The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 2024, **82**, 215–230
https://doi.org/10.1093/jaac/kpae022
Advance access publication 5 July 2024
Original Article

Disagreement in Aesthetics and Ethics: Against the Received Image

Vítor Guerreiro and Susana Cadilha

ABSTRACT

The way we think about disagreement is shaped by the systematic emphasizing of its adversarial, non-cooperative aspects. This is due to a perspective on arguing and disagreeing. Perspectives enable some thoughts and occlude others. We claim that the way some issues are thought of in aesthetics is conditioned by a similar phenomenon we call 'the Received Image' (RI), which parallels the influence on ethics of what Bernard Williams called 'systems of morality'. Peter Kivy argued that disagreements in aesthetics, if genuine, presuppose that contenders are tacit realists about 'art-relevant properties': the motivation for arguing lies in making the *adversary* acknowledge (epistemic) *defeat* (in pursuing agreement *from* others). He draws this conclusion from what he sees as a fundamental difference between aesthetics and ethics. However, in our view, Kivy and his opponents in the *semantic* meta-debate on disagreement think under the aegis of the RI. We look at disagreements about art from a neo-cognitivist perspective, and argue that heuristic similarities between aesthetics and ethics stand out with an understanding-based epistemology coupled with an adequate theory of artistic form: form as a perspective-generating device whose grasping involves 'infinitely fine adjustments'.

I. INTRODUCTION

Disagreement is pervasive, and the variety of its motivations unruly. Finding ourselves in disagreement, we also often dispute. The motivation can be a concern for the truth or purely agonistic; a desire to prove the other wrong. When art is concerned, sadly, one such motivation is, more often than not, snobbery (Kieran 2010; Patridge 2018), i.e., the signaling of desired social status through verdicts of 'taste'. Sometimes, people also just entrench irrationally. Closed mindedness and aggressiveness, no less than the urge to share and cooperate, can be powerful motivators (Slote 2018, 114–115). Yet another motivation could be to avoid *Nehamas' nightmare* (Lopes 2022, 84; 2018, 165). Levinson (2006, 402) claimed that "a world awash in verdant pastures and first-rate Cézannes is better than one strewn with sputtering slime-pools and second-rate Utrillos." With Nehamas, we think that a world strewn with aesthetic foulness and second-ratedness is still better than a world jellified into aesthetic monoculture: "What is truly frightful is not what everyone likes but simply the fact that everyone likes it." (Nehamas 2007, 84) Instead of being 'redeemed' by doxastic homogeneity, the value of aesthetic disagreement could lie precisely in avoiding it.

Some disagreements are doxastic (concerning beliefs), and some are 'conative' (concerning non-doxastic attitudes). Are these all? Because of a certain way of parsing the metaphor of *taste*[1] disagreements about art often come out as conative disagreements *disguised* as doxastic. This is part of what we call the Received Image (RI). We emphasize a venerable though commonly less visible aspect of the metaphor: that of *grasping*. To see a painting as dynamic, balanced, and unified one must *notice* things in it (e.g., a recurrence of motifs unifies a structure) and *connect* them properly (just as grasping an argument requires *knowing how* to properly connect its premises (Riggs 2003, 217)). When *taste* is said

Received: 26 May, 2023. **Revised:** 1 April, 2024. **Accepted:** 16 May, 2024

to be involved in our experience of those features, it should be stressed that what we do is *grasp* them, just as we grasp generosity and extravagance in persons and actions.

Originally, the metaphor of taste is twofold, as Hume already rightly observed.[2] Taste has both a *hedonic* and a *discriminating* (or cognitive) aspect. And, in fact, even Stolnitz (1960 30, 48), the paradigmatic non-cognitivist, speaks of 'grasping' a 'scene' or the 'intrinsic value' of a work. Despite its twofoldness, the uses of 'taste' differ according to whether the hedonic or the cognitive component are dominant. Although 'tasting' does not *exclude* 'grasping' (e.g., 'grasping' the particular version of ice cream flavor), a concept of tasting where the grasping sub-metaphor is dominant carries cognitivist overtones that not all representatives of a broadly construed Humean or Kantian tradition might be comfortable with. In other words, we can think of tasting as a kind of grasping,[3] and place this idea in a longstanding tradition; yet it is not quite the same in Hume, Kant, Bell, Stolnitz, or Goodman, to give just a few examples.[4]

Disagreement may concern how we *organize* our 'cognitive stock' (John 2020, 281–83; Carroll 1998[a], 140, 144; Wollheim 2015, 130–32; 1994, 142–43): i.e., it may be neither strictly doxastic, nor conative, but *perspectival*. We develop this idea by contrasting *disagreement in understanding* to disagreements of taste, which are the standard focus of *semantic* disputes. The disagreements we find in that literature are conflicts involving doxastic or conative aspects of declarative sentences (propositional structures, genuine or ersatz) containing 'taste predicates'. However, we address disagreement here in a way that doesn't correspond to how it is usually approached in the semantic debate.

The form of disagreement that truly interests us is a conflict in what we call perspectives, involving non-propositional structures[5] grasped through *first-hand understanding* (Sosa 2019, 109–121; 2021, 3–16). Such forms (primarily instanced by artworks) may support a variety of contrasting perspectives. We may disagree about which perspective affords a better understanding of a specific work. Doubtlessly, there will be disagreements of this sort that are easily resolved. Sam points out to Sal that if he sees the work as having this structure rather than that one, various factors fall into place—factors that Sal's perspective makes no sense of. In other cases, the disagreement may rightly be interminable: nothing seems to favor one over the other.[6] From this epistemological viewpoint, we highlight heuristic similarities between aesthetic and moral understanding.

In Section II, we distinguish our position from others in the standard debate about aesthetic disagreement and explain how we are doing something else. In Section III, we elaborate on the RI and sketch an alternative framework for disputes about art. Section IV contains the core of our proposal, connecting an epistemological distinction between understanding and knowledge[7] to a functional/teleological theory of artistic form.[8] At the end of this section, we devote a few paragraphs to take stock, make some clarifications, and discuss a few possible objections. In Section V, we discuss Bernard Williams's approach to moral motivation as (1) an exemplary case of resistance to the RI and (ii) a source of analogies with aesthetic thought.

II

Our approach to disagreement relies on a long-standing tradition that, in one way or another, sees *understanding* as central to our experience of artworks.[9] We bring some key concepts of this tradition to bear on the vexed topic of disagreement, pointing out how the typical narrow focus of the semantic debate fails to do justice to it. Part of our point is that the semantic debate on disagreement unfolds as it does because it foregrounds one aspect of taste, of its cognitive aspect.

A weighty amount of debate on 'judgements personal taste' is invested in the attempt to explain how the impression of *genuine* disagreement can arise in evaluative domains.[10] Our purpose, however, is neither to explain the nature of disagreement nor to provide a definition of it. Disagreement is an instrument through which we approach the grasping of *form*. We agree with MacFarlane (2009, 3–4, 18) that there are several kinds of disagreement and instead of asking what 'real' disagreement is we should inquire what kinds of disagreement there are, and which suits a specific case. Different approaches to discourse in a domain (objectivist, expressivist, neo-expressivist, contextualist, relativist)[11] will characterize disagreement differently. We can leave aside the idle question of which is *real* disagreement: they *all* are. However, our purpose is not to locate aesthetic or moral disagreement in

MacFarlane's taxonomy and ascertain which of the aforementioned approaches outshines the others in accounting for what we expect it to.

Our rather different purpose can be glimpsed from MacFarlane's (2009, 15) example of Sam and Sal disagreeing about the taste of a particular brand of stout: (1) disputes about taste do not require (nor preclude) a sense of disagreement stronger than practical non-cotenability;[12] (2) even if disagreement is not doxastic, Sal may want to make Sam's attitude convergent with his own by 'pointing out salient facts' about the beer. 'These facts', he claims, 'will play a role much like premises in an argument, except that their intended effect is not a change of belief but a change in taste.'[13] This is very interesting, because it points to a further sort of disagreement, i.e., disagreement *in understanding*. The key idea is that calling attention to patterns of differently salient 'facts' about x generates different *perspectives* of x, and these perspectives can change our doxastic *and* non-doxastic attitudes toward x. But it is important to stress that we don't mean 'salient facts' of the kind 'Smith judges that Zingerman's pastrami is not tasty because she ate it with too much mustard' (Egan 2010, 249). We have in mind robust cases of perspective change, not cases in which one is prevented from grasping relevant relations between the elements of a painting because of a crippling belly ache. It is the relative salience of the 'salient facts' in a perspective that is most interesting. They change the *way we see* x, or rather they *are* ways of seeing x. This may sound like a neo-expressivist view (Bar-On 2013; Horgan and Timmons 2006), but it isn't. It is, however, neo-cognitivist (Gibson 2008, 7–14) in that it focuses on understanding as *the* central cognitive value[14] rather than bitesize pieces of propositional knowledge.[15] Disagreement in understanding is the sort of disagreement that Humean 'true judges',[16] at the peak of their mental powers (Hume 1987, 241), will virtuously (neither faultlessly nor perplexingly) display, not because of any subjectivist semantics, but because of the sort of *structures* that artworks *are*.

