, though they are indirectly related to the extent that both are directly related to two fundamental questions about aesthetic value which are laid out in a recent book by Dominic Lopes—[17] and Matravers' article is, in a way, a reaction to that book. The two questions laid out by Lopes are a) the 'demarcation question' (what makes aesthetic value *aesthetic*), and b) the 'normative question' (what makes aesthetic value a *value*). Whereas Zangwill's exploration of a Kantian notion of aesthetic pleasure lies clearly within the purview of the demarcation question, both Lopes' book and Matravers' article concern the way theories of aesthetic value tackle the normative question.

Another way Zangwill's and Matravers' articles are related is that the theories discussed by Matravers are, respectively, Aesthetic Hedonism (AH), Deweyan aesthetics (DA), and Lopes' own Network Theory (NT), which is a development of DA. AH is a most natural companion to the formalism espoused by Zangwill. According to AH, the aesthetic value of anything is explained by the 'non-instrumentally valuable experiences' it is deliberately made to afford. Another name for these non-instrumentally valuable experiences is 'pleasure'. Here is the main 'primitive question' of aesthetics according to Lopes: what is the place of aesthetic value in our lives? This is akin to the Socratic primitive question in ethics: 'How should we live?' We go into a lot of trouble to bring aesthetic value into our lives.

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[17] See Lopes 2018.

How then do we go about justifying this? In order to pursue our 'aesthetic lives' we allocate resources that might be spent elsewhere. From this, Matravers proposes a test that theories of aesthetic value should pass, based on a tenet from Peter Singer's 'maximising consequentialism': the idea that if we *can* prevent the suffering or death of fellow human beings without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable importance then we *should* do so; these are called 'Singerian duties'. For Matravers, the existence of Singerian duties imposes two problems on any theory of aesthetic value: the 'resource allocation' problem (how will aesthetic value figure in a procedure to decide the allocation of resources?) and the 'relative weight' problem (is aesthetic value ever a reason to do or refrain from doing something?). This is the test, in a nutshell: one has to show how aesthetic value provides us with reasons to allocate resources in pursuit of it *and* how it could measure up against other values, such as human welfare, the reduction of harm, etc.

AH passes Matravers' first test: pleasure is the sort of thing that can enter the Singerian calculus; i.e. AH affords an 'unbounded' sense of aesthetic value. AH does provide an answer to the main question 'what is the value of aesthetic value?' (namely, pleasurable experiences) and thus a method to weigh the relative importance of such value (it bears on its sleeve how it can be a player in utilitarian calculus). By contrast, Matravers argues, NT does not provide a defence of aesthetic value in an 'unbounded sense', since according to this theory, aesthetic value is always relative to a given practice within the 'network'. Matravers argues, nonetheless, that such an unbounded sense of aesthetic value is required in order to adequately deal with the problems of resource allocation and relative weight. One may wonder, though, whether the difficulty lies precisely in the way these questions are formulated.

Levno von Plato ("Schiller on the Aesthetic Constitution of Moral Virtue and the Justification of Aesthetic Obligations") is a prominent defender of what is sometimes called the Moral Beauty View (roughly, the idea that moral virtues and vices are also, in a quite literal sense, aesthetic qualities), and thus provides an interesting contrast to Zangwill's view. He focuses on this issue from the point of view of both the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophical practice. His purpose is twofold: i) to examine and clarify Schiller's thesis, and ii) to trace its implications for contemporary debates. Concerning the first point, von Plato attempts to show how Schiller goes beyond Kant, avoiding the limitations of the latter's moral theory. According to von Plato, Schiller argues not merely for a desirable though purely instrumental harmony between the rational and sensual aspects of human nature (the 'form-drive' and the 'sense-drive'), but for a much stronger thesis—aesthetic qualities as constitutive of moral virtue. In von Plato's reading, Schiller

