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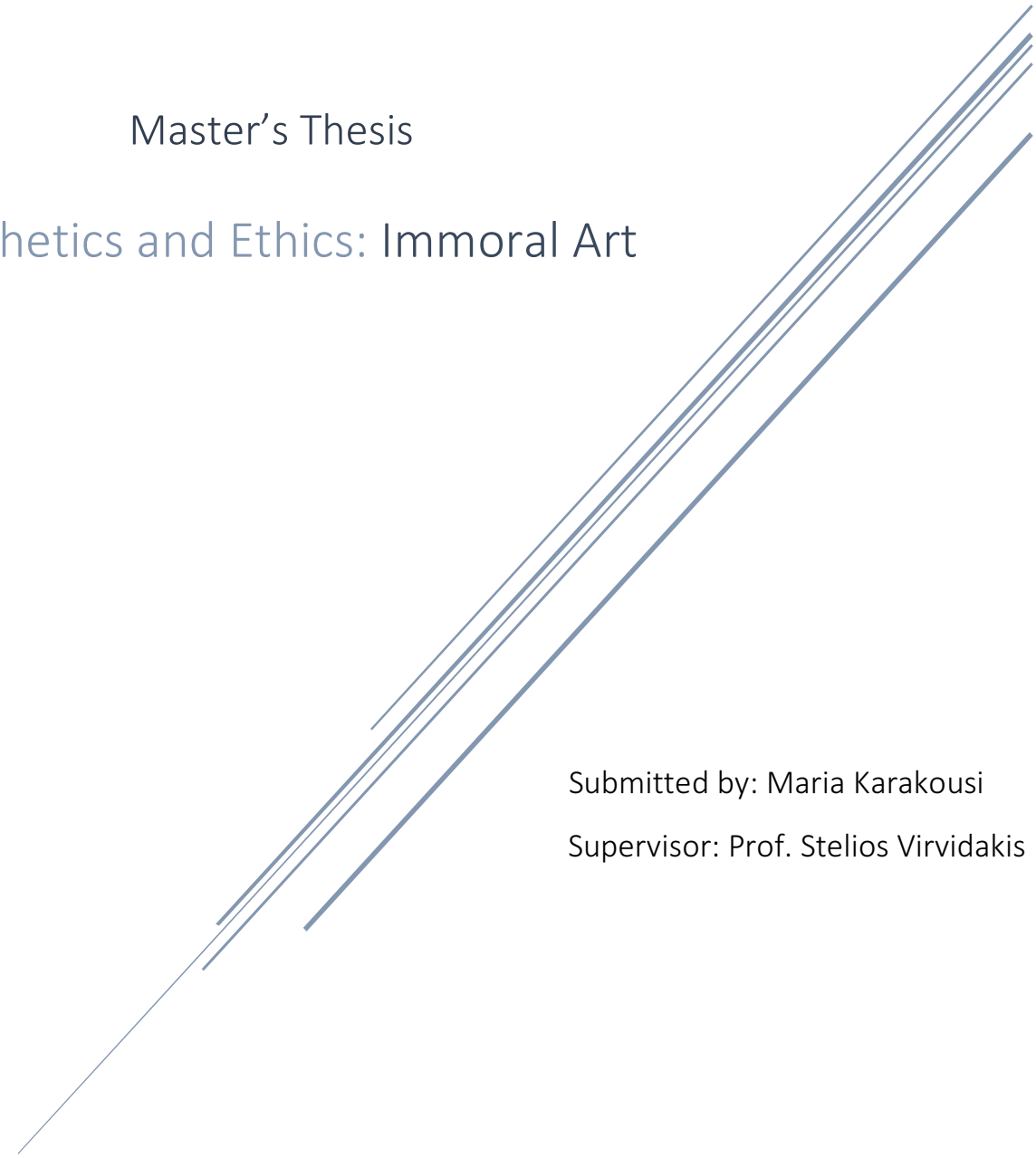
Master's Thesis

Aesthetics and Ethics: Immoral Art



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ΔΙΠΛΩΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ

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Περίληψη

Η παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία πραγματεύεται την υπόθεση της εγγενούς σχέσης της Αισθητικής με την Ηθική με αναφορά στα έργα τέχνης. Το κεντρικό ερώτημα αφορά στη βαρύτητα που δύναται να έχει η ηθική διάσταση ενός έργου τέχνης σε σχέση με την αισθητική του αποτίμηση ή αξιολόγηση. Με αφετηρία την αρχαιότητα, και μια ακραία μοραλιστική αντίληψη που νομιμοποιεί την ηθική αποτίμηση των έργων τέχνης, τον 19^{ο} αιώνα εμφανίζεται ο Αυτονομισμός ο οποίος με τον ισχυρισμό της πλήρους ανεξαρτησίας των ηθικών και αισθητικών αξιών, τίθεται στον αντίποδα του Μοραλισμού. Τον 20^{ο} αιώνα, την συζήτηση επανεκκινεί ο Noël Carroll (1996) εισάγοντας τον «Μετριοπαθή Μοραλισμό», μια θέση η οποία υποστήριξε ότι ένα ηθικό ελάττωμα σε ένα έργο τέχνης μπορεί κάποιες φορές να αποτελεί και αισθητικό ελάττωμα. Στο «Ethical Criticism of Art», ο Berys Gaut (1998) πρότεινε μια ισχυρότερη μοραλιστική εκδοχή την οποία ονόμασε «Ηθικισμό» ενώ οι Anderson και Dean (1998) πρότειναν τον «Μετριοπαθή Αυτονομισμό», την άποψη ότι ένα ηθικό ελάττωμα δεν είναι ποτέ αισθητικό ελάττωμα ασκώντας παράλληλα κριτική στους μοραλιστές για τον συμφυρμό δύο εννοιολογικά διακριτών αξιολογικών συστημάτων. Ο Matthew Kieran (2003) προσέφερε μια τρίτη εναλλακτική στο «Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism», όπου υποστηρίζει ότι ένα ηθικό ελάττωμα μπορεί μερικές φορές, λόγω της γνωσιακής αξίας που κατέχει, να αποτελεί αισθητική αξία σε ένα έργο τέχνης. Η τελευταία θεώρηση, αν και μοραλιστική, φαίνεται να ξεκινάει με σκοπό την υπεράσπιση της τέχνης και κατά μια έννοια, να προσπαθεί να προσεγγίσει την ανωτερότητα της αισθητικής αξίας σε σχέση με την αποτίμηση των έργων τέχνης από μια μοραλιστική σκοπιά. Στην παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία, επιχειρείται η παρουσίαση των παραπάνω θέσεων και η εξέταση των επιχειρημάτων με σκοπό την αναζήτηση μιας απάντησης στο ερώτημα εάν η ηθική απαξία αποτελεί ταυτόχρονα και αισθητική απαξία για ένα έργο τέχνης. Παράλληλα, σκιαγραφείται ο χώρος της σύγχρονης προβληματικής και της συζήτησης όπως εκτυλίσσεται, στο πλαίσιο της Αισθητικής και της Φιλοσοφίας της Τέχνης.

(Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Αισθητική, Ηθική, Αυτονομισμός, Ανήθικη τέχνη, Αξία τέχνης)

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Abstract

The present thesis focuses on the issue of the association of aesthetic and ethical values, an issue of recurrent interest in the realm of philosophical aesthetics. Since antiquity, different versions of moralism have been historically predominant. In the 19th century, Autonomism appears as the very opposite of Moralism, holding that different types of value – aesthetic, moral, cognitive, and others – are independent of each other in art. In the 20th century, Noël Carroll (1996) initiated the discussion again with 'Moderate Moralism', arguing that a moral defect in a work of art is *sometimes* an aesthetic defect. Berys Gaut (1998) in "The Ethical Criticism of Art", proposed a stronger version of moralism called 'Ethicism' whereas Anderson and Dean (1998) advanced 'Moderate Autonomism', the view that a moral defect is never an aesthetic defect, and criticised moralists for conflating two conceptually distinct categories of criticism. Matthew Kieran (2003) offered a third alternative in his "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism," where he argues that a moral defect is sometimes a merit in a work of art qua art due to the cognitive value of that defect. It might be thought that the latter viewpoint approaches the issue of the relation between art and morality with a view to defending the primacy of aesthetic evaluation, however, from a moralistic perspective. The present thesis offers a delineation of these positions with a focus on the question of whether it is appropriate to invoke moral considerations to appreciate art. Simply stated, *can moral defects in artworks also be aesthetic defects?*

(Key words: Aesthetics, Ethics, Autonomism, Immoral art, Value of art)

Introduction

It is often observed that art and ethics meet in discussions of philosophical questions arising from works of art represented as evil or corrupting, from artworks which are not characterized as beautiful, graceful, cheerful or pleasurable but rather, as wrenching, depressing, exhausting, horrifying, distressing. In other words, artworks which are artistically inspired and yet deeply morally problematic. Indeed, as Berys Gaut notes, "art has the power to upset, to disturb, to make us question our assumptions, to change us. But it also has the power to celebrate our cherished convictions, to pacify us […]".[1] According to Gaut, these diverse powers of art have made it the recurrent object of high ethical hope and of deep ethical concern with the latter being the more prominent of the two in recent years. From a different perspective, Jerrold Levinson takes up the distinct issue of experiencing art that is the vehicle of negative emotions in his volume *Suffering Art Gladly* (2014). As he admits, "it is an enduring conundrum acknowledged by most theorists the reason why works of art that arouse negative emotions have a value and an appeal for us that are at least as powerful as the appeal and value of works that either arouse positive emotions or do not engage us emotionally."[2] Both remarks emphasise and endorse the existence of an intersection between two philosophical realms, namely, aesthetics and ethics, or simply put, between art and morality. Despite being in focus ever since the antiquity, this relation was not always regarded as problematic. In fact, from Homer on, all ancient writers have acknowledged the aim of poetry, and of other arts, to be solely the procurement of pleasure for their recipients.[3] By extension, philosophers from Plato through Hume commonly held that works of art should always be morally good in order to constitute art, thus giving rise to the ethical criticism of

[1] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 2-5. Moral anxieties have not been directed only at the fine arts, "but perhaps even more recurrently and forcefully at the popular arts", namely film and popular music. Gaut focuses on popular art because as he holds, "art is a core part of culture, through which we articulate and develop our self-conceptions both as individuals and as members of society, and which through its emotional charge can imprint that self-conception deeply on us". And as he says, "this is perhaps most obvious in the case of the popular arts."