We are not trying to contribute to the semantic debate. We are trying to cast a different light upon the issue. To do this, we use Peter Kivy's (2015) argument that to motivate aesthetic disputes we must take disputants to be tacitly holding realism about 'art-relevant properties'. We place Kivy's argument in a wider context of the debate on disagreement, showing also why we refuse the terms of the debate. There is something of Kivy we preserve: a sense of disagreements about art as cognitively meaningful. But we also point out something which all options on the menu (Kivy's included) still share: allegiance to what we call the RI.

For Kivy, the way to make sense of disputes about art and explain why the 'aesthetic shrug' is not the universal response to disagreement is to see parties in such disputes as tacitly holding realism about 'art-relevant properties', namely: meaning properties, aesthetic properties, and value properties. Kivy's aim is not to argue directly for realism in each domain, although he rehearses some arguments for each form of realism respectively. To press his case, Kivy contrasts aesthetic and moral disagreement: because moral discourse concerns actions,[17] an expressivist approach to disagreement is at least able to explain our interest in changing the non-doxastic attitudes of others. Since for Kivy there are no relevant actions that aesthetic discourse motivates, then motivation for arguing can only be *alethic*: we argue because we want to persuade others of what we believe to be the aesthetic truth or fact of the matter. For Kivy, "there are two basic and pervasive reasons why, normally, people become embroiled in disputes: to motivate their adversaries to action, or to convince them of the truth, no other ulterior motive is required for the latter." (2015, 99). There is a strong implied emphasis on the preposition 'from', in (the English translation of) Kant's remark that in judgements of taste "we are suitors for agreement from everyone else" (Kant 2007, 68).[18] In his view, expressivism fails to explain why people argue about art because of the difference he sees between aesthetic and moral thought.

Two remarks are in order: (i) even granting that we are tacitly realists about the relevant properties, there is room to doubt whether persuading others of (what we believe to be) the truth is our *sole* motivation to enter aesthetic disputes and (ii) there is likely more than one way of being a 'realist' about art-relevant properties, just as there are different ways of being a subjectivist (e.g., (neo)expressivism, relativism, and contextualism are forms of subjectivism).[19] About the latter: do we want to say that disagreements in the realist mode *always* coincide with its strongest variety, what MacFarlane calls 'preclusion of joint reflexive accuracy" (i.e., when the accuracy of my belief in my context of assessment

precludes your belief from being accurate in your context of assessment)? There being many kinds of disagreement, can't we couple realism with something less stringent without thereby turning it into subjectivism? As to the former: are we *never* concerned with the sharing of (non-doxastic) attitudes when the point is not to influence action? We think Kivy's argument doesn't show what he wants it to show concerning motivation. Still, there is something right about it, which we use to frame our own view.

It may seem odd that Kivy speaks of expressivism only in its Ayer-Stevenson incarnation. He doesn't mention quasi-realism nor the more recent neo-expressivist theories, which arguably are a version of the former (Horgan and Timmons 2006, 257). Maybe he considered these late incarnations of the Humean project as mere technical attempts at solving the Frege-Geach problem: pulling apart the expressive component from the semantic one, but leaving us *epistemologically* on the same place (Bar-On and Chrisman 2009, 20–23) or trying to eat their cake and have it too (i.e., to have genuine beliefs and propositional outgrowths from purely expressive utterances that survive embeddedness in 'force-stripping contexts' while remaining non-descriptive).[20] At one point, in making their case for the advantages of neo-expressivism, Bar-On and Chrisman claim

> What could be the point of endowing an expressive term with a grammatical form that allows it to be used predicatively? Speculation: doing so affords what we may call 'discursive negotiation'. When we move from "Yuck" to "Yucky," and thereafter to "X is yucky," we are poised to draw others' attention and attend ourselves to features of X relevant to our yuck-reactions; and our own 'yuck' reactions becomes ripe for intersubjective give-and-take. (Bar-On and Chrisman 2009, 25)

This is curiously reminiscent of MacFarlane's example of Sam and Sal disputing over beer: a drawing of attention to 'salient' features that will function 'much like premises in an argument' whose conclusion ('intended effect') 'is not a change of belief but a change in taste'. But this could now be used to generate a sort of dilemma: if the advantage offered by the neo-expressivist consists in 'discursive negotiation' and 'intersubjective give-and-take', *and* there is no further cognitive point to it, then Kivy has answered it when he rejected the Kantian motif of 'building sociability' as the underlying motivation for disputes about taste. But if the 'negotiation' does indeed have a further cognitive point, i.e., if 'taste' is really a matter of *noticing* or *discerning* things (Sibley 1959, 423; 1965, 137), as Davies points out (2017, 110),[21] then Egan's (2010, 259) analysis of 'predicates of personal taste' (as self-ascriptions of a 'disposition to respond to some object or type of object in a particular way'), whose truth is generally assumed by all anti-realists about aesthetic value playing the semantic game (Davies 2017, 108) will not do. In mixing 'funny', 'tasty', 'beautiful', 'elegant', 'balanced', 'dynamic', 'disgusting', 'ugly', 'fustian', etc. we conflate aesthetic verdicts with other sorts of aesthetic characterizations, and even judgements of what Kant (2007, 121) would have called 'agreeableness' (*Annehmlichkeit*) and 'disagreeableness' (*Unannehmlichkeit*). In other words, Egan's analysis collapses all aesthetic judgements into verdicts. It mixes judgements about artworks with literal taste responses to anchovies or Marmite. Any account of aesthetic disagreement built on Egan's analysis will inherit the idea that at the heart of aesthetic dispute lies the attempt of leading others to self-ascribe the same dispositions to respond that I ascribe myself. But in rejecting Kant's sociability motif, Kivy has already rejected this motivation (as before, perhaps he just didn't want to end up saying the same in more words). Davies (2017, 112–13) argued that even though Egan's analysis may be adequate to *some* uses of the so-called predicates of personal taste, it fails to capture what is at work in all.[22] An adequate analysis sees many of these predicates and uses ascribing properties *to the artworks*, not to the utterers of judgements. As Tilghman (2006, 161–162) put it, two persons who disagree on whether a passage is 'grand' or 'pompously banal' are not having a dispute about the semantics of 'fustian', which they both grasp very well. They are disagreeing on how to understand and appreciate the character of the passage. And we would add that they do it by *paying attention*, not just to their own responses, but, precisely, to the differently 'salient features' that they can *notice*, adequately placing them in an *understanding* of the passage, which will be more like a *story* about those features than a (set of) proposition(s). If this is right, and if Davies is right, only realism can do justice to disputes about art. But the point is to free realism from the conceptual ballast of the semantic debate (i.e., realism without veritism).[23] In the next two sections, we focus on that task.

III

We claim that an entrenched perspective on what counts as 'cognitive' or 'aesthetic', viz. the RI, obscures alternative ways of looking at things. It seeps into a variety of theories while not coinciding with any one.[24] Because of it, we spent quite a while explaining what we *don't* want to do (e.g., to stare at our semantic navels). We now explain in more detail what we mean by the RI, and then what it is that we *want* to do. What we want is to rehearse another way of seeing: realism without veritism.

The RI is manifest, for instance, in the belief that the epistemic world is neatly divided into value-free *descriptions* of the truth and 'value judgements', the latter permanently suspect of smuggling metaphysically 'queer' entities into our ontology. But its mainstay is veritism, i.e., the idea that truth and propositional knowledge are the crux of cognitive value; and, accordingly, that the imagination and the emotions are best consigned to the non-cognitive or 'expressive' sphere. Curiously, the RI is an example of what we mean by *an understanding*. It is not just a (set of) proposition(s), but neither is it a conative/expressive concomitant of some ersatz propositional form (neo-expressivism). Neither is it some mysterious 'intuitional' state that we are positing *alongside* 'normal' mental states. An understanding is a structure, an organization of our 'cognitive stock', which though involving propositional and conative aspects[25] is not to be strictly identified with them. It is a structured whole that is more than the sum of its parts; an 'epistemic Gestalt'.