draws an interesting contrast between the 'good-hearted' and the 'beautiful soul'. For the good-hearted, harmony between sensibility and reason is merely accidental; instead, the 'beautiful soul' achieves harmony through its active will. However, Schiller also concedes that this perfect harmony or self-determination is hard to achieve, and, thus, much closer to an ideal. That is why Kantian moral theory is not entirely dismissed—one first needs to follow the dictates of practical reason if one is to become a 'beautiful soul', and only then trust her inclinations. At a certain point, following Schiller, von Plato states that only those who act gracefully, i.e. those who achieve harmony between sensibility and rationality, may be guided by their sentiments (these are people with a 'beautiful soul' or, as he calls them, 'children of the house'), this being also a vivid example of how the Moral Beauty View presents potentially fruitful ties to Aristotelian virtue theory (a topic which von Plato does not tackle in this article) and captures the idea that it takes the right kind of person, with an appropriate constitution and training, to apprehend moral and aesthetic qualities. As with Aristotle, Schiller too considers that the normative standard assesses and appraises the whole person, not just individual, atomized actions. Moral virtue—understood as the full self-determination of a human being—is the assessment of a person's moral value and thus should not be understood merely in terms of practical rationality (it is not a question that can be clarified simply by scrutinising the motives and reasons behind people's actions). It is because Schiller understands moral virtue in this holistic sense that, according to von Plato, it is not only possible but necessary for his moral theory to include an aesthetic dimension. Also, the fact that there are characteristic relations between the aesthetic and the moral aspects of certain determining actions suggests that it may be possible to provide aesthetic reasons for action and aesthetic obligations, for instance. And von Plato does argue, in the final sections of his paper, that this move opens up many resources for current research on the interactions between various normative demands, and even suggests a route to justify the concept of aesthetic obligations.

Peter Lamarque ("Literary Form and Ethical Content") focuses not on the issue of whether an artwork such as a poem, a novel or short story *can* have moral content but on how such moral content, when it is present, is conveyed to the reader and what relationship it bears to artistic value. Is this moral content essential to our experience of the work as literature? Lamarque's proposal is interesting in that it explores the possibility that ethical value in literature is a part of its *formal* value, which means that the presence of ethical content, if Lamarque is right, is compatible with aesthetic autonomism: we do engage in moral assessments in order to appreciate literature, but such assessments are ultimately subordinated to the overall task of *aesthetic* assessment. In other words, literature is not

supposed to provide us with *moral learning* just because it involves the application of moral predicates. Consequently, a formalist of Zangwill's persuasion, for instance, should in principle have no problem with the ascription of moral content to literature (but never to instrumental music!), under such a view.

But can moral content be conveyed through the very structure of the poem, its artistic form? Lamarque takes his cue from Terry Eagleton's remark that "the language and structure of a literary text may be the bearers and progenitors of so-called moral content".[18] He then argues that by artistic form Eagleton means 'macro-narrative features' of the text, such as 'genres, work-structures, or the general stylistic character'. One could, of course, debate whether Lamarque's understanding of Eagleton is adequate, but the crucial point is that Lamarque wants to go further than Eagleton, without denying this initial claim: he contends that ethical values are 'deeply ingrained' in literary narrative, that the ethical tone of a literary text is most adequately expressed through micro-narrative features. Why should this make any difference? Lamarque argues that ethical content, conveyed in this fine-grained way, is grasped by the reader through a reflective reading process, and this process is part of what it means to engage with a work of literature and constitutive of the aesthetic enjoyment that we get when we deeply relate to a work of art. This means that the ethical appraisals we may form when engaging in that reflective process make a contribution to the overall aesthetic value; they help us to appreciate the work better, but they are not some kind of moral lesson that we can draw from a specific work of art and apply to our personal lives. Thus, Lamarque does not simply hold that literary texts have a moral content, but, more importantly, he believes that this moral content is closely intertwined with the artistic form, with 'the very fabric of the work itself'. Therefore, its value is, first and foremost, aesthetic. It could happen that reading literary fiction makes people more sympathetic; or that it leads them to make better moral judgements; or maybe not. Either way, it would not explain the value of literature as literature. Lamarque asks us the following question: what is the value of 'ethical content' in literature? Whether or not it makes us more sympathetic, it is not translatable into a set of moral hints applicable to our lives; it is not normative in that sense, nor exemplary nor educational, nor is it *supposed* to be. The value of ethical content in literature is subservient to its aesthetic value.