[2] Levinson, Jerrold. *Suffering Art Gladly – The Paradox of Negative Emotion in Art*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. x. Levinson expresses the recent problematic concerning the so-called paradox or puzzle of negative emotions in art or, in other words, concerning the question of how we can explain the experience of art when it is of a painful, fearful, pessimistic or of tragic nature.

[3] Destrée, Pierre. "Aristotle on the Paradox of Tragic Pleasure" in *Suffering Art Gladly – The Paradox of Negative Emotion in Art* edited by Jerrold Levinson. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 4. The genre of tragedy is the most prominent example of a form of art raising ethical issues. The puzzle created by the experience of tragedy persisted through the years and is nowadays connected to a recent problematic in philosophical aesthetics traditionally labelled 'the paradox of tragedy'.

art. For the same reason, many 20th century philosophers have regarded this relation as unproblematic and as a result they have neglected the issue. Lately, however, as Noël Carroll observes, "this consensus itself is beginning to be challenged and philosophers are reevaluating traditional arguments against the ethical criticism of art, and they are also attempting to discover the premises upon which such criticism might rest."[4] Indeed, in recent years, the nature as well as the different aspects of this relationship, have become the topic of scholarly debates, resulting in enquiries into the ethical aspects of art and art criticism or the aesthetic aspects of moral life and moral evaluation. There have thus been several approaches and angles of the problem, each of which has different presuppositions and implications.

Most of the theorists involved in the discussion, although they advance claims that apply to works of art in general, develop their arguments with support from examples of a specific artistic genre, that of literature. For argumentative purposes, they tend to focus on literature more closely than on any other form of art. This emphasis is common and natural in philosophical discussions of the relation between art and morality, and might be justified as follows: First, narrative artworks often have explicit moral content, whereas nonnarrative artworks (for example, abstract art, pure music) do not. Hence, narrative artworks provide clearer cases for study than nonnarratives. Second, some of the features of artworks that look most morally significant may be unique to narratives.[5] Indeed, imaginative literature clearly possesses the potential for portraying different ideals for living one's life, moral ambiguity, conceptions of the good and so forth, in an intricate, conceptually nuanced manner. As Bermúdez and Gandner observe, "In this light, it seems to be no accident that music and painting should be comparatively neglected, in favour of literature, when the moral significance of art is being argued, and so frequently appealed to in contexts where views of art that assert its autonomy and independence from moral concern are being defended."[6] In

[4] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". The University of Chicago Press. *Ethics* 110/2 (January 2000): pp. 350-387 (351).

[5] Harold, James. "On Judging the Moral Value of Narrative Artworks". *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64/2 (Spring 2006): pp. 259-270 (259). Harold indicates that the discussion is limited (for the most part) to fictional narratives since nonfictional narratives pose special problems.

[6] Bermúdez, José Luis, Gardner, Sebastian. *Art and Morality*. International Library of Philosophy. London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2003, p. 9-10. Bermúdez and Gardner deal with the question whether the intersection of art and morality characterizes equally and to the same degree works of art in all media. Even if all artworks are subject to moral evaluation as part of their artistic evaluation, it may be doubted that, for

addition, Iris Murdoch explains the focus on narrative artworks by stating: "Art is (often too) jauntily at home with evil and quick to beautify it. Arguably however, good literature is uniquely able publicly to clarify evil, and emulate the just man's private vision without, such is his privilege, the artist having to be just except in his art. That this separation is possible seems a fact of experience."[7]

The theoretical context offered so far is broad and multifarious[8] and these remarks serve to outline the broader issue. However, the scope of my thesis is narrower: I will explore one aspect of this manifold relationship through a question addressed within the broad spectrum of the aesthetic appreciation and evaluation of works of art; or, more narrowly construed, with a focus on the relationship between aesthetic value and moral value within an artwork. Indeed, it is nowadays acknowledged that many artworks – though by no means all – possess both aesthetic and ethical values. Discerning and defining these two types of values, the aesthetic and the ethical, has been one of the main philosophical tasks pursued in recent literature, mostly by dealing with the issue of whether or not both types of value can contribute to the overall artistic value of a work. Several distinct questions have arisen concerning the relevance of a work's ethical import to its evaluation as art, as well as the overall evaluation of art itself. Matthew Kieran addresses the issue in an insightful way: "Consider a paradigmatically immoral attitude. It doesn't matter which one. Nazism, racism,

example, music, as a supremely formal and abstract art, or painting as an art which centers on visual perception, can carry the same weight of moral meaning as literature – except in so far as, and only to the extent that, they are made to incorporate literary, narrative or dramatic material.

[7] Murdoch, Iris. "From the Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists" in *Plato on Art and Beauty* edited by Denham, A.E. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 30. According to Levinson, the issue can be divided into two parts: "First, how can fictional narratives, being neither true nor pretending to truth, afford moral insight, instruction, or improvement? How can they give us knowledge of human nature, or of anything else? Second, if imaginative literature has a moral dimension, does this open it to moral assessment, and if so, how does the moral assessment of literature stand to the aesthetic assessment of it?" Levinson, Jerrold. *Aesthetics and Ethics – Essays at the Intersection*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 2.

[8] Levinson, Jerrold. *Aesthetics and Ethics – Essays at the Intersection*. ibid., 1998, p. 2. In the 20th century, the general issue regarding the intersection, the overlap, or, more generally, the relations between aesthetics and ethics, comprises several distinct questions. Some examples are: Is there objectivity in ethics and aesthetics? Are there moral and aesthetic truths, and how are they discovered and defended? How does aesthetic value relate to the notion of value in general? Does aesthetic value rest on some more encompassing sort of concern, to which it contributes, or does aesthetic value, as paradigmatic of what is intrinsically valuable, on the contrary anchor values of other, seemingly more fundamental sorts? Might moral enlightenment come about, perhaps uniquely, via engagement with some forms of art? Under what conditions, if any, is artistic censorship justifiable, or even mandatory? Are there no limits to what may, or should, be appreciated aesthetically or dealt with artistically?

misanthropy, misogyny, quietism in the face of suffering, moral indifference to those external to a type, class, tribe or nation, the commendation of rape or incest, […] the list could go on. Imagine a work that fits the description. What should we say about such a case? Is it just a matter of moral qualms getting in the way of appreciation? Or is a work's moral character integral to how we should evaluate it as art?"[9]

In view of the divergence of approaches surrounding the broad issue of the aesthetic evaluation or value of art, the focus of my thesis consists in the exploration of the connection between a work's value as art and its moral character. More specifically, the question which served as an essential thrust for the inquiry of this thesis is formulated as follows: *Do moral flaws in works of art constitute aesthetic flaws?* And respectively, *if an artwork seems to endorse a morally bad viewpoint, can this make it not just morally bad, but also aesthetically bad?* By extension, we can ask *if aesthetic value is morally significant*.

This thesis is structured as follows: The first section has a descriptive purport. An inquiry is conducted in order to delineate the basic terms and concepts which have become central in the longstanding debate between aesthetics and ethics, and thus, have contributed to the formation of the main question. With a view to providing an outline of the shaping context within which the recent discussion has evolved, I briefly sketch some of the main notions involved in questions of art and ethics, focusing on the way the terms 'aesthetic' and 'ethical' are employed in the debate. My main purpose is to introduce the basic concepts of the discussion in aesthetics aiming at a better understanding of the main question. Hence, the remarks offered in the first part, were selected with regard to their relevance to the main question and, moreover, they serve as elucidations of the concepts encountered. The basic terms and concepts involved having been clarified, the main question can then come to the fore.

Hence, the second and main section of the thesis provides an overview of the recent directions which subsequently offered an answer to the basic question. I will refer to the 20th

[9] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". *Philosophy Compass* 1/2 (2006): pp. 129–143 (129).

century philosophical arguments which, with an aesthetically evaluative orientation, yet all from a different perspective, were involved in the question of whether moral flaws constitute aesthetic flaws, leading to diverse conclusions about the relation between art and ethics. The introduction of the philosophical arguments which were proposed in order to explain an aspect of the relevance of morality to art and of art to morality, is further subsumed under the broader discussion of aesthetics and ethics which is expected to emerge through this process.