Again, the RI does not correspond to a specific theory or set thereof, but cuts across a variety of them. It has two distinct, though closely connected components (*Untergestalten*): one concerning what counts as 'aesthetic' (call it RI-aesth)[26] and the other concerning what counts as 'cognitive' (call it RI-cog).[27] When Carroll (2008, 145) speaks of a 'dominant notion of aesthetic experience' and sums it as 'aesthetic experience parsed as pleasure', he is pinning down RI-aesth. Shelley (2018) also spells out RI-aesth in his criticism of the 'default theory of aesthetic value', which he takes to be a mix of hedonism and strict perceptual formalism. Another way of putting RI-aesth is Lopes' (2021, 237): "Folk aesthetics is hedonic." The specificity of RI-aesth is best seen in discussions of the aesthetic value of literary fiction. As Harold (2016, 388) puts it: "… aesthetic value has always seemed most plausible when applied to non-narrative art forms, and particularly those that foreground sensory experience, such as absolute music and abstract sculpture. Literary value, if it is a kind of aesthetic value, is an odd bird."

RI-aesth and RI-cog are bound, but they are not the same. When one asks whether artworks have cognitive value *in addition* to their aesthetic value (Gibson 2008, 573), the *form* of that question *is* RI-cog.[28] There are optimists and skeptics about the cognitive value of the arts. Some subsume cognitive value in 'artistic value', to keep it apart from aesthetic value (Stecker 2019, 41-42): this is symptomatic of both RI-aesth and RI-cog. When aesthetic and moral judgments are distinguished on grounds that the latter are rule-governed while the former are not (Goldman 2016, 5),[29] that is RI-aesth. In his exchanges on the nature of aesthetic experience, Carroll (2012; 2015; 2016) departs from the RI in some respects (e.g., in rejecting that 'being valued for its own sake' defines aesthetic experience) but adheres to it in others (e.g., when arguing against Goldman (2013) that cognitive insight should be kept separate from the *core* of aesthetic experience (Carroll 2015, 175)). The pattern is a combination of pulling away and moving towards the RI. Already in this explanation some interesting features of understanding, in contrast to knowledge, stand out: there can be no flawed knowledge, but there are flawed understandings.

The relevant notion of understanding here is what some epistemologists (Kvanvig 2003, 191; 2009; Elgin 2017) call 'objectual understanding', which Zagzebski (2020, 78–89) also contrasts with knowledge in quite a specific way. Objectual understanding is understanding of *a subject matter* (e.g., a city's transportation network), which can be (literally or metaphorically) described in terms of grasping how a *structure* with 'moving parts' *works* (Grimm 2011, 85–86). In such acts of grasping, any previously unnoticed detail can suddenly change one's appreciation of the whole, i.e., of how its elements hang together.[30] Pressed for examples, we could cite Elgin's (2017, 195–196) case of John Snow's plotting of the 1854 cholera epidemic in London. The plotting (non-propositional element) made salient certain details (the water pump on Broad Street; the fact that workers from a nearby brewery and workhouse did not get the disease), which led to revision of the belief that cholera is airborne. Before that plotting, people were at a loss with a list of propositional truths (facts about

death tolls), for otherwise, those details would have hardly become salient. Once they 'jumped out', things fell into place. Another vivid example is cited by Zagzebski (2020, 84–85), namely, how our appreciation of a highly complex phenomenon like the fall of the Roman Empire is changed by giving prominence to details (about climate change and pathogens) typically obscured by the excessive salience of political and military facts. Because the latter are precisely datable and have more immediate and obvious effects, their role tends to be distorted. Pressed for an artistic example, we could cite from Dodd (2020, 105, footnote 10): "The striking clarity, wit, and ebullience expressed by the final six chords of Barbirolli's recording of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony help to unlock a simultaneously powerful, passionate, and playful aspect of this work that is commonly missed in other, more dour recordings." Understanding is thus subject to endless fine adjustments (Elgin 1993[a], 182). It varies in breadth, depth, and significance (Elgin 2017, 58). No features of the whole enjoy a pre-established relative import.

We take the grasping of *structure* (or *form*) as central both for the arts and the rest of our cognitive life. Here is where Zagzebski's (2020, 81) suggestion comes in: "true belief is the grasp of a propositional structure". If so, then knowledge is a *special case* of understanding. But objectual understanding is the grasp of *non-propositional* structure. This is helpful to clarify our position: we have nothing against propositional knowledge; we have nothing against truth; we are not invoking some 'weird' cognitive state to push forward a 'purely pragmatic' notion of disagreement where knowledge and truth would play no role. On the contrary, to understand one must also have *some* knowledge. We merely point out that there is *more* structure to be grasped than propositional structure; that our grasp of the latter itself depends on more holistic forms of grasping;[31] and that this involves more than belief, assent, and assertion. Veritism consists in treating propositional structure (or ersatz propositions) as if it were the only kind of structure involved in the mind's grasping of the world. But to refuse veritism is not to refuse a role for the grasping of propositional structure within a wider cognitive context. We want to focus on these wider structures to which 'aesthetic judgements' must fit, if we truly are to make sense of them. But what are they?

IV

To see what our proposal brings to the debate, we need an unusual connection: theory of (artistic) form. Under the RI, we think of form as opposed to 'content'; associate 'content' with cognitive value, and 'form' with aesthetic value. However, this is a confusing distinction. If we adopt a functional/teleological theory of form (Aristotelian hylomorphism applied to art) of the sort Carroll (1998[b]; 2016) proposes, new ways of thinking open up. An artwork is a complex structure of relations between its elements (the 'matter' thus organized, which includes both appearances *and* meanings) and this structure is unified by a governing *purpose*: the *point* of the artwork.[32] Striving to understand an artwork, we *select* those relations that seem *relevant* to the work's purpose[33] (not all discernible relations are relevant, e.g., color in a black and white photograph, though any *might* be, depending on the context). This makes it possible that different, equally 'virtuous' critics select different subsets of relations as relevant to the purpose, or even identify different purposes.[34] We will then have different *understandings* of the same work and it need not be the case that at least one of them *must* be wrong (see footnote 6, and Elgin's example of Fry and Greenberg on Cézanne's *Le compotier*). Yet neither is this 'blameless' variation (Hume 1987, 243–44) in the sense that there is no response to it other than the 'aesthetic shrug' (Kivy 2015, 49). It is not *innocuous*. In fact, the example of Fry *versus* Greenberg could perhaps even be given as a case of what elsewhere is called *deep* disagreement.[35] But how can that be?

One way of explaining how it can be is to describe such functional structures in terms of those characteristics that Goodman (1968, 252–55; 1978, 67–69) dubbed 'symptoms of the aesthetic', i.e., the features that characterize 'aesthetic symbols' (artworks): density (syntactic and semantic); relative repleteness; exemplification (literal and metaphorical); and multiple and complex reference.[36] There is no space to explain any of these features in detail but what matters for our argument is a *consequence* of them which is named by Goodman himself (1968, 238) apropos the specific case of disagreement in attributing expressive properties to music: the 'infinitely fine adjustment' required by dense, replete,

exemplificational and referentially complex structures.[37] This means that it is a permanently open possibility that some previously unnoticed detail about a work's structure will change our appreciation of the whole.

It is important to note that our proposal is not receding into a kind of subjectivism, as one might be misled into thinking, from our talk of how the same structure can be differently parsed, organized, and unified by different purposes. Hence the usefulness of Goodman's symptoms: density, repleteness, etc. are not 'projections' of the mind, but *real* properties of symbol systems. That potentially many characters lie 'between' other two, and that indefinitely many features may interact to determine a different meaning of the whole are *objective* features of dense and replete systems. This point can be further clarified if we think of the *essentially incomplete* nature of fictional narratives: a work's fictional world necessarily has *gaps* that *permanently* require the audience's imagination to fill them (Carroll 2014). To the extent that artworks are *perspective generators*, this point generalizes to other forms: a painting too has a fictional world whose gaps we imaginatively fill.