Guy Dammann and **Elisabeth Schellekens** ("Aesthetic Understanding and Epistemic Agency in Art") discuss the sorts of knowledge we may acquire from our experience of

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[18] Eagleton (2012: 46).

artworks and how. In response to a recent challenge issued by Gregory Currie,[19] that if we do in fact gain knowledge from reading fiction then we should be able to clearly articulate what such knowledge amounts to, Dammann and Schellekens argue that it is possible to learn from art, even if the standards required to ground knowledge claims about art turn out to differ from those that govern knowledge claims in the natural sciences, which are usually taken as paradigmatic for any sort of knowledge claim. But the question here then is 'how?'.

Dammann and Schellekens contrast two models of how we supposedly acquire knowledge from art, namely, the 'subtractive' and the 'cumulative' models. They embrace the cumulative model and their argument for it is a sort of inference to the best explanation: if we adopt it, then the scepticism of non-cognitivists' concerning the difficulties of precisely specifying what knowledge we draw from the experience of artworks will lose some of its appeal, partly because it allows us to break the spell of scientism, but also because it affords an explanation of why it is so difficult to state not only *what* we stand to learn from art but also the standards by which one is to assess that knowledge.

Dammann and Schellekens seem to agree with Lamarque at one point at least: it is not to be expected that we should draw any useful moral conclusions or any sort of moral knowledge that would be directly applicable to our lives from reading, say, *Anna Karenina*, in the way we could draw conclusions about inflation from reading a textbook on economy. As they suggest, this would be somewhat like asking what we have learned from our friendship with a particular person. The authors claim that it is neither fair nor adequate to transpose the criteria for knowledge at work in natural sciences to the domain of art, because we do reap cognitive benefits, but these are not translatable into applicable knowledge claims about particular objects or events. Dammann's and Schellekens' argument is clear: we will never be able to enumerate everything we learn from a work of art, or everything we learn from a friend, no matter how thoroughly or exhaustively we attempt it, because the understanding of the world a work of art affords us will always surpass in scope what we are able to translate into tangible or applicable 'knowledge items'. Dammann and Schellekens of course concede that it is possible to retain and extract tangible information from a work of art (e.g., how a 19th century farming implement was handled), and this is the kind of knowledge they call 'subtractive'. However, when we want to define what we learn from a work of art as a whole, the answer eludes us. And it eludes us because there is another

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[19] Currie 2020.

way to learn from works of art—by acquiring understanding through time, through our cumulative experience of multiple works of art, in a variety of contexts, taking note of the relationships in which they stand to one another. As it happens with many other encounters in our lives, art might be able to alter our epistemic makeup by changing the way we think about the world, ourselves and the situations we find ourselves in.

James O. Young ("Assessing the Ethos Theory of Music") is a well-known anti-formalist who holds that good art is good in virtue of its cognitive value. Here he discusses and defends a version of the Ethos Theory of Music: the view that exposure to certain sorts of musical compositions will enhance listeners' capacity for empathy and prosocial behaviour. And while Young's views do stand opposed to formalism, we should note here that being an anti-formalist does not oblige one to endorse the Ethos Theory.

Young sets out to analyse some versions of the Ethos Theory, and describes what he sees as the best version, namely, one that is susceptible to empirical testing, and was embraced in the 19th century by Herbert Spencer. Young observes that, broadly speaking, the theory can be traced back to several authors in classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages, also in different versions,[20] which he groups in two broad categories: the Pythagorean, and another one tracing back to Plato and Aristotle. According to Young, what distinguishes the Pythagorean version is the idea that a phenomenon akin to 'sympathetic vibration' explains the effects of music on the soul, while for Plato and Aristotle *mimesis* is the key mechanism by which music affects the soul. Young begins his argument with two observations: 1) the Pythagorean version may be summarily dismissed because it is incompatible with modern science; 2) while some contemporary empirical researchers seem to believe they are testing Aristotle's version, they are in fact testing the Pythagorean version, and the results don't actually confirm or disconfirm the Ethos Theory, but rather show something trivial: i) music induces positive and negative moods in people, and ii) people in a happy mood are more prone to engage in prosocial behaviour, with the added nuisance that such 'prosocial' behaviour might actually amount to acting within a tribal or sectarian 'social logic', with less