Ultimately, my purpose is to give a brief description of the philosophical arguments regarding the question at issue, set within the broad boundaries of the long and complex debate over art and ethics, in the hope of contributing to the better appreciation and understanding of the various aspects of the problem. Within this context, the continuing philosophical exchanges on the issue as well as its philosophical importance in the history of aesthetic thought will be further explored.

Aesthetics and Ethics
The background of the discussion: the terms

In contemporary bibliography, it is quite common to pose questions concerning the relationship between aesthetics and ethics, two fields of value theory, which are often found in connection or interaction regarding various forms of artistic activity. The relations between the two fields have undergone great transformations through the years and with time, debates about the relation of art to morality became part of philosophical literature to the point of appearing as one of the greatest challenges in philosophical aesthetics. Because of the complexity of the issue, there have been more than one construals and more than one answers to the question of whether or how they are related. Thus, it will be useful, before putting forth and examining the central question, to introduce the main concepts and illustrate the basic terms employed in this longstanding debate, namely, the *aesthetic* and the *ethical*.

i. The concept of the 'ethical'

'Ethical' is the central term of philosophical ethics, the field which, broadly construed, is concerned with moral principles, the right or wrong and the good or bad ways of human conduct. Philosophical inquiry in ethics includes several distinct questions about justice, about well-being, about moral realism and relativism, each treated by diverse moral theories, which in turn fall under certain ethical approaches such as normative ethics, applied ethics, virtue ethics or meta-ethics. In all these moral discussions, the 'ethical' often appears interpreted in different ways and thus, it is used in different senses so as to be applicable to specific moral theories. In this respect, an elucidation of the 'ethical' would then begin with a definition of morality.

In fact, there have been several attempts to define morality within moral philosophy and beyond. As G. Wallace and A.D.M. Walker have observed: "in philosophical and non-philosophical discussion the words 'morality' and 'moral' are of frequent occurrence and it seems that in both areas confusion has arisen as a result of uncertainty or unclarity about their meaning."[10] Correspondingly, the 'ethical' has also figured in more than one senses in

[10] Wallace, G. – Walker, A.D.M. (eds.) *The Definition of Morality*. London: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1970, p. 4. As they

the debate about the relation of aesthetics and ethics.[11]

Within moral philosophy, it is common to mark a difference between the terms 'ethical' and 'moral'. One way to distinguish between the two is to define the former in a broad sense as a notion of human merit, a conception which was already proposed by the ancient Greeks, especially in Aristotle's version of ethics. In this line of thought, the ethical is connected with the question of how one should live and it is thought of as providing an answer to it. Accordingly, Berys Gaut explains that "the broader set of merits and defects, which we will count as ethical in the broad sense, are qualities of character or intellect that are virtues—that is, forms of excellence."[12] This conception of the ethical became popular among several proponents of the ethical criticism of art, including Wayne Booth and Martha Nussbaum.

Nussbaum locates the difference between the 'ethical and the 'moral' to the extent that the former does not suggest a division of human values into two distinct groups, the moral and the non-moral.[13] And it is in these terms that she further claims that "Literary theory could neglect moral philosophy and still show a keen interest in the ethical."[14] For Nussbaum "moral philosophy is a general and inclusive rubric, covering, in principle, many different types of ethical investigations, of which one sort is the theoretical study of substantive ethical positions, or ethical (moral) theory."[15] In *Love's knowledge*, Nussbaum imagines a future in which literary theory (while not forgetting its many other pursuits) will also join with the ethical theory in pursuit of the question "How should one live?". Setting her inquiry within an

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explain further, "it is a commonplace that sometimes 'moral' is a term of approval and is opposed to 'immoral' or 'morally wrong', and that sometimes it is a classificatory term and has as its contradictory 'non-moral'. But even as a classificatory term 'moral' occurs in a wide range of contexts. […] The situation with 'morality' is roughly similar. At times the word refers to a certain kind of conduct and has as its opposite 'immorality'. Perhaps more frequently – and in this sense the word has no opposite – it refers to a set or system of beliefs or rules about conduct; Yet again the word sometimes means 'the quality or fact of being moral'."

[11] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 42.

[12] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 42. As Gaut explains, they are the kind of qualities the possession of which tends to make a life, or lives of certain kinds, go well. Thus, their possession can be thought of as providing an answer to the question, 'How should I live my life?' or 'What is the good life?'.

[13] Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge – Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 169. For this distinction see B. Williams. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Mass. 1985. In Williams view, the moral is a sub-set of the ethical, particularly problematic as Gaut indicates.

[14] Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge – Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. ibid., 1990, p. 170.

[15] Nussbaum, Martha, *Love's Knowledge – Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. ibid., 1990, p. 169. Nussbaum makes clear that her use of the distinction between ethical theory and moral philosophy is closely related to Rawl's use of a distinction between moral theory and moral philosophy, in J. Rawls. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Mass. 1971.

Aristotelian conception of ethics as the search for a specification of the good life for a human being, a study whose aim is not only theoretical understanding but also practice,[16] and moreover with influences from John Rawls' theory of morality,[17] Nussbaum undertakes this task by discussing novels (by authors such as Henry James but also Proust, Dickens and Beckett) which, according to her, explore significant ethical aspects of human moral experience. She aims at pointing out that novels are a valuable source of ethical reflection of any kind,[18] and thus at establishing an association of philosophy and literary texts involving important human moral concerns, namely, in the ethical sphere.

An equally broad sense of the 'ethical' is also suggested by Wayne Booth, the literary critic, when he writes: "The word 'ethical' may mistakenly suggest a project concentrating on quite limited moral standards: of honesty, perhaps, or of decency or tolerance. I am interested in a much broader topic, the entire range of effects on the 'character' or 'person' or 'self'. 'Moral' judgments are only a small part of it. [...] An 'ethical' choice is for many strictly the right choice, the opposite of 'unethical,' just as a moral choice is the opposite of an immoral choice. For us here the word must cover all qualities in the character, or ethos, of authors and readers, whether these are judged as good or bad."[19] With this view of the 'ethical' in mind, Booth believes that the association with certain types of characters in fiction can have a positive effect on us, that is, we can become better people. So, in his book, *The Company We Keep*, he suggests that we can and should judge books on ethical grounds, according to whether or not they promote particular values which we endorse. He thus sets out a rich conception of ethical criticism centered around the metaphor of friendship.

Again, a similarly broad conception of 'ethical' is employed by Marcia Eaton who holds that "ethical evaluation is the assessment of someone's character or behavior in terms of the effects it has on human well-being or in terms of the behavior's compliance with dictates of

[16] Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge – Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. ibid., 1990, p. 139.
[17] In *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls, describing the task of moral theory, adopts a procedure that he traces explicitly to Aristotle but he makes three significant additions; First, he gives a name to the desired end of the procedure: it is "reflective equilibrium"; Second, he provides an account of "considered judgement" that tells us which judgements to trust and mistrust during the procedure; Third, he adds five constraints that must be met by any ethical theory that will even be seriously considered during the procedure of scrutiny. Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge – Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. ibid., 1990, p. 175.
[18] Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge – Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. ibid., 1990, p. 12.
[19] Booth, Wayne. *The Company We Keep – An Ethics of Fiction*. England: Univ. of California Press, 1988, p. 8.

conscience or principles governing human beings' treatment of one another."[20] With the contention that the aesthetic is integrated with other values, namely with ethical values, Eaton strongly opposes the views of the formalist movement in the 20th century which insisted that ethical and aesthetic assessments are distinct. She examines specific ways in which the aesthetic and nonaesthetic are connected, particularly ways in which aesthetic and ethical concerns and values are integrated and argues in favour of a general inseparability of these two core elements of humanity.[21] As she further claims, "Both the aesthetic and the ethical are part of what I think is best understood as value grounded in one's conception of the meaning of life."[22]

With differences in formulation, the broad notion of the 'ethical' as including traits of character or intellect has facilitated and further promoted the ethical criticism of art. However, being too broad, it also met a lot of disagreement, expressed more often in terms of the fact that it did not leave room for some traits which at the same time constituted terms of aesthetic relevance. Indeed, as Gaut argues, "at least some ethical qualities are of aesthetic import, one cannot simply take ethical qualities as any good or bad aspect of character. For on this understanding, several aesthetic qualities will uncontentiously figure as ethical ones: having a capacity to write stylishly, beautifully or elegantly and possessing an acute aesthetic sensibility, for instance, are kinds of excellence in people."[23] The autonomist Richard Posner expressed this complaint arguing among others, against the broad sense of 'ethical'; In Posner's words, Booth defines the 'ethical' with "promiscuous breadth".[24] In brief, Posner

[20] Eaton, Muelder, Marcia. *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 125.

[21] Eaton, Muelder, Marcia. *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical*. ibid., 2001, p. 97. Further, Eaton discusses what constitutes "an aesthetic life" and in addition, shows how one term of assessment, 'sentimental', provides a case study for the interconnectedness of aesthetic and ethical evaluation. She characteristically states that "If ethical ascription of 'sentimental' requires aesthetic assessment and aesthetic ascription of 'sentimental' requires ethical assessment, then ethical and aesthetic judgments are not completely distinct. What is demanded, then, is a holistic view of human value." (p. 129).