Another crucial feature pointed out by Zagzebski (2020, 85–89) is that of *analogical reasoning* in grasping such structures: our ability to see "the same structure repeated in multiple domains." Other authors call this *cross-domain mapping* or 'isomorphism' (Young 2014, 19–21; Peacocke 2009). Without this ability, artistic form could hardly play any robust cognitive role. Thanks to it, we can look at a picture of a tree and realize it is about human loneliness;[38] we can grasp that a still life with walnuts is about some terrible violence,[39] or that a canvas with two very close shades of red is exemplifying features that 'map onto' features of other things, such as how closely fierce, ardent rivals resemble each other.[40] To illustrate this in a much simpler manner: consider how the dimensional properties of Lilliput in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* 'maps onto' the moral smallness or pettiness in the social life of 18 century England that Swift seeks to portray (Carroll 2016, 5). Without the spontaneous ability to 'read' such isomorphisms, we would not only miss sophisticated metaphors in literature and visual art (e.g., how the cordyceps fungus in *The Last of Us* could be showing us something about the Internet and social media); we would hardly understand Lopes' funny metaphor about Carroll (Noël, not Lewis), that he is "the Kristeller of our times" (Lopes 2014, 36). Examples are legion.

Artworks can be 'thicker' or 'thinner' in such 'mappings'; some are more intuitive, some more rarefied. There is no algorithm to grasp them; and this is what makes the metaphor of taste *cognitively compelling*: we must *notice* whether and how properties of things in a domain are 'mappable' to properties of things in other domains. This resembles how we *notice* that combining 'fresh' with 'earthy' ice cream flavors makes *sense*. It is not as *easy* as acquiring perceptual knowledge that this in front of me is an ice cream. The cognitive point in all this is that, as in Snow's plotting of the cholera epidemic, these 'mappings' *give salience* to properties, patterns, relations, and correlations that might go entirely unnoticed amidst a (stultifying) sequence of propositional truths.

A further point requires mentioning: the domain about which *art* affords us understanding (i.e., the domain *onto which* properties and relations are 'mapped') is that of *human experience* (Graham 2005, 61–74; 1996, 2–15; 1995, 30–36; 1994, 7–12). We may get all sorts of *information* about the world from artworks, but the point of understanding them is to shed light on *experience*. Artworks are not surrogates for experience, but thanks to the grasping of form and analogical reasoning, something of the *form of experience* (its texture, its grain, its perspectival features) can be grasped from the form of an artwork. Experience can be *made intelligible* in that manner.

To grasp a proposition, one needs skills, such as linguistic competence and background knowledge; grasping a work of art requires a higher degree of *know-how*. One must strike a balance amid the endless 'fine adjustments' and analogical reasoning required. There is no algorithm for this, and it may be slightly different every time one approaches the same work again. One listens to a song like *Dirty Old Town* and something of the experience of growing up in industrial slums is to be grasped from it, not just information, but a *perspective* on it. But *what is* a perspective? Here is an example from Young (2001, 82): Thomas Jones' cityscapes of late 18th century Naples show a different perspective on urban life (e.g., from Canaletto's Venice) by focusing on "signs of decay, shoddy construction and laundry hanging from porches": "humble objects" appear as "the stuff of ordinary life". A propositional form encapsulates *a* thought; but artworks are more like devices that "make possible the thinking of new thoughts" (Young 2001, 133). An artistic form is like a special lens through which we observe

experience to reveal (under different lightings and distortions) potentially unnoticed aspects of it.[41] (If this has a subjectivistic ring in the reader's ears, we suggest waiting until the end of the section). Once we grasp a proposition, we are done with it. But the grasping of artistic form is a cumulative (Dammann and Schellekens 2021), 'organic' (knowledge is ageless, but understanding *matures*), and permanently open process.

Different Humean 'judges', at the peak of their epistemic virtues, will find themselves at variance in a way that is neither 'blameful' nor 'cognitively innocuous': disagreement is the effective device for the understanding of structures of this nature. It requires none of the kinds in MacFarlane's taxonomy, though we can imagine a 'soft' form of non-cotenability: I cannot share your understanding of the piece without some changes to my understanding of it. However, this also points us to a different heuristic: was that passage grand or fustian? Was that person being exemplarily generous or extravagantly wasteful? Was Raskolnikov any more courageous than the student he overheard because he committed the act? Is *Broadway Boogie Woogie* 'really' vibrant, *jazzy* and frenzied or is it sober, restrained, and austere? Are these a matter of 'really existent' properties, 'emergent' or otherwise? Are 'aesthetic judgements' anything like sentences of the sort 'The cat is on the mat' *or* 'That is yucky!'? Could they work differently?

Some sentences are more like titles of songs, or music albums (e.g., *Rust Never Sleeps*), or both: they are part of a wider (non-propositional) structure whence they get their meaning and on which they also articulate a perspective. Metaphors like "Noël Carroll is the Kristeller of our times" behave similarly: it is pointless, explanation-wise, to ask whether 'there really is' such a *property* (e.g., being the Kristeller of such and such a time), and it doesn't get any better if we ask about dispositions or phrase it in terms of supervenience. To understand the metaphor is to grasp a 'story' that may be told in a myriad ways and may change subtly over time (e.g., as our understanding of the source domain in the metaphor becomes more nuanced and richer). We think the 'story', i.e., the wider structure, which is not any mere *conjunction* of propositions (Elgin 2007, 36), is the 'main epistemic unit', the interesting target, not the 'aesthetic judgements'. This is an *epistemological* point, not a *semantic* one.

But now a concern might reappear: is the artistic form a form *of the object* or not? Is it a *merely subjective way* of arranging the parts of the work in order to make sense of it (our talk of 'imposing structure' might suggest this), or is it something we *discover* or *retrieve from* the work? (This is exactly the sort of concern that recurs about Williams' moral internalism.) Are subjectivism and mind-dependency stressed by our emphasis on the 'epistemological'? The answer is that there is a false dichotomy to avoid here. Consider a city map. It represents the city; but to be useful, a map must simplify what it represents; it cannot be *as rich* as what it represents, for that would amount to *noise*. Simplification is a form of distortion (Zagzebski 2020, 79-80). However, it allows understanding: we switch between the trees and the forest, focusing on different details as we go along, reconsidering the whole in light of different details standing out. Now, simplification is just one form of (useful) distortion. Simplification; amplification; selection; juxtaposition; correlation; connection (Young 2001, 82–85) are all forms of imposition whose purpose is also to retrieve or reveal. This is how representation works; no representation is 'transparent' to the point of not performing one or several of these operations; if it *were*, it *could not be* a representation. It is in this sense we say that artistic form resembles a 'lens'. To retrieve, it must add. But what about 'mind-dependence' and the point of realism?

Consider games. Facts within games depend on a complex web of relations: the rules, our understanding of them, the game's purpose. When is a certain move in chess *smart* or *reckless*? Is it 'sportsmanship' in soccer to get up immediately after suffering a blow? It depends on our understanding of that web of relations. In uttering the 'judgement' that a chess move was smart one is not just voicing a proposition but articulating an understanding of the game (a 'story' about the move). Two similar judgements may articulate rather different understandings. In this case, there would be a disagreement, but it is not clear that even 'soft' non-cotenability applies, though one could be made to feel that understanding the game one way excludes understanding it the other way. Of course, *while playing it* our understanding of it had better be consistent! But theoretically there is nothing inconsistent about entertaining both. It makes no more sense to ask which is true, the cubist way of seeing or the impressionist way of seeing, than to proclaim that squinting is true or false. Likewise, there is nothing inconsistent about seeing *Broadway Boogie Woogie* as sober and austere, say, by placing it in the same 'game' as

Severini's *Dynamic Hyerogliphic of the Bal Tabarin*, rather than the 'game' of Mondrian's earlier work.[42] We *should* see it as vibrant, *jazzy* and frenzied because seeing it in the latter context is normative for the artistic category to which it *actually* belongs (Walton 1970), not because there is something 'less real' about experiencing it as sober and austere. It is, however, a matter of *noticing* things and *grasping* a structure (e.g., the patterns of alternating colors and lengths in the Mondrian). It makes as much sense to ask whether the vibrancy, frenzy, austerity, or sobriety *really exist* as asking whether goals and checkmates 'really' exist apart from the game (or whether an insightful metaphor ascribes 'real' properties to things). There is an ambiguity in 'mind-dependence': checkmates are mind-dependent because the game of chess would not exist without minds; this is quite different from the truth of a judgement as to whether one was checkmated depending on one's epistemic states rather than the game itself. It is just absurd to turn the first sense into a criterion of realism, though people have been egregiously happy to slip onto that trap.

It is now time to recap, clarify lingering issues, and dispel some potential objections. First, our view is not a theory of 'aesthetic experience'. Such an idea of a separate kind of experience makes no more sense to us than that of a special class of 'aesthetic properties'.[43] Second, imagination and emotions are *not* non-cognitive add-ons to understanding. They are *cognitively crucial*: when observing something under different emotional states, different aspects of that thing are *revealed* to us.[44] And without imagination we would be blind to cross-domain mapping,[45] unable to fill in gaps in either fiction or everyday discourse, or to perform 'mind reading' and 'simulation', etc. Third, a crucial form of disagreement is left out of the semantic debate: disagreement in understanding. Because understanding and knowledge plausibly differ in relevant properties (e.g., factivity, gradience, immunity from Gettier cases), disagreements in understanding will have different properties from disagreements congealed in propositional form.