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[20] And here one could quibble endlessly with the interpretation of ancient and medieval texts, as well as with secondary literature, though that would be beside the point. 'A rose by any other name…' would pass or fail certain tests, which are the heart of the matter here. If something like the Pythagorean version of the theory, as Young describes it, is what empirical researchers are testing instead of a version that hinges on expression/representation (mimesis) and the arousal of emotions; and if Spencer's variant is in fact the most suitable to empirical testing, then Young has indeed started to chisel away the conceptual clutter. This is the true core of the article.

than commendable moral results. While this is compatible with the Ethos Theory, it neither proves nor disproves that music has *enduring* effects on moral character. And here is where the philosophical aspects kick in: we need conceptual clarity, at the very least, if we are to reap the benefits of empirical research. Young then argues that Herbert Spencer's version of the Ethos Theory is the most promising one, with the added virtue that this version of the Ethos Theory is not only plausible but also testable. He concludes by suggesting that in order to support the Ethos Theory, a longitudinal (rather than cross-sectional) study that would establish a correlation between habitual listening to highly expressive music and increased empathy needs to be undertaken. He also suggests that this can be further complicated by music's diverse effects on people of different personality types.

Vítor Guerreiro ("Is there an Aesthetics of Political Song?") makes the case that politics and art are more closely interwoven in people's experience than is suggested by our standard notions of what 'political art' is. To unpack this, he focuses on political song, but also drawing on examples from other art forms. He relates the political character of a song to the ways it functions as a representation: engaging with songs of this kind enables one to recognize aspects of human experience of which one might be previously unaware, even if one had undergone the sorts of experience articulated in that sort of music. A variety of challenging musical examples are provided as the article progresses.

Guerreiro comes close, here and there, to Schellekens' and Dammann's position on the cumulative nature of art's cognitive value: he too claims that the knowledge we may get from these sorts of artworks is not reducible to propositional content, nor assessable in terms of truth conditions, nor acquirable through means other than experience of the artworks themselves. In fact, the way in which he frames his answers to the questions set out in the beginning suggests that the cumulative model is the most suitable to this approach. Art is the articulation of human experience in such a way that certain aspects of that experience come into focus, acquiring a salience they normally lack in everyday routine; and human experience is 'politically structured'. Guerreiro makes use of a variety of ideas from several philosophers, with the aim of establishing a model for the understanding of (political) songs in which the broadly political content is itself a part of the song's *form* as an artistic representation and, as such, part and parcel of its aesthetic force. It does this by way of an apparatus that includes: Kulvicki's notion of 'non-detachable syntactic parts' (originally applied to the meaning of pictures);[21] Carroll's notion of form as the

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[21] Kulvicki 2020.

'ensemble of artistic choices' fitting together in part-whole relations according with artistic aims;[22] Young's concept of 'illustrative representation';[23] and Max Black's explanation of metaphor in terms of (literal) *frame* and (metaphorical) *focus* and a 'system of associated commonplaces' (metaphor being taken as a paradigm case of illustration).[24] A political song is a complex organic whole, made up of non-detachable syntactic parts that may include such unorthodox elements as the fact that handaxes are used as percussion instruments. The form of the song is not just a set of sounds or an AB song pattern, but the way all syntactic parts are made to fit and work organically. To understand a song as a representation is not just to understand the lyrics as one would a poem; but to detect what significant relationships hold between the syntactic parts, e.g. the sound of the handaxes playing the role of 'focus' over a 'frame' defined by other syntactic parts of the song. The fact that such relationships are contextual is part of what makes representation in song dense and relatively replete, contrary to what we would think by focusing on song texts as vehicles of meaning. Summing up: 'political art' is a quality that permeates the *form* of an experience, to paraphrase Dewey; experience as articulated, organised in a 'syntactic' whole which is, in this particular case, the song. Political 'content' is, first and foremost, political 'form'. It is an aspect of how experience is organised by representation.