[22] Eaton, Muelder, Marcia. *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical*. ibid., 2001, p. 129.

[23] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 42.

[24] Posner, Richard. "Against Ethical Criticism: Part Two". *Philosophy and Literature* 22/2 (1998): pp. 349-312 (405). The disagreements of Richard Posner with Wayne Booth and Martha Nussbaum are known as the debate about the ethical criticism of art. This revolves around two key issues: "first, whether or not it is ever appropriate to judge a literary work on ethical grounds; and second, whether or not reading particular novels will make one a better citizen of a democratic polity." Stow, Simon. "Unbecoming Virulence: The Politics of the Ethical Criticism Debate". *Philosophy and Literature* 24 (2000): pp. 185-196 (186). Contrary to Nussbaum and Booth, Posner generally held that 'the formal properties do not exhaust the worth and appeal of literature, but the moral properties […] are almost sheer distraction'. Posner, Richard. "Against Ethical Criticism". *Philosophy and Literature* 21/1 (April 1997): pp. 1-27 (24).

disputed the claims of authors such as Martha Nussbaum and Wayne Booth regarding the positive moral effect of immersion in literature and defended his autonomist approach to art insisting, by contrast, on the separation of the moral from the aesthetic.[25]

Given this broad sense of the ethical, there have been other attempts to define the way in which we talk of moral merits and demerits of persons, particularly, in terms of a narrower sense, something which has proven more complex than what appeared at first. One of the most influential definitions of morality is offered by Richard Hare who holds that moral judgements are overriding, universalizable and prescriptive.[26] The concept of universalizability has received great attention from moral philosophers with one dispute concerning whether the criterion of universalizability is purely formal or substantive.[27] However, the most crucial claim in Hare's definition is that "moral rules and principles are to be defined by reference to the fact that they *override* other sorts of rules and principles"; According to G. Wallace and A.D.M. Walker, "many philosophers have been attracted by the idea of defining, or partly defining, 'morality' in terms of the relationships which moral rules and principles have, or are believed to have, to other kinds of rules and principles.[28] Other attempts to define morality include the claim that morality is to be identified by its function or object (Geoffrey Warnock), while more recently some philosophers have appealed not to overridingness or to function, but to the sanctions that support morality as being definitive of it (Bernard Williams).[29]

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[25] Posner, Richard. "Against Ethical Criticism". ibid., 1997: p. 2. Posner qualifies this claim with a caveat: "the separation of moral from aesthetic values is not a rejection of the former. The aesthetic outlook *is* a moral outlook, one that stresses the values of openness, detachment, hedonism, curiosity, tolerance, the cultivation of the self, and the preservation of a private sphere — in short, the values of liberal individualism."

[26] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 43. As Wallace and Walker explain further, "Hare's claim that moral principles are universalizable is, it would seem, to be understood in the following way: if I maintain that morally I ought to do X, then I am committed to maintaining that morally anyone else ought to d o X unless there are relevant differences between the other person and myself and/or between his situation and mine." Wallace, G. – Walker, A.D.M. *The Definition of Morality*. ibid., 1970, p. 8.

[27] Wallace, G. – Walker, A.D.M. *The Definition of Morality*. ibid., 1970, p. 8. "Is it logic (that is, the meaning of the word 'moral') which requires that I universalize my moral principles or is the principle that I should do so itself a substantive moral principle?"

[28] Wallace, G. – Walker, A.D.M. *The Definition of Morality*. ibid., 1970, p. 10.

[29] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 44. Bernard Williams has identified what he calls "the morality system" partly in terms of the response of blame directed at those who violate it. According to Gaut, "the point captures a valuable insight, for there very often is a connection between negative moral judgements and blame, but it cannot provide a definition of morality." For Gaut, this problem cannot be solved even by appealing to guilt; for, in this case, the definition of morality would be tightly circular: *guilt is by definition a kind of self-blame directed towards what is morally wrong*.

Berys Gaut offers his own version of the 'ethical' in a narrower sense, by adopting a *purely practical* conception of morality, "a conception that holds that not only are actions and motives ethically significant, but also feelings that do not motivate."[30] In an overall account, Gaut argues that "the notion of the ethical in the broad sense concerns the entire domain of character excellences and deficiencies (which standardly involve an element of intellectual judgement) and the notion of the ethical in the narrower sense, that of the moral, though not without tensions, concerns the kinds of motivations and feelings that we have towards other people."[31] In contrast to the supporters of ethical criticism, such as Booth and Nussbaum, who have tended to focus on both the aesthetic and the ethical in the broader senses of the terms, and have argued for a connection between the two, Gaut holds that much of the debate about art and ethics has focused on the narrow sense of the 'ethical' "raising questions about whether such undoubtedly moral vices as sadism, cruelty and callousness manifested by a work are aesthetic defects in it." For Gaut, it might be thought that "it is precisely in respect of the moral, rather than the broader ethical defects of works that ethical criticism has the harder part of the argument to make."[32]

With these observations in mind, we have delineated some crucial aspects of the conception of the ethical as appearing in the debate. Of course, the issue of the definition of morality is not exhausted here nor within the context of its application to works of art.[33] But the accounts mentioned so far may be regarded as sufficient to provide a brief illustration of the proposed views regarding the topic and further, adequately advance the discussion towards the relation of the two terms, that is, the 'ethical' and the 'aesthetic', in the main question of this thesis. We can now proceed to some elucidations regarding the concept of the 'aesthetic'.

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[30] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 48. Gaut explains his view further claiming that the moral assessment of a person's character is determined only by what he does and by the motives that determine his actions. Any feelings or thoughts that play no role in motivating actions are morally irrelevant. Thoughts, fantasies and desires, however gruesome, inappropriate or corrupt we would judge the actions they motivate to be, are not themselves morally bad, unless they issue in actions that express these feelings and thoughts. So, a person may be morally good while having these feelings and thoughts, and his goodness may consist partly in his capacity to resist their influence on the will, for these feelings and thoughts may have arisen purely passively in him, and he is not to be held responsible for their occurrence.

[31] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 48.

[32] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 45. As Gaut makes clear, in his discussion about the relation of art to ethics, when he refers to the 'ethical' without qualification, "then it will be the ethical in the narrow sense, that of the moral, that I will mean." (p. 48)

[33] For further definitions of morality and the 'moral', see Wallace, G. – Walker, A.D.M. (eds.). *The Definition of Morality*. Great Britain: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1970.

ii. The concept of the 'aesthetic'

The relation, conceived as intimate, of the 'ethical' to the 'aesthetic' has been constantly affirmed in different versions and formulations through the centuries. This seems to hold for the ancient Greeks of the 5th and early 4th centuries B.C. who thought that aesthetic questions and moral philosophical questions were not distinct set of questions.[34] Nowadays, however, this tendency has been disputed, a distinction between the two kinds of questions has been established and the debate has mostly focused on cases in which it can be thought that these questions intertwine or intersect.[35] Turning to the 'aesthetic' – the second term of the debate will be addressed at slightly greater length since any attempt to define it seems to give rise to considerable difficulty.

Aesthetics is the philosophical field which is primarily concerned with questions regarding art, aesthetic experience and aesthetic appreciation of artworks, working towards the understanding of beauty and aesthetic judgements and treating concepts such as sublimity and taste, but also, as Jerrold Levinson explains further, a great variety of properties which are considered aesthetic such as "grace, elegance, delicacy, harmony, wittiness, but also, vehemence, garishness, gaudiness, acerbity, anguish, sadness […] — bearing in mind, of course, that many of the properties on this list are aesthetic properties only when the terms designating them are understood figuratively."[36] In recent years, the philosophy of art is

[34] As Nussbaum claims: "they were both typically seen as pursuing a single and general question: namely, how human beings should live." Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge – Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, ibid., 1990, p. 15. For an extensive treatment of this issue, see Nussbaum, Martha. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. In *Interlude I* of the book, Nussbaum, with a focus on literature, indicates that before Plato's time there was no distinction between 'philosophical' and 'literary' discussion of human practical problems. The poets were regarded as the most important ethical teachers and tragic and comic dramas were standardly assessed for their ethical content as well as for other aspects of their construction. (p. 123-4).

[35] Levinson, Jerrold. *Aesthetics and Ethics – Essays at the Intersection*, ibid., 1998, p. 1. Jerrold Levinson recognises three ways in which both kinds of questions can be found in interaction. Particularly, he refers to an intersection of aesthetics and ethics which can be understood to comprise three spheres of inquiry; "The first is that of problems or presuppositions common to aesthetics and ethics. The second is that of ethical issues in aesthetics, or in the practice of art. And the third sphere is that of aesthetic issues in ethics, theoretical and applied."

[36] Levinson, Jerrold. "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview" in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* edited by Jerrold Levinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 6. Frank Sibley, in a classic and highly influential article that set the framework for the modern debate about the aesthetic, discusses aesthetic properties and makes the same observation about the terms which do not primarily function as possessing an aesthetic meaning. These terms need to be employed in an aesthetic use in order to be called aesthetic properties. Sibley gives

mostly concerned with questions about the nature of art itself and basic issues such as the definition of art, the nature of the aesthetic and the standards of correct interpretation as well as representation and expression in artworks.[37] In this context, the analysis and evaluation of works of art is further referred to as falling under art criticism.