One foreseeable objection: granting that disagreements in understanding between two equally discriminating critics are subject to 'infinitely fine adjustments', they *are* expressed by uttering 'aesthetic statements'. So, will this not force us back into the semantic debate via the question of whether those statements are objectively true or false (or neither)? We *don't think so!* To claim otherwise is to imply that objectual understanding collapses into propositional knowledge. But this is a polemical issue. We listed major arguments against that view (see footnote 15), relying on extant understanding-based epistemological work. That scaffolding allowed us to state a reasonable working hypothesis.

We do not claim that there are no cases of 'taste' judgements amenable to a subjectivist analysis of the sort proposed by Egan and assumed by all parties in the semantic debate except the objectivist. There are certainly cases of judgements to which one or other of these semantic analyses apply.[46] Our point is not that the debate should disappear or be replaced. Some disagreements are purely doxastic, some purely conative, but these do not exhaust the landscape.

Disagreement in understanding does not fit onto the semantic debate. The diverging perspectives of two equally discriminating critics are not truth-makers of their sentences, in the way Egan's dispositions to be affected are thought to be (so that the truth of their sentences is made relative to their perspectives). A perspective in our sense is more like a device to bring out (often via distortion) real patterns of properties in things. Our 'perspectival pluralism' differs sharply from making the truth of the statement relative to the standards of whoever utters it (semantic relativism) or lending the statement an indexical component that determines its identity (semantic contextualism), or even from turning the sentence into an ersatz propositional vessel of conative import (neo-expressivism). However, an approximation can be made. Some features of perspectives bring them closer to how 'aesthetic sentences' are characterized by the subjectivist parties in the semantic debate: e.g., they are neither true nor false (though some of their *components* will be),[47] and so not epistemically 'blameful'; but they have other features that bring them closer to objectivism: they are not cognitively innocuous (i.e., 'faultless'); it is in virtue of what artworks *are* that they can sustain divergent perspectives, and also why some perspectives just won't do.[48]

Yet, one might still wonder how exactly normativity obtains here. In some cases, it might never be entirely clear whether one perspective is better (e.g., the Fry-Greenberg dispute), even if the disagreement could qualify as *deep* or is, at any rate, not 'innocuous'; but in other cases, there clearly is. Here is a familiar example: Danto's (1964, 577–578) thought experiment of the two perceptually

identical frescoes, one exemplifying Newton's first law, the other Newton's third law. At some point, Danto provides a number of strikingly different, equally viable 'identifications' of the representational content of the frescoes (a 'free play' between the imagination and understanding). But there are also 'senseless' identifications: however we are to construe the middle horizontal line, it will *not* read as *The Ascendency of St. Erasmus*. Another way that normativity obtains was already pointed out (apropos the Mondrian painting): the actual artistic category the work belongs to. But an equally important point we cannot stress sufficiently is that there is no algorithmic way of answering this question.

Reality is rich enough to sustain many patterns at once: the sordid and the noble coexist in life. Consequently, a picture of Churchill as a bulldog (Goodman 1968, 89) is not a logical contradiction, and neither is its co-existence with a picture of Churchill as something else (e.g., a hawk; a fox, etc.) that might suggest a different perspective on him. They all organize our experience of properties 'out there'. Artistic form is a cognitive device, "a vehicle for exploration and discovery" (Elgin 1993b, 15).

To organize elements of experience into complex *Gestalten* (Sibleyan or otherwise) is as subject to 'infinitely fine adjustments' as is the grasping of dense and replete structures. The picture doesn't change substantially when we move on to organize experience in terms of moral *Gestalten*. This already adumbrates the 'heuristic similarity' between aesthetic and moral disputes, if we extend the analysis to the cases of exemplary generosity, extravagant wastefulness, pompous banality, and fictional moral courage. In both cases, we organize experience (represent it for ourselves) to understand it. To see aesthetics free of the RI, we must see morality free from it as well. These are parts of the same thought.

V

For Bernard Williams, to think ethically is not to reason from general principles applicable to every rational creature *ceteris paribus*. Moral problems are always concrete, existentially rooted: "morality is seen as something whose real existence must consist in personal experience and social institutions, not in sets of propositions" (Williams 1981, x). And there is no way of translating real experience into systems of principles and rules without sacrificing something we shouldn't.

Why do we think it right if someone saves his/her spouse from a fire? One can, of course, justify this by invoking moral obligation or duty, or perhaps that one cannot reasonably reject the norm according to which one should save a spouse from a fire (contractualist deontology).[49] But is this the *actual* reason any real person would give to *explain* her actions? Williams argues for motivational pluralism in what concerns moral action, as for a plurality of consideration able to carry moral weight. It is not beyond the scope of true ethical thinking for a person to invoke her love for a spouse, or a special connection to another person, as motivations. Ethics should be about what *matters to us the most*, what is most valuable to us, what is personal, contingent, and existentially important; against the RI-tendency to view emotions as inessential or alien to the moral point of view. Particularly, Williams emphasizes how the emotional responses of which one is capable define one's moral character. As he puts it, "to me, at least, the question of what emotions a man feels in various circumstances seems to have a good deal to do, for instance, with whether he is an admirable human being or not."[50]

Williams was sensitive to the "entanglements of the emotions with moral judgement" (1973, 214). He saw that interpreting a person's actions in light of a particular emotional structure makes them intelligible in ways that would otherwise elude us. Emotions shed light not on the supposedly objective reasons why people do what they do, but on subjective reasons, translated into reasons-for-us, since these are always emotionally charged, and determine not only what we do, but how we do it.

To focus exclusively (and atomistically) on moral judgements distorts moral thought. Moral judgments should be seen in terms of a general moral outlook. This outlook articulates someone's experience, and emotions are a crucial element of it. For instance, the fact that someone feels contempt towards a situation reveals her moral perspective, for she could regard that same situation as bad without feeling contempt (and that would be the result of an entirely different way of seeing). So, in expressing a moral outlook, we express our beliefs but also how we feel about the matters concerned.

To emphasize the role of the emotions is not giving way to subjectivism in ethics. To acknowledge the role played by the imagination and the moral emotions[51] in generating a moral point of view does not amount to saying that moral judgements are a mere expression of subjective attitudes, irrelevant to

reasoned debate. Were that the case, then *failing to see* something as inviting a (moral) response would not be a live possibility, and disagreement would not be *genuine* disagreement. But the possibility of not feeling what one is supposed to feel, as well as the possibility of not being imaginative enough in our moral understanding, are real possibilities. However, we do think it possible for someone to imaginatively expand her conceptual vocabulary as well as her repertoire of moral feelings; and so, to explore other ways of seeing, imaginatively extending them into her own life. That is our tacit assumption when we say that someone is not assessing the situation correctly, because she lacks either moral imagination or *sufficiently well-calibrated* moral emotions. As Williams puts it, "to feel a certain emotion towards a given object is to see it in a certain light; it may be wrong, incorrect, inappropriate to see it in that light, and I may become convinced of this." (1973, 224) He saw how the notions of 'appropriateness' and 'correctness' apply to the emotions. These are subject to criticism and a key aspect of moral education. In an Aristotelian fashion, moral education need not consist in learning moral principles, but rather in responding with appropriate emotions on the appropriate occasion; to know *what* to feel and *when*. This means there are criteria for "what emotions a human being is expected to feel or, alternatively, to dispense with" and that there is a "possibility of thinking through a moral outlook and reaching its presuppositions" (Williams 1973, 225), even if this criticism is merely internal, confined to that particular evaluative outlook.