Nemesio Puy ("Ethical Issues on Musical Appropriation") shows us the relevance of musical ontology for practical issues in artistic practice that have some moral aspect. It is a fact of contemporary life that musicians must rely on publishing and selling their music if they want to go on existing as musicians. Then there is the ancient practice of a composer appropriating other composers' extant musical material (the 'source work') in her own work (the 'derivative work'). In fact, appropriation of some sort is ubiquitous and unavoidable: it is impossible for any individual to have nothing but original ideas in her head at any moment. Whenever creating something, one constantly borrows from others, elaborating on previously existing ideas. In short, creativity presupposes appropriation. However, it comes in kinds and degrees. Some are trivially unobjectionable, like the appropriation of 'atomic parts' (e.g. an individual chord); some seem straightforwardly objectionable, like the appropriation of the whole sound-sequence of a work; while the truly controversial cases consist in the appropriation of more than just atomic parts, but falling short of

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[22] Carroll 2016.

[23] Young 2001.

[24] Black 1955.

appropriating the whole work. How to adjudicate in such cases?

Puy draws and expands on James Young's (2020) work on the same topic. Whereas Young proposes a method to sort out the objectionable cases of musical appropriation derived from ontological considerations plus a criterion of fair use based on economic harm, Puy contends that the truth of such claims is liable to vary depending on the musical *genres* to which the source and derivative works belong. Ethical claims on musical appropriation are genre-relative, since different genres come with different sets of normative constraints. What is objectionable in one genre may be permissible in another, even if we restrict ourselves to Young's economic notion of harm. This is an improvement on Young's position. Puy seeks to show how the practice of using the first measures of a source work as the first measures of a new (derivative) work is permissible in the genres of *theme and variations*, *tribute works*, and *liturgical music*, whereas it is non-permissible in the genres of *film music*, *opera overture*, and *minimal music*. For instance, liturgical music directly contrasts with film music in that the latter requires that the first measures of a soundtrack consist of original material (either an original pattern or an original use of a commonplace pattern, e.g. a folk tune) that univocally identifies the film, its place of action and dominant mood, or effectively introduces the *Leitmotive* associated with main characters. In the case of liturgical music, appropriation of *both* commonplace patterns (e.g. plainchant monodic melodies and melismas) and *their use* do not conflict with the more fundamental aim of establishing a link to liturgical tradition and facilitating recognition. In both cases, appropriating commonplace patterns is permissible, but appropriating particular uses of such patterns (specific manners of presenting their content) is permissible in one case and non-permissible in the other.

A final note of interest are the underlying connections between Puy's argument and his own theory of *nested types*, with which he has recently made a very important contribution to musical ontology, adding clarity to various aspects of what is known as 'musical platonism' (the theory that musical works are abstract types). In this view, for instance, when a musician composes a work, she creates two entities, not just one: the higher-order type which is the musical work and the lower-order type which is the *first version* of that musical work.

According with the 'layer cake' model we explained at the beginning of this introduction, the eight articles comprising this special volume can be organised thus: three layers, of which the top layer is occupied by Zangwill, Matravers and Von Plato; Lamarque and Schellekens & Dammann in the middle layer; and, finally, Young, Guerreiro and Puy in the bottom layer. The three layers correspond, respectively, to 'higher order' questions on

the nature of value, aesthetic and ethical; 'intermediate' questions on the epistemology of art and aesthetic experience; and, finally, 'lower order' questions concerning the moral effects of music, the nature of political song, and the ethical status of different kinds of musical appropriation. These are not impervious, and a reasonable amount of 'bleeding' is expected to occur from one layer to another, in both directions. Furthermore, this particular distribution of articles and topics is a most appropriate way of fleshing out the structure of the intersection, as we presented it above. We hope the readers of this *Special Issue*, whatever their degree of acquaintance with philosophical aesthetics and ethics, will find this selection of ours most useful, and as much a pleasure to read as it was for us to bring them together.

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