As Monroe Beardsley states, many of the philosophical questions which later became the subject of philosophical inquiry about art, have preceded even the appearance of aesthetics in the full sense.[38] The term 'aesthetics' was first introduced in 1735 by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten. Baumgarten's treatise defined aesthetics as a special branch of study opening the way for greater involvement with aesthetic issues.[39] At the onset of the term, the 'aesthetic' was mainly used with reference to sensory perception in general. Ever since then, however, through various attempts to capture its essence such as the accounts of the British 18th century taste theorists, notably Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Burke and subsequently, the Kantian conception of aesthetic perception as disinterested perception and the Schopenhauerian conception of aesthetic perception as objective perception, the term has been shaped in a more specific meaning, as marking *a distinctively disinterested, objective,*

examples of aesthetic concepts including an almost endless, as he says, variety of adjectives, such as *unified, balanced, integrated, lifeless, serene, somber, dynamic, powerful, vivid, delicate, moving, trite, sentimental, tragic,* as well as expressions in artistic contexts like 'telling contrast,' 'set up a tension,' 'conveys a sense of,' or 'holds it together'. Sibley, Frank. "Aesthetic Concepts". *The Philosophical Review* 68/4 (Oct. 1959): pp. 421-450 (421-22).

[37] Although closely related, a distinction between philosophy of art and aesthetics is often assumed. However, the distinction is not acknowledged or thought of importance by everyone; on this distinction, see Christopher S. Nwodo. "Philosophy of Art versus Aesthetics". *British Journal of Aesthetics* 24/3 (Summer 1984): pp. 195-205. As for questions of art criticism, their distinctive feature are discussions about the notion of taste.

[38] According to Monroe C. Beardsley, the intensive study of the arts was first undertaken in the 5th century (Socrates and the Sophists) though early reflections about questions which would later be called aesthetic, had already appeared in Homer. Bosanquet, in his *History of Aesthetic,* quotes a passage from Homer as "one of the earliest aesthetic judgments that Western literature contains." (*Iliad* XVIII, 548). As Monroe C. Beardsley notes, the Homeric exclamation – "that was a marvellous piece of work!"– is a remark that can give rise to aesthetic questions, *as soon as the first authentic and unmistakable thrusts of philosophical speculation begin to be felt in the Western world*. Beardsley, Monroe, C. *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present – A Short History*. New York: The University of Alabama Press, 1966, p. 24.

[39] Baumgarten first introduced the term "aesthetics" in his 1735 dissertation *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (Philosophical meditations on some matters pertaining to poetry), §CXVI. He then published the first treatise simply entitled "Aesthetics" in his *Aesthetica* of 1750-58, §1 where he defines aesthetics as "the theory of the liberal arts, the logic of the inferior faculties of cognition, the art of beautiful thinking and the art of intuitive thinking, analogous to rational thinking," in sum, "the science of intuitive cognition" (*Aesthetica (theoria liberalium artium, gnoseologia inferior, ars pulchre cogitandi, ars analogi rationalis) est scientia cognitionis sensitivae*). Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgement* edited by Paul Guyer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, (in *Editorial Notes*), p. 351.

distanced, and form-focused manner of perceiving," as Jerrold Levinson indicates.[40] However, in modern discussions, the qualifier 'aesthetic' has come to apply to a variety of items, including judgments, attitudes, experiences, properties, objects and values, and not solely to modes of perception. Carolyn Korsmeyer observes that philosophical studies of the concept of the aesthetic can often be seen as an attempt to fulfill three general purposes; "First, aestheticians try to describe the nature of a certain kind of perceptual experience, so that in response readers can recognise and classify their own experiences as such. Second, they clarify a concept, 'aesthetic', such that it can be related systematically to other notions such as 'art' in a larger theoretical framework. Finally, they often derive both descriptive and normative claims regarding how one looks or should look at art in order best to discern its peculiarly valuable qualities."[41]

Within this context, some of the key notions in modern philosophical attempts to elucidate the concept of the aesthetic have become those of aesthetic attitude (Stolnitz 1960), of aesthetic experience (Beardsley 1981),[42] and of aesthetic property. Regarding the first notion, one way to determine the aesthetic attitude is in terms of qualities intrinsic to it, for instance, with an appeal to its ability to provide pure, disinterested enjoyment,[43] or to the contrast of

[40] Levinson, Jerrold. "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview". ibid., 2010, p. 10. Levinson gives two examples of 20th century conceptions in the same vein, those of Edward Bullough's account of aesthetic perception as involving psychic distancing of the perceived object, or a disengagement of the practical self in relation to it, and Clive Bell's account of aesthetic perception as focused exclusively on form, or the arrangement of elements in a sensuous medium, independent of all knowledge of the world.

[41] Korsmeyer, Carolyn. "On distinguishing 'Aesthetic' from 'Artistic'". University of Illinois Press. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 11/4 (October 1977): pp. 45-57 (46).

[42] Beardsley (1981) characterizes such experience as involving "firmly fixed attention, relative freedom from outside concerns, affect without practical import, exercise of powers of discovery, and integration of the self. Such experiences have value in virtue of sharing the unity, intensity, and complexity of the objects—notably artworks—to which they are directed, and such objects have aesthetic value precisely in so far as they have the potential to afford such experiences." Levinson, Jerrold. "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview". ibid., 2010, p. 10. Moreover, Marcia Eaton holds that aesthetic experience involves "attending to—perceiving and reflecting upon—an object or event's intrinsic properties considered worthy of that attention within a community into which one has been socialized. These experiences are not necessarily—indeed, are rarely "pure" in the sense that one's attention is aimed only at aesthetic properties. One can look at a painting or landscape, listen to a song or poem and, while paying due attention to shapes or rhythms or repetitions, also think about grandma, sex, oppression, or anything else. As long as one continues to perceive or reflect on aesthetic properties, one is having a genuine aesthetic experience." Eaton, Muelder, Marcia. *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical*. ibid., 2001, p. 99.

[43] Immanuel Kant highlights two elements that have been central for aesthetic attitude theorists: the connection to pleasure and the idea of disinterest. Although he does not mention enjoyment, Stolnitz defines the aesthetic attitude as "disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of awareness whatever, for its own sake alone". On the other hand, Scruton talks of the aesthetic attitude as involving "enjoyment of an object for its own sake" and defines an interest in an object X for its own sake as "a desire to go on hearing, looking at, or in some other way having experience of X, where there is no reason for this desire in terms of any

mere contemplation with possessing a practical attitude towards a work (Kant, Stolnitz).[44] Stolnitz's conception is characteristic of an aesthetic attitude theorist; he holds that the aesthetic attitude is appropriate for our appreciation of nature and of art, and in fact is the foundation of our understanding of artistic value. To look at art qua art is to look at it with the aesthetic attitude.[45] George Dickie argued in the 1960s and 1970s against the idea of the aesthetic attitude itself, holding it to be a vacuous concept, meaning that we should attend to a work of art in whatever way is appropriate to appreciate it. Dickie insisted that no informative theoretical constraints can be placed on such appreciation and thus rejected the idea that aesthetic experience can be reduced to the enjoyment of disinterested perception, or to anything else similarly specific.[46]

An alternative way to specify the aesthetic attitude would be in terms of the objects at which it is directed: aesthetic properties.[47] And thus, in analytic aesthetics the discussion has focused a lot on what counts as an aesthetic property, sometimes going on to explicate other uses of the aesthetic in relation to that, for example construing aesthetic perception or experience precisely as perception or experience of aesthetic properties, as Jerrold Levinson argues.[48] In his analysis of the concept of the aesthetic, Gaut recognises two senses of the term, a wide and a narrow one — as he also did in the case of the 'ethical'. He finds that the narrow sense of the term refers only to what is aesthetically good, i.e. the beautiful, or that it displays properties that are particular species of the beautiful—the elegant, the graceful and so on – as well as to what is aesthetically bad, i.e. ugly, or to what displays properties of

other desire or appetite that the experience of X may fulfil, and where the desire arises out of, and is accompanied by, the thought of X". Scruton, Roger. *Art and Imagination: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, pp. 143, 148.

[44] Korsmeyer, Carolyn. "On distinguishing 'Aesthetic' from 'Artistic'". ibid., 1977, p. 46. With the examples of Edward Bullough and Jerome Stolnitz, Korsmeyer indicates that "attitude theorists typically delimit the sense of this key concept by contrasting it with the practical, the moral, and the cognitive.

[45] Korsmeyer, Carolyn. "On distinguishing 'Aesthetic' from 'Artistic'". ibid., 1977, p. 48.

[46] Guyer, Paul. "History of Modern Aesthetics" in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* edited by Jerrold Levinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 28. This is why according to Guyer, Dickie resorted to his famous 'institutional analysis' defining a work of art as anything put forth by a member of the art world as a candidate for appreciation, where all the work is to be done by the concept of the art world and no restriction is implied by the concept of appreciation (Dickie 1974: chapter 1).