A further assumption, shaping the idea that emotions play no role in an agent's moral worth, is that in making moral judgments, we appeal to an impartial authority (e.g., if lying is wrong, that is because of general reasons that justify this evaluation, reasons utterly unrelated to our personal preferences or inclinations and available to any rational thinker). And so, nothing of the concrete, individual, personal dimension can play a role in establishing that frame of reference. Thus, the moral point of view would require consistent action, determined by impartial, impersonal, general reasons or principles. But the emotions are often *not* consistent, impersonal, or impartial, and can*not* provide us with a fixed point on which to tether moral agency. To such a line of reasoning Williams replies: consistency and impartiality are not and cannot be the model for all moral actions and relationships; neither is an action's moral valence necessarily connected to those notions. As he puts it (1973, 227): "is it certain that one who receives good treatment from another more appreciates it, thinks the better of the giver, if he knows it to be the result of the application of principle, rather than the product of an emotional response? He may have needed, not the benefits of universal law, but some human gesture." Williams shows how the RI enforces upon ethics the ideal of an 'absolute conception of the world'; that grand notion of moral impartiality, "an external view of action and experience … what Sidgwick, in a memorably absurd phrase, called 'the point of view of the universe.'"[52] To some moral philosophers at least, the moral point of view seems to require an external view of one's own life. In a famous passage, Williams draws attention to what the two main moral theories leave behind, in the attempt to achieve full impartiality: "if Kantianism abstracts in moral thought from the identity of persons, Utilitarianism strikingly abstracts from their separateness" (1981, 3).

Plausibly, Williams's philosophical motto could be phrased thus: let us have imagination replacing the urge for systematization. This urge expresses the felt need to remove moral uncertainty and reduce, as much as possible, conflicts between our evaluative judgments. In this context, moral conflict is seen as involving a theoretical contradiction. For Williams, though, this is misleading; for conflict is often not a 'logical affliction' but an imaginative one (as in the aesthetic case). Imagination is the means through which the alien is made familiar (as in the aesthetic case); it enters the deliberative process by creating new routes for action, new possibilities and new desires. Alternatively, one may think that one has a reason to act in a certain way only for failure to sufficiently exercising one's imagination on what it would be like if one's intentions were fulfilled. Sometimes a conflict does not even require elimination. If it is a genuine practical conflict, it can hardly be eliminated.[53] Sometimes, the circumstances are so tragic that a sense of 'moral impossibility' prevails—whatever the agent does, she will act wrongly. But in most cases, the imagination is a laboratory of possibilities, and moral reasoning is, essentially, an imaginative comparison of possibilities or identification with another's values and needs; an attempt to grasp the point of view of others. Elgin (2007[b]) takes a similar approach to learning from fiction: *stories* are human beings' first exercise in imaginatively identifying with others. Moral imagination is frequently at use in attempting to *see* a particular object or person with more

clarity or detail. In the words of Iris Murdoch, "as moral agents we have to try to see justly, to overcome prejudice, to avoid temptation, to control and curb imagination, to direct reflection." (1971, 39)

VI. CONCLUSION

We have sketched a more diverse picture of disagreement than we get from Kivy or his contenders. More than in seeking agreement *from* others via persuasion, a substantial part of the motivation for disputes about art lies in seeking agreement *with*, or *amid* others. An understanding-based epistemology opens the cooperative aspects of how artworks trigger disputes: the point is to reach 'multiperspectival' forms of understanding (Briesen 2023, 2667). Such a *cooperative* way of conceptualizing disagreement is obscured by the conceptual metaphors that organize the RI. Given everything we said about the sort of structures that artworks are, this is only to be expected. We need the cooperation of others to notice what has inevitably escaped us. In the end, how we understand the work is what makes any judgement about specific aspects of it meaningful. As Lopes (2018, 172) puts it, "aesthetic disagreement need not consist in parties asserting propositions that others deny." The same applies to moral thought and disagreement: it's not about action all the time. Understanding is a substantial part of it. And because of this, the heuristic analogies with moral understanding jump out at us. Both involve simultaneously the imposition of structure on and the grasping of structure from human experience.[54]

VÍTOR GUERREIRO, Instituto de Filosofia - Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, Via Panorâmica Edgar Cardoso, s/n, 4150-564 Porto, Portugal. Email: vguerreiro@letras.up.pt

SUSANA CADILHA, IFILNOVA - NOVA FCSH, Av. Berna 26 C, Lisboa, Portugal. Email: susanacadilha@fcsh.unl.pt

REFERENCES

Bar-On, Dorit and Chrisman, Matthew. 2009. "Ethical Neo-expressivism." In *Oxford Studies in Metaethics,* Volume 4, edited by Russ Shafer-Landau, 132–65. Oxford University Press.

Bar-On, Dorit, and James, Sias. 2013. "Varieties of Expressivism." *Philosophy Compass* 8 (8): 699–713.

Berker, Selim. 2013. "The Rejection of Epistemic Consequentialism." *Philosophical Issues* 23 (1): 363–87.

Briesen, Jochen. 2023. "Elgin on science, art and understanding." *Erkenntnis* 88: 2651–71.

Carmo D'orey. 1999. *A Exemplificação na Arte: Um estudo sobre Nelson Goodman*. Lisboa: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Carroll, Noël. 1998a. "Art, Narrative, and Moral Understanding." In *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*, edited by Levinson, Jerrold, 126–60. Cambridge University Press.

Carroll, Noël. 1998b. "Film Form: An Argument for a Functional Theory of Style in the Individual Film." *Style* 32 (3): 385–401.

Carroll, Noël. 2008. "Aesthetic Experience, Art and Artists." In *Aesthetic Experience,* edited by Shusternan, R and Tomlin, A. New York: Routledge. Taylor & Francis.

Carroll, Noël. 2012. "Recent Approaches to Aesthetic Experience." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70 (2): 165–77.

Carroll, Noël. 2015. "Defending the Content Approach to Aesthetic Experience." *Metaphilosophy* 46 (2): 171–88.

Carroll, Noël. 2016. "Art Appreciation." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 50 (4): 1–14.

Carroll, Noël. 2014. "The Creative Audience: Some Ways in which Readers, Viewers, and/or Listeners Use Their Imaginations to Engage Fictional Artworks'." In *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*, online edn., edited by Elliot Samuel Paul and Scott Barry Kaufman, 62–81. New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199836963.003.0004.

Carter, J. Adam, Gordon, Emma, Grodniewicz, J. P. 2020. "Understanding a Communicated Thought." *Synthese* 198 (12): 12137–51.

Damman, Guy, and Elisabeth, Schellekens. 2021. "Aesthetic Understanding and Epistemic Agency in Art." In *Disputatio Special Issue: Ethics and Aesthetics - Issues at Their Intersection*, edited by Susana Cadilha and Vitor Guerreiro, 13 (62): 265–82.

Danto, Arthur. 1964. "The Artworld." *The Journal of Philosophy* 61 (19): 571–84.

Davies, David. 2017. "The Semantics of Sibleyan Aesthetic Judgments." In *The Semantics of Aesthetic Judgements*, online edn., edited by James O. Young, 106–120. New York: Oxford Academic. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198714590.003.0006.

Dodd, Julian. 2020. *Being True to Works of Music*. Oxford University Press.

Egan, Andy. 2010. "Disputing About Taste." In *Disagreement*, edited by Ted Warfield and Richard Feldman, 247–86. Oxford University Press.
Eileen, John. 2020. "Learning from Aesthetic Disagreement and Flawed Artworks." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 78 (3): 279–88.
Elgin, Catherine Z. 1993a. " Relocating Aesthetics: Goodman's Epistemic Turn." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 47 (185): 171–86.
Elgin, Catherine Z. 1993b. "Understanding Art and Science." *Synthese* 95 (1): 13–28.
Elgin, Catherine Z. 2007a. "The Fusion of Fact and Value." *Iride* 20 (1): 83–104.
Elgin, Catherine Z. 2007b. "The Laboratory of the Mind." In *A Sense of the World: Essays on Fiction, Narrative and Knowledge*, edited by John Gibson, Wolfgang Huemer and Luca Pocci. New York and London: Routledge.
Elgin, Catherine Z. 2007c. "Understanding and the Facts." *Philosophical Studies* 132: 33–42.
Elgin, Catherine Z. 2008. "Emotion and Understanding." In *Epistemology and Emotions*, edited by Brun, Doğuoğlu and Kuenzle, 33–49. London: Ashgate.
Elgin, Catherine. Z. 2017. *True Enough*. Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press.
Gibson, John. 2008. "Cognitivism and the Arts." *Philosophy Compass* 3 (4): 573–89.
Goldman, Alan. 2013. "The Broad View of Aesthetic Experience." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 71 (4): 323–33.
Goldman, Alan. 2016. Aesthetic and Moral Judgments: Analogies and Differences, Real and Apparent. *Studi di Estetica* anno XLIV, IV serie, 2/2016, ISSN 0585-4733.
Goodman, Nelson. 1968. *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.
Goodman, Nelson. 1978. *Ways of worldmaking*. Hassocks [Eng.]: Harvester Press.
Goodman, Nelson. 1979. "Metaphor as Moonlighting." *Critical Inquiry* 6 (1): 125–30.
Graham, Gordon. 1994. "Value and the Visual Arts." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 28 (4): 1–14.
Graham, Gordon. 1995. "Learning from Art." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 35 (1): 26–37.
Graham, Gordon. 1996. "Aesthetic Cognitivism and the Literary Arts." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 30 (1): 1–17.
Graham, Gordon. 2005. *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics*, 3rd edition. New York: Routledge.
Grimm, Stephen. 2011. "Understanding." In *The Routledge Companion to Epistemology*, edited by D. Pritchard and S. Berneker. New York: Routledge.
Grimm, Stephen. 2012. "The Value of Understanding." *Philosophy Compass* 7 (2): 103–17.
Grimm, Stephen. 2019. "Understanding as an Intellectual Virtue." In *The Routledge Handbook of Virtue Epistemology*, edited by Battaly, H., 340–51. New York: Routledge.
Harold, James. 2016. "Literary Cognitivism." In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Literature*, edited by Carroll, N. and Gibson, J., 382–93. New York: Routledge. Taylor & Francis.
Horgan, Terence and Timmons, Mark. 2006. "Expressivism, yes! Relativism, no!" In *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, Volume 1, edited by Russ Shafer-Landau, 255–98. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Hume, David. 1987. "Of the Standard of Taste." In *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, edited by Miller, E. F., 226–49. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics.
Kant, Immanuel. 2007. *Critique of Judgement*, translated by Meredith, J. C. Oxford University Press.
Kieran, Matthew. 2010. "The Vice of Snobbery: Aesthetic Knowledge, Justification and Virtue in Art Appreciation." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 60 (239): 243–63.
Kivy, Peter. 2015. *De Gustibus: Arguing About Taste and Why We Do It*. Oxford University Press.
Kvanvig, Jonathan. 2003. *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding*. Cambridge University Press.
Kvanvig, Jonathan. 2009. "The Value of Understanding." In *Epistemic Value*, edited by Pritchard, Haddock and MIllar, 95–112. Oxford University Press.
Levinson, Jerrold. 2006. "Intrinsic Value and the Notion of a Life." In *Contemplating Art,* edited by Levinson, J., 400–18. Oxford University Press.
Levinson, Jerrold. 2016. "Toward an Adequate Conception of Aesthetic Experience." In *Aesthetic Pursuits: Essays in Philosophy of Art*, online edn., edited by Jerrold Levinson, 28–46. New York: Oxford University Press.
Lopes, Dominic M. 2008. "Virtues of Art: Good Taste." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 82 (1): 197–211.
Lopes, Dominic M. 2014. *Beyond Art*. Oxford University Press.
Lopes, Dominic M. 2018. *Being for Beauty: Aesthetic Agency and Value*. Oxford University Press.
Lopes, Dominic M. 2021. "Normativity, Agency, and Value: A view from aesthetics." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 102 (1): 232–42.
Lopes, Dominic M. 2022. "Getting Into It: Ventures in Aesthetic Life." In *Aesthetic Life and Why it Matters*, edited by Lopes, D., Nanay, B. and Riggle, N. Oxford University Press.
Macfarlane, John. 2009. *Varieties of Disagreement, online version of a talk given at University College Dublin*. https://johnmacfarlane.net/varieties.pdf.
Mackie, John. 1977. *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Mendonça, D., and S., Cadilha. 2019. "Bernard Williams and the Concept of Shame: What Makes an Emotion Moral?" *Labyrinth* 21 (1): 99–115.
Murdoch, Iris. 1971. *The Sovereignty of Good*. New York: Routledge.
Nagel, Thomas. 1986. *The View From Nowhere*. Oxford University Press.

Nehamas, Alexander. 2007. *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art*. Princeton University Press.
Patridge, Stephanie. 2018. "Snobbery in Appreciative Contexts." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 58 (3): 241–53.
Peacocke, Christopher; St. Louis University. 2009. "The Perception of Music: Sources of Significance." *The Modern Schoolman* 86 (3-4): 239–60.
Putnam, Hilary. 2002. *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*. Harvard University Press.
Riggs, Wayne. 2003. "Understanding 'virtue' and the Virtue of Understanding." In *Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology*, online edn., edited by DePaul, Michael and Zagzebski, Linda, 203–26. Oxford Academic, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Scanlon, Thomas. 1998. *What We Owe to Each Other*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
Scruton, Roger. 1998. *Art and Imagination: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press.
Scruton, Roger. 2007. "In Search of the Aesthetic." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 47 (3): 232–50.
Shelley, James. 2018. "The Default Theory of Aesthetic Value." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 59 (1): 1–12.
Sibley, Frank. 1959. "Aesthetic Concepts." *The Philosophical Review* 68 (4): 421–50.
Sibley, Frank. 1965. "Aesthetic and Non-aesthetic." *Philosophical Review* 74 (2): 135–59.
Slote, Michael. 2018. "Peter Kivy and Future Challenges for Aesthetics." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 52 (2): 112–21.
Sosa, Ernest. 2021. *Epistemic Explanations: A Theory of Telic Normativity, and What it Explains*. Oxford University Press.
Sosa, Ernest. 2019. "Firsthand Knowledge and Understanding." In *Varieties of Understanding: New Perspectives from Philosophy, Psychology, and Theology*, online edn., edited by Stephen R. Grimm, 109–121. New York: Oxford University Press.
Stanley, Jason, and Timothy, Williamson. 2001. "Knowing How." *The Journal of Philosophy* 98 (8): 411–44.
Stecker, Robert. 2019. *Intersections of Value: Art, Nature and the Everyday*. Oxford University Press.
Stolnitz, Jerome. 1960. *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism: A Critical Introduction*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Tilghman, Benjamin. 2006. *Reflections on Aesthetic Judgment and other Essays*. New York: Routledge.
Walton, Kendall. 1970. "Categories of Art." *The Philosophical Review* 79 (3): 334–67.
Williams, Bernard. 1973. *Problems of the Self*. Cambridge University Press.
Williams, Bernard. 1981. *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980*. Cambridge University Press.
Wollheim, Richard. 1994. *The Mind and its Depths*. Harvard University Press.
Wollheim, Richard. 2015. *Art and its Objects*. Cambridge University Press.
Young, James O. 2001. *Art and Knowledge*. Routledge.
Young, James O. 2014. *Critique of Pure Music*. Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press.
Young, James O. 2017. "Introduction." In *The Semantics of Aesthetic Judgements*, online edn., edited by James O. Young, 1–16. New York: Oxford Academic.
Zagzebski, Linda Trinkaus. 2020. *Epistemic Values: Collected Papers in Epistemology*. New York: Oxford University Press USA.
Zangwill, Nick. 1988. "Two Dogmas of Kantian Aesthetics." In *Proceedings of the 11th International Congress in Aesthetics 1988: Selected Papers*, edited by Woodfield, R., 1–12. Nottingham: Nottingham Polytechnic Press.
Zemach, Eddy. 1997. *Real Beauty*. Pennsylvania State University Press.

END NOTES

1 Namely, as a purely hedonic, non-cognitive process.
2 Hume registered this tension between the immediacy of 'tastebud responses' to things, crystallized in the dictum *De gustibus non est disputandum*, and what he called the 'light of understanding' (mingled with sentiment); the aspect in which it concerns *discernment*, illustrated with the fictional story from Cervantes (Hume 1987, 234–35), of the leather thong and the old key in the hogshead.
3 Cf. with the concepts of 'appreciation as liking' and 'appreciation as sizing up' (Carroll 2016).
4 See Elgin (2017, 175) for a contrast between Hume and Goodman on this count.
5 A non-propositional structure may include propositions: avoid the fallacies of composition and decomposition.
6 See Elgin (*op. cit.* 174–182) for the dispute between Fry and Greenberg, about Cezanne's *Le Compotier*.
7 Zagzebski (2020, 78–89); Grimm (2012; 2019); Sosa (2021, 3–16).
8 This notion of form relies on Carroll's (1998[b]; 2016) functionalism and Goodman's (1968, 252–55; 1978, 67–69) 'symptoms of the aesthetic'.
9 A contemporary expression of such a view is to be found in Dodd (2020, 143): "Western classical music (...) is a cognitive, not merely decorative, art form. Musical works of this kind are composed in order to be understood, where understanding them involves us in hearing the meaning in them: in other words, coming to a sense of why they unfold as they do, of what their point is." But the tradition goes back at least to Hume (see footnote 2), who places *delicacy* (perceptual and conceptual acuity) and good sense, i.e., intellection (Carroll 2016, 1) at the center of our experience of art. See also Scruton (2007, 249) for a similar notion of understanding, directed at an integration of appearance and meaning.
10 MacFarlane (2009, 17): "Objectivism accounts for the disagreement we feel in disputes of taste, at the cost of imputing implausible kinds of error and chauvinism to speakers; contextualism avoids chauvinism at the cost of losing the disagreement. Relativism, it is alleged, does better than objectivism because it avoids imputing error and chauvinism, and better than contextualism because it vindicates our intuitions of disagreement."
11 We add 'neo-expressivist' to MacFarlane's list.
12 Not being able to adopt the other's attitude without a change in one's own.