[47] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 31. An important account of this form is due to Monroe Beardsley. Beardsley defines an aesthetic point of view as one in which we take an interest in the aesthetic value of some object; and he then defines the aesthetic value of an object as the value that it possesses in virtue of its capacity to give aesthetic gratification, when we are correctly experiencing it.

[48] Levinson, Jerrold, "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview". ibid., 2010, p. 11.

the ugly — the hideous, the ungainly and so on.[49] But, in this narrow sense, a difficulty in the characterization of the 'aesthetic' is also indicated since, as Gaut claims, "simply construing it in terms of sensuous pleasure (that is, pleasure in sense-perception) is inadequate, because there are things that can be beautiful, such as mathematical proofs and thoughts, that cannot be perceived by the senses at all."[50]

On the other hand, there is the wide sense of the aesthetic, a full range of usage of the term which includes views that try to define the 'aesthetic' in terms of aesthetic properties, namely, in terms of "perceptual or observable properties, directly experienced properties, and properties relevant to the aesthetic value of the objects that possess them."[51] Typically, aesthetic properties have been described as second-order or higher-order properties, because they are based on other, simpler, non-aesthetic properties of the aesthetic object.[52] The recurrent philosophical inquiry led to a list of properties and types of properties that are thought to be aesthetic when ascribed to works of art, which in recent years, assumed a broader scope than the one traditionally adopted. According to Alan H. Goldman, this list includes:

1. pure value properties: being beautiful, sublime, ugly;
2. formal qualities: being balanced, tightly knit, graceful;
3. emotion properties: being sad, joyful, angry;
4. behavioral properties: being bouncy, daring, sluggish;
5. evocative qualities: being powerful, boring, amusing;
6. representational qualities: being true-to-life, distorted, realistic;
7. second-order perceptual properties: being vivid or pure (said of colors or tones);

[49] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 27.
[50] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 27.
[51] Levinson, Jerrold. "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview". ibid., 2010, p. 6.
[52] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art (Foundations of the Philosophy of the Arts)*. 2nd ed. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016, p. 51. Davies defines aesthetic properties as objective features perceived in the object of appreciation when it is approached for its own sake; Such properties are internal to the object of appreciation and they are directly available for perception in that their recognition does not require knowledge of matters external to the object of appreciation. For Davies, *aesthetic properties announce their significance, as it were, through the experience they provide*. Moreover, he indicates that although philosophers disagree about how the relevant kind of dependence is to be analyzed, they do agree on that there is some connection between the item's aesthetic properties and details of its structure and content. Davies further asserts that, "generally speaking, two things that are otherwise identical should share the same aesthetic properties, while a change to a thing's structure or content is likely to affect its aesthetic character."

8. historically related properties: being original, bold, derivative.[53]

The wide range of these properties, along with the fact that some could apply to objects which are not works of art, complicated their treatment and gave rise to further difficulties concerning their characterization and, thus, unification under some common factor. Furthermore, disagreements have arisen regarding the demarcation of the class of these properties, or more simply stated, about their status. Several proposals have been put forth in this direction, that is, in an attempt to answer the question of whether there is a common characteristic of these various properties by which they are all recognised as aesthetic qualities. Some thoughts expressed are that these are all perceptible properties of the works themselves; That they are regional qualities (Beardsley 1973), qualities of complexes that emerge from qualities of their parts;[54] That they are value-tending or value-contributing (Beardsley 1973); That they are implicitly evaluative (Goldman 1995) or evaluatively relevant (Levinson 1990);[55] Or then, as Frank Sibley most prominently suggested, aesthetic properties are those that require taste to be perceived.[56] Overall, in a brief grouping of the innumerable

[53] Goldman, Alan, H. "Aesthetic Properties" in *A Companion to Aesthetics – Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* edited by Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper. London: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009, p. 125. Goldman indicates the breadth of the proposed list. However, as he claims, "the reasons for including such properties as originality or staleness in the list are, first, that they contribute to the value of artworks qua artworks and, second, that, despite not being directly perceived, they influence the ways knowledgeable viewers perceive or experience the works." Subsequently, Gaut comments that Goldman consciously eschews formalism and allows for a wider variety of aesthetic properties.

[54] Goldman, Alan, H. "Aesthetic Properties". ibid., 2009, p. 125.

[55] Levinson, Jerrold, "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview". ibid., 2010, p. 12. In opposition to these claims, Gaut thinks of cases such as natural objects, and mathematical theorems to which some of these properties are applied and as he says, in those cases, the objects are not works of art, but nevertheless, they would be regarded as possessing aesthetic value. From that, he contends that *some aesthetic terms instead of being evaluative, they are only descriptive*. Therefore, according to him, another feature required in addition is that "all these terms are used in art-critical practice, that is, are employed by art critics to evaluate works of art." Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 34-35.

[56] In Sibley's view, aesthetic terms span a great range of types, could be grouped into various kinds and sub-species and they are not condition-governed or non-rule- governed: "that an aesthetic term is true of some object cannot be justifiably inferred from any description of the object in non-aesthetic terms." For his use of the notion of taste, he explains: "Accordingly, when a word or expression is such that taste or perceptiveness is required in order to apply it, I shall call it an aesthetic term or expression, and I shall, correspondingly, speak of aesthetic concepts or taste concepts." As he further points out though, when he speaks of taste, he is concerned with *an ability to notice or discern things* and so, he shall not be dealing with questions which center upon expressions like "a matter of taste" (meaning, roughly, a matter of personal preference or liking). Sibley, Frank. "Aesthetic Concepts". ibid., 1959, p. 421. On this issue Gaut expresses the worry that, "if taste is the ability to detect aesthetic properties, any account appealing to this would be tightly circular. On the other hand, if taste is, as Sibley claims, an ability acquired by training, then many perceptual skills, such as the ability to see which kinds of rock formation are likely to be oil-bearing or to distinguish chicks as male or female, require training, though they are not directed at aesthetic properties". Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 27. However, as Alan Goldman remarks in this respect, "the apparent need for taste can be explained, first, by the

attempts to characterize aesthetic properties offered by Berys Gaut, two approaches have been most influential. In the first approach, "they try to give an account of the aesthetic attitude and then to identify aesthetic properties as the proper objects of this attitude. The second has been directly to identify some feature or features that all aesthetic properties have in common."[57] However, it is true that none of the answers proposed came without a counterexample and subsequently, the matter remains open to dispute along with the issue of what perceivable properties of things are aesthetic.

One more terminological distinction which, although not adopted by everyone, is considered to be rather essential for the clarification of the concept of the 'aesthetic' is the difference between the aesthetic and the artistic and by extension, the relation of the aesthetic value to the artistic value of a work of art. Artworks may include different kinds of properties, some that might as well be art-relevant, but still, would be characterized as non-aesthetic. For instance, "a work of art may depict certain conventions used by the artist (a dove carrying an olive branch as symbolizing peace), or may refer to or allude to another, taking us beyond consideration solely of its internal features. Some works belong to kinds with a specific function – they are elegies, hymns, portraits, for example – and this isn't apparent from their aesthetic properties alone."[58] In this regard, "artistic properties are art-relevant features of the work that depend on relations between its immediate content and matters external to its borders."[59] Symbolism in art or allusion are examples of artistic properties, and also, originality or seminality or revolutionariness, which, although appreciatively relevant, are not directly perceivable in works in the manner of aesthetic properties (Levinson 1990; Goldman 1995; Sibley 2001).[60]

The distinction between these two kinds of properties highlights the disagreement between aesthetic theory and the philosophical account of art that came to the fore in the second half

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fact that many of the qualities in question are complex relations. We may require considerable exposure, or training, before we become capable of recognising such relations in works of art. Second, most of the qualities mentioned in the list are at least partly evaluative. To call an artwork daring, powerful, or vivid is to suggest a positive evaluation of it. To call it sluggish, boring, or drab is to suggest a negative evaluation." Goldman, Alan, H. "Aesthetic Properties". ibid., 2009, p. 125.

[57] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 28.

[58] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 51.

[59] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 195.

[60] Levinson, Jerrold. "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview". ibid., 2010, p. 9.

of the 20th century. The former maintains that consideration of the aesthetic in art is adequate for art's appreciation as art while reflection on a work's artistic properties is not relevant to its proper reception.[61] This view was embraced by those who conceded the autonomy of the aesthetic, namely aestheticians (Bullough), aesthetic attitude theorists (Stolnitz) as well as aesthetic formalists.[62] On the other hand, the latter view maintains that awareness of a work's artistic properties is crucial not only to understanding it but also to identifying it as the artwork it is.[63] Examples of this view are the institutional theory (Dickie) as well as historicist definitions which regard the socio-historical aspects of the context of creation as crucial to the nature of art. Nevertheless, as Davies notes, it is far from clear where we should draw the line between the two. According to him, "identifying artworks and their contents depends on awareness of their artistic, as well as aesthetic, properties." In line with this, Davies proposes that the evaluation of an artwork should take account of both its aesthetic and artistic properties.[64] Indeed, as Gaut holds, there is a central connection between the realms of the aesthetic and the artistic and thus, aesthetic evaluative properties and artistic evaluative properties are identical for artworks.[65] In this respect, he further explains that the notion of the aesthetic has its primary application to works of art and any other applications, such as to natural objects or mathematical proofs, are derivative from this primary application.[66]

The debate about the status of aesthetic properties is closely linked to our understanding of what art is or is not and, as a result, it had further implications for another debate which

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[61] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 52. Aesthetic theory – a prominent theory in the first half of the 20th century – is the idea that artworks are aesthetic objects, and that their nature and value derives from special experiences they are capable of delivering. Aesthetic theory can be formulated with a formalist or an expressivist bias but part of its strength lies in the fact that it need not have either slant. Edward Bullough was an influential early 20th century proponent of this idea. The key concept in his view is that of *psychical distance*. Other famous proponents are John Dewey and Frank Sibley. Davies, Stephen, Stecker, Robert. "Twentieth-century Anglo-American aesthetics" in *A Companion to Aesthetics – Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* edited by Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper. London: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009, p. 64.

[62] Clive Bell combined the aesthetic attitude theory with aesthetic formalism in his book, *Art*, published in 1914.

[63] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 52. However, Davies warns that the term *aesthetic* is often used in a broad way, to include what is called *the artistic*. But, this does not mean that those who follow this broad use are unaware of the distinction drawn previously.

[64] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 195. Davies refers to the complex composite of these assessments as the work's *artistic value* or as its *value as a work of art*.

[65] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 36.

[66] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 35. As Gaut indicates, the importance of this claim lies not just in the clarification it provides to the term 'aesthetic', which figures in our question about the relation of the aesthetic to the ethical domain. It also shows that one cannot consistently maintain, as some have supposed, that there is a relation between ethical and artistic value, but not between ethical and aesthetic value. George Dickie offers such a view in "The Triumph in Triumph of the Will."

concerned the definition of art. During the centuries, there have been various definitions of art, as imitation or representation (Plato, Aristotle), as a medium for the transmission of feelings (Tolstoy 1995), as intuitive expression (Croce 1920) and as significant form (Bell 1914). And around the middle of the 20th century, a number of philosophers were even led to suggest that there is no point in trying to define art.[67] Some denied that art can be defined at all, while others argued that it cannot be defined usefully or informatively.[68] For a brief illustration of the most important recent attempts to define art I will use an adequate comprehensive classification, proposed by Stephen Davies, which includes functionalist and procedural definitions of art.[69]

Functionalists (M.C. Beardsley, N. Zangwill) argue that something is an artwork only if it succeeds in achieving the purpose of artistic creation. Functionalists differ over art's purpose, but a common line suggests that its function is to provide a pleasurable aesthetic experience.[70] By contrast, proceduralists (G.Dickie's *institutional theory*) hold that something becomes an artwork only if it is made according to the appropriate process or formula, regardless of how well it serves the purpose of art.[71] Generally speaking, functional theories "see art as definable in terms of some essential function that its objects fulfil or are intended to fulfil and procedural ones see art as definable in terms of the performance or occurrence of certain procedures internal to a social practice."[72] Accordingly, whereas functionalism makes the value of art central to its nature, procedural definitions are purely descriptive and

[67] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 27. Davies thinks that the reason why this occurred is because the early definitions have failed, and further indicates two ways in which a definition of art could fail: 1) by listing a property that not all artworks possess or 2) by identifying a set of properties that is not exclusive to artworks.

[68] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 27. An example of the first case is Morris Weitz (1956) who argues that artworks are united by a web of family resemblances, not by the kind of essence sought by a real definition. An example of the second is Cluster theorists such as Gaut (2000) and Dutton (2006). As Gaut claims, "'Art' is a cluster concept—that is, a concept that resists definition in the sense of there being a set of individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for something to be a work of art. Nevertheless, one can give a set of criteria, satisfaction of which counts towards something being art, but which need not all be satisfied for something to count as art." Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 39.

[69] Davies, Stephen. "Definitions of art" in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes. 3rd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 215.

[70] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 34. With its emphasis on the pleasurable contemplation of aesthetic properties, aesthetic functionalism is related to the 18th and 19th century aesthetic theories.

[71] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 36. The institutional account highlights the social procedures by which something attains arthood.

[72] Levinson, Jerrold. "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview". ibid., 2010, p. 15.

nonevaluative.[73] There is no need for the two approaches to art's definition to be opposed but, as Davies indicates "it could be that something is an artwork only if it satisfies *both* the functional and the procedural requirements." In this respect, a third class of theories is historicist: "something is an artwork only if it stands in the appropriate relation to its artistic forebears" (J.D. Carney, Levinson and Carroll – although the latter denies that his proposal is a definition). And accordingly, a fourth class of theories is what Davies calls *Hybrid definitions* of art, namely, the result of a combination of the aforementioned approaches. To this latter class belong definitions as those offered by Arthur Danto and Robert Stecker.[74]

The multiplicity of attempts to define the nature of art – closely linked to our understanding of the value of art and hence to the criteria we hold for the evaluation of works of art – distinctively corresponds to the strong need to find one characteristic, unique to all artistic objects, through which a concept of art would be established. As Denis Dutton argues, much of the literature in philosophy of art and aesthetics has been no less than an attempt to reveal the most important underlying universal features of art.[75] With the examples of Tolstoy, Schiller, Clive Bell but also, Aristotle, this universalist conception regards art as a natural category of human activity and experience.[76] For Dutton, it is possible to list some of the features which are commonly considered as universal characteristics of art, although with a caveat that the same features might as well appear in non art experiences and activities.[77] These are:

1. Expertise or virtuosity. The manufacture of the art object or execution of the artistic performance usually requires the exercise of a specialized skill. This skill may be learned in an apprentice tradition in some societies, or it can be acquired by virtually everybody in the

[73] Davies, Stephen. "Definitions of art". ibid., 2013, p. 215.
[74] Davies, Stephen. "Definitions of art". ibid., 2013, p. 218. As Davies states, the idea is that hybrid definitions will be superior, because they can combine the advantages of several theoretical perspectives while avoiding the weaknesses that plague each taken in isolation.
[75] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals" in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes. 3rd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 267.
[76] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals". ibid., 2013, p. 267.
[77] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals". ibid., 2013, p. 273. Dutton notes that these features are not necessarily criteria for the presence of art and, further, he offers examples of their presence in experiences and activities beyond art.

culture.[78]

2. Nonutilitarian pleasure. Whether narrative story, crafted artifact, or visual performance, the art object is viewed as a source of pleasure in itself rather than as a practical tool or source of knowledge.[79]

3. Style. Art objects and performances, including fictional or poetic narratives, are made in recognisable styles, according to rules of form and composition. The degree of stylistic determination varies greatly, as much in premodern cultures as in the arts of literate civilizations. […] A style may derive from a culture, or a family, or be the invention of an individual; styles involve borrowing and sudden alteration, as well as slow changes.

4. Criticism. The development of a critical vocabulary and discourse, including criteria for excellence, mediocrity, competence/incompetence and failure.[80]

5. Imitation. In widely varying degrees of naturalism, art objects, including sculptures, paintings and oral narratives, represent or imitate a real and imaginary experience of the world. […] While imitation is important to much art, nevertheless there are notable exceptions such as abstract painting and music.

6. "Special" focus. Works of art and artistic performances are frequently bracketed off from ordinary life and made a special and dramatic focus of experience. While there are plenty of mundane artistic objects and performances, there are special artworks or performances which are often imbued with intense emotion and sense of community.[81]

7. Finally, the experience of art is an imaginative experience for both producers and audiences. According to Dutton, "Art of all kinds happens in the theater of the imagination: it is raised

[78] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals". ibid., 2013, p. 274. As Dutton explains, "In both instances, there still tend to be individuals who stand out by virtue of special talents. Technical artistic skills are noticed in societies worldwide and are generally admired."

[79] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals". ibid., 2013, p. 274. When it is derived from the experience of art, this pleasure is called aesthetic pleasure and is set aside from practical or informational/communicative considerations.

[80] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals". ibid., 2013, p. 274. There exists some kind of indigenous critical language of judgment and appreciation, simple or elaborate, that is applied to arts. This may include the shop talk of art producers or evaluative discourse of critics and audiences.

[81] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals". ibid., 2013, p. 274. According to Dutton, these objects or performance occasions invoke what Dissanayake (1997) calls "making special." They frequently involve the combining of many different art forms, such as chanting, dancing, body decoration. Outside art, political rallies, sporting events, public ceremonies, such as coronations and weddings, and religious meetings of all sorts also invoke a sense of specialness.

from the mundane practical world to become an imaginative experience."[82]

In contrast to universalism which sees art as a cultural universal and consequently recognises universal values in art, aesthetic relativism expressed a rather dismissive attitude towards the notion of universal values in art. Relativists understood aesthetic values as particulars, that is, having their reality only relative to local cultural and historical conditions. Therefore, a good work of art was "good" only in a specific culture.[83] The disagreement between universalists and relativists in art constitutes one aspect of a broader debate which concerns whether there is a *structural symmetry* between the moral and the aesthetic domains. As Gaut explains, "the structural symmetry view holds that fundamental aspects of aesthetic and moral values are the same; for instance, that realism (or irrealism) is the correct account of both sorts of value, or that both kinds of value are expressible in terms of principles (or that neither are), or that both kinds of value are objective (or subjective), and so forth.[84] By extension, from the perspective of the evaluation of art, it is the question of whether the structure of aesthetic and moral evaluation is the same, which has been of recurrent interest in the philosophical debate about the relation of the 'aesthetic' and the 'ethical'.

Indeed, a great deal of the recent work in aesthetics has emphasised the connection between art and moral understanding, or, in terms of evaluation, the relation between aesthetic and moral value. The views regarding the value works possess as art are starkly contrasting but, broadly construed, there are two directions: those who think that moral considerations are relevant to the value of works of art and those who think that aesthetic considerations are entirely independent of moral ones. Thus, among those many and various questions which have been put forth, there is one tightly linked to the subject of this thesis and formulated as follows: "*Is it the case that the ethical goodness of the attitudes, if any, manifested in a work of art contributes towards its aesthetic value?*" The question concerns the issue of whether there is an intrinsic relation between art and morality, namely, an internal connection of the

[82] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals". ibid., 2013, p. 274. For Dutton, the carving may realistically represent an animal, but as a sculpture it becomes an imaginative object. The same can be said of any story well told, whether ancient mythology or personal anecdote. Hence, he adds that, at the mundane level, imagination in problem solving, planning, hypothesizing, inferring the mental states of others or merely in daydreaming is practically coextensive with normal human conscious life.

[83] Dutton, Denis. "Aesthetic Universals". ibid., 2013, p. 275. Regarding the debate between relativists and universalists in art, Denis Dutton concludes by claiming that a balanced view of art is thus required.

[84] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 8.

aesthetic to the moral domain. Accordingly, the *intrinsic* issue[85] lies in a broader dispute over whether artistic value is intrinsic or instrumental. Regarding this issue, some of the better-known approaches to identifying the value of art are the essentialist and the nonessentialist conceptions of artistic value.

According to the strongest version of essentialism, artistic value is one, unitary kind of value, shared by all valuable artworks, unique to art, and rendering art intrinsically valuable.[86] The essentialist claims that, art is valuable in and for its own sake, hoping to find the value of art in an essential or defining property of art.[87] In this respect, aesthetic value is intrinsic in the artwork; *The goodness of an artwork resides exclusively in its beauty*, as, for instance, an essentialist would say.[88] While some essentialist philosophers locate the value of art in features of the work, aesthetic formalists, for example,[89] others maintain that *art is valuable because the experience to which it gives rise is valuable*. The latter argue that "the experience is intimately bound up with the artwork that is its cause, so that it cannot be described except by characterizing the qualities of the artworks that give rise to it. And if the value of the experience is intrinsic to it, then the value of the artwork is also intrinsic."[90] Accordingly,

[85] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 8. As Gaut indicates, the intrinsic question is not about the effects of art on its audience as in the case of the causal question. Overall, Gaut offers a grouping of the different types of questions involved in the wide issue of the relation of art and ethics: a) does exposure to works of art that are ethically suspect (because of their advocacy of violence, sexism, etc.) tends to morally corrupt their audiences? b) does the ethical badness of certain works of art justify their suppression? c) are both kinds of judgments, for instance, objective or relative, are they governed by principles, are they about response-dependent properties and so on?, and moreover, d) is there an analytic connection between the notions of the aesthetic and the ethical? For Gaut question a) is a causal, empirical question because we need to find the answer through psychological and sociological research, b) concerns censorship or otherwise, matters of *public policy*, while both questions are distinguished from a third one regarding whether there are structural parallels between aesthetic and moral judgments — the latter became of great interest to the 18th century philosophers, including Hume and Kant. The fourth issue concerns a conceptual question. Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics" in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes. 3rd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 394.

[86] Stecker, Robert. *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: An Introduction*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2010, p. 244.

[87] Stecker, Robert. "Value in Art" in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* edited by Jerrold Levinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 310.

[88] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 193.

[89] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 194. Aesthetic formalists consider the value of art to be confined solely to its structural unity and integrity. However, they do not need to deny that artworks have qualities valuable for purposes other than the contemplation of their forms. Instead, a formalist would argue that in some cases an artwork might be valuable as a weighty object or an historical document for instance, but, as art its value is solely intrinsic.

[90] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 194. In other words, "if we value the work for the pleasure its contemplation yields, and this pleasure just is the pleasure of apprehending and understanding the artwork's pleasure-making features, then the artwork is not merely an incidental means to a valuable effect.

essentialists hold that it can be known *a priori* that art has these features, based on reflection on the nature of art or on the nature of our interaction with it. Thus, aesthetic value is the most common candidate to fulfill these essentialist conditions on artistic value.[91] Indeed, two broad groupings of essentialist theories that have been important in the 20th century are aesthetic and cognitive theories of artistic value. The former, support the view that art has an aesthetic value, that is, "they define artistic value intrinsically, in terms of the aesthetic properties of artworks, in terms of aesthetic experience which such works provide, or in terms of a characteristic pleasure we derive from art."[92] The latter, is based on the assumption that art has some sort of cognitive value, "not only in the sense of being a significant source of new knowledge, but also in the sense of making us newly aware of or alive to ways of thinking, imagining, and perceiving."[93] As Robert Stecker notes, though, not all accounts of art's cognitive value are considered to be essentialist; "some would like to extend it to make more ambitious claims, such as that art is capable of giving us knowledge that some conception is true or false in actuality (Nussbaum 1990)".[94]

The non-essentialist approach, on the other hand, denies that these essentialist claims need be true of artistic value, namely, that we cannot locate the value of art in this way, and hence maintains that we must find an alternative way of doing so. With this regard to this aim, instead of the notion of an intrinsic value in art, the non-essentialists promoted the idea that art is instrumentally valuable, beyond the provision of experience valued for its own sake. In

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The pleasurable outcome could not exist or retain its value independently of its connection with the artwork." However, a disagreement arises at this point. As Davies explains, some philosophers denied this conclusion and considered the value of such an experience of art to be extrinsically valuable. "For these philosophers, it looks as if the value of art is in what it leads to, and to that extent its value is extrinsic rather than intrinsic. Hence, Davies accepts the former view."

[91] Stecker, Robert. *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: An Introduction*. ibid., 2010, p. 244.

[92] Stecker, Robert. "Value in Art". ibid., 2010, p. 313. Some of those who want to identify aesthetic value with the possession of aesthetic properties are Goldman 1995; Sibley 1983; Zangwill 1984; Zemach 1997, and, in terms of experience or pleasure, Beardsley 1958; Budd 1995; Anderson 2000. Accordingly, for Eaton "Aesthetic evaluation assesses something in terms of its capacity to produce delight when intrinsic features of it, traditionally identified as worthy of attention, are the object of perception and reflection." Eaton, Muelder, Marcia. *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical*. ibid., 2001, p. 125. From this perspective, Eaton further claims that "Aesthetic values are different than, but they are not necessarily separate from, other values." (p. 99).

[93] Stecker, Robert. "Value in Art" ibid., 2010, p. 316. Collingwood's theory of art (1938) is usually classified as an expression of emotion theory but his understanding of expression makes it look like cognition. Further, Arthur Danto (1981) and Nelson Goodman (*Languages of Art*: 1968, 1978) have embraced views which seem to attribute a kind of cognitive value in art, but, not in the sense of art's being a significant source of new knowledge.

[94] Stecker, Robert. "Value in Art" ibid., 2010, p. 316.

fact, the instrumental value of a work of art includes the actual effects, good or bad, of a work on those who experience it or effects that would be produced if people were to experience it.[95] As Robert Stecker explains, the nonessentialist claims that "artistic value consists in those valuable properties, which artists commonly try to imbue in their works, and which critics and appreciators commonly look for or seek out in works. These properties may sometimes be, but needn't be, the same across the arts. Hence there can be some artistic values that are never found in some art forms."[96] What is basically maintained by the latter view is that art has an inherent or instrumental value and thus, extrinsic. To this extent, to value something in purely instrumental terms is to value it solely as a means to the end it realises. Thus, in contrast to the essentialist, for the non-essentialist, art is valuable because *it is a means to independently specifiable effects that are valuable*.[97] Matthew Kieran explains this point further: "for something to possess inherent value it must not only be the means to a valuable end, but also the means must partly constitute and thus be internal to the ends involved."[98] This second view was famously advocated by the 19th century Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy denied that art is valuable for its beauty. He believed, instead, that it is valuable only where it serves morality or religion, which are valuable independently of their connection with art. For him then, the value of art is extrinsic.[99]

Yet, there are philosophers who think that the value of art is intrinsic and opt for the exclusion of extrinsic value and vice versa, or, alternatively are inclined to argue that art has both intrinsic and extrinsic value.[100] Of course, artistic value is not exhausted by these definitions. In fact, the theories of the artistic or aesthetic value are numerous and new ones are constantly proposed. To refer to just a few, many emphasise the value of the emotional response to a work (Feagin 1996; Walton 1990) while others speak of art-historical value —

[95] Stecker, Robert. *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: An Introduction*, ibid., 2010, p. 226. In Stecker's viewpoint, it has to be shown that instrumental value is no part of the artistic value of a work in order to maintain that aesthetic value adequately captures artistic value.
[96] Stecker, Robert. *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: An Introduction*, ibid., 2010, p. 222.
[97] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*, ibid