13 Note a resemblance with what Scruton (1998, 244) says about aesthetic experience featuring 'as the conclusion of a practical syllogism'.
14 Zagzebski calls it 'the basic positive epistemic state' (2020, 80).
15 Three major arguments for distinguishing understanding and knowledge are the *argument from luck* (understanding is immune to Gettier cases), the *argument from degrees* (understanding is gradual), and the *argument from infinite regress* (no number of φ-relevant propositions known suffices for understanding φ). (Carter, Gordon, and Grodniewicz 2020, 12139–41).
16 Hume tried to solve the 'problem of taste' by appealing to facts about the mental constitution of 'true judges' (ideal critics), namely, traits like delicacy, freedom from prejudice and good sense.
17 Specifically, the kind of action "that conflicts with the interests of others, has victims and beneficiaries: in short (...) that calls for the redirection of conflicting attitudes by use of emotive language" (Kivy 2015, 40).
18 The German original reads 'Man wirbt', so instead of a noun ('suitors') what's actually there is more like 'we press our suit [for agreement]'.
19 See Young (2017) and Davies (2017).
20 Bar-On and Chrisman even raise the issue in these terms: 'Why not go back to Ayer's expressivism?' Kivy's silence could be understood as an expressive shrug in that direction.
21 See footnote 2.
22 Particularly 'Sibleyan predicates 'Sibley (1959, 421): 'unified, balanced, integrated, lifeless, serene, sombre, dynamic, powerful, vivid, delicate, moving, trite, sentimental, tragic'.
23 See Elgin (2017), Chapter 2. See also Berker (2013, 369).
24 Some examples would be Mackie's (1977) 'argument from queerness'; Nagel's (1986) ideal of a 'view from nowhere'; the fact-value dichotomy, famously attacked by Putnam (2002) and Elgin (2007a).
25 A Kantian about the grasping of *form* could counter that such grasping is free from desire. To this we reply, firstly, that even if that was the case with the grasping of 'free beauty' in inorganic nature (about which even a moderate aesthetic formalist like Zangwill becomes more 'radical') and some examples of organic nature, the matter becomes more controversial when we move from natural beauty to works of the arts, and to *ästhetische Ideen* [aesthetic ideas]. Secondly, that it all hangs controversially on how one should interpret the *disinterestedness* of aesthetic judgements. There are interpretations compatible with giving a central place to *desire* (see Zemach 1997, 103–107—who would seethe with rage at the mere suggestion), namely: disinterestedness = the *content* of the judgement is independent from the satisfaction of co-occurrent desires. But this, as we said, is a *controversial* point.
26 That aesthetic value is to be parsed in terms of *hedonic mental states*.
27 That cognitive value is to be parsed in terms of *propositional truth*.
28 Denying RI-cog doesn't entail that all aesthetic value is cognitive value.
29 Goldman denies this, locating the differences in the sort of competences required of judges, motivations to share accepted values, and a demand for coherence across moral (as opposed to aesthetic) judgements. Williams (section V, ahead) puts pressure on this demand too. It would be interesting if *the* crucial difference between both domains turned out to hinge on the internalism/externalism debate.
30 Objections to the effect that propositions can do the epistemic work *in place* of the non-propositional elements are to be expected (e.g., Briesen 2023). They will share the form of a well-known 'reduction' of *knowing-how* to *knowing-that* (Stanley and Williamson 2001): 'for some way w, we know that w is a way to brew perfect Arabic coffee' (our example). The reply in *modus tollens* is irresistible: if this is right, then merely grasping that proposition should enable one to brew perfect Arabic coffee; however, *this won't work*. In any case, it is a *controversial* matter, and we can only do so much here.
31 On this notion, see, for instance, Zangwill (1988).
32 If one were to ask us, "why not a simpler notion, like the Kantian, in which the object's form is purposive to our understanding?" the short reply would be something like: because it is one thing to have a purpose, quite another to have the form of purposiveness. A longer reply: for reasons similar to why predicate calculus/ first order logic is to be preferred over the 'simpler' syllogistics: because it does whatever the latter does (incorporates it) and then more. For further reasons, see Carroll (ibid.).
33 This need not be given the *intentionalistic* interpretation that the purpose is identical with the *actual* or declared intentions of the artist.
34 To give an example: are the bits of war footage in the beginning and end of Vera Chytilová's *Daisies* (1966) just nonsense (like many of the film's frames *seem* to be), or are they crucial to interpret the film as a whole? Do they confirm randomness, or do they unify?
35 An epistemic phenomenon of which is highly unusual for anyone to provide *aesthetic* examples.
36 This proposal marks no special commitment with any specific as Goodman's philosophy.
37 Goodman mentions 'semantically dense systems'; but the reasoning extends to artworks in general.
38 Caspar David Friedrich, The Lonely Tree (1822).
39 Antonio de Pereda, Still Life with Walnuts (1635). The example was provided by art critic Andrew Graham-Dixon.
40 The exemple we have in mind, provided by Catherine Elgin, is Alighiero e Boetti's *Rosso Gilera, Rosso Guzi* (1971): https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/204/2693
41 This is no more 'subjectivistic' than the use of lenses, contrast dyes and other devices in empirical observation; or than the simplification of reality that *all theoretical models* must enforce: idealization is a form of simplification (Young 2001, 83) and a theoretical model is a species of idealization.
42 The example is taken from Carmo d'Orey (1999, 486). We use 'game' in place of 'symbol system'.
43 This would lead us beyond the purview of this paper, towards developing a neo-cognitivist account of Sibleyan concepts. Something like this: that the elegance of a moving body lies in taking it in *as if* it was a kind of symbol, or, to use Lopes' *almost-there* expression: as "a gestalt of its non-aesthetic features... a way of organizing them in perception" (2008, 198). We would have to show how 'is elegant' functions like 'is a sapphire' in Goodman's (1979, 125-126) metaphor 'the lake is a sapphire' (a 'way of organizing in perception' properties such as being blue, translucent, iridescent, etc.). A project for a future paper.
44 Cf. Elgin (2008, 43–44). The example concerns how fear and serenity while walking a street late at night attune us to different, equally real aspects of the environment. Levinson (2016, 29) makes roughly the same point in his defense, *contra* Dickie, of how a difference in 'attitude' (cheerful acceptance versus begrudging annoyance) may impact the content of an experience. The point is that emotions are not just 'perturbations' of the 'normal' cognitive process. There are aspects of a situation that stand out only with certain emotions but not others.
45 We wouldn't understand that Miloš Forman's film, *Firemen's Ball* (1967), is not strictly or only about firemen at a dance ball in a Czechoslovak backwater town. The whole film relies on a 'mapping' of properties between different aspects of social life within the socialist political system.
46 Cases more akin to 'Marmite is tasty' than 'This painting is unified, balanced, and vibrant.'
47 Compare with an argument: its parts are true or false; the whole is valid or invalid. Having said this, perspectives are *not* arguments.
48 Cf. Goodman (1979, 126): Muddy Pond is *not* a sapphire. The world sets normative constraints on perspectives.
49 See, for instance, Scanlon (1998). A classic example of what Williams calls 'one thought too many': "it is my wife" should suffice to justify the person's action, yet moral theory often demands more (Williams 1981, 18).
50 Williams (1973, 166). For instance, one emotion a fully admirable moral agent would have, in certain situations, is regret.

51 See Mendonça and Cadilha (2019) for one available explanation of why some emotions have a distinct ethical resonance.
52 Williams (1981, xi). Examples are legion in the history of moral and political philosophy, e.g., only abstract persons stand under the Rawlsian 'veil of ignorance'.
53 For example, if I fail to keep a promise to help a friend because an emergency arose, I have acted well, but that doesn't change the fact that I *failed* to keep that promise.
54 We wish to thank the many points raised by the anonymous reviewers of this article. They helped us immensely to improve it. Susana Cadilha's research was supported by FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P. by project reference DL 57/2016/CP1453/CT0096 and DOI identifier https://doi.org/10.54499/DL57/2016/CP1453/CT0096. Vítor Guerreiro's research was supported by FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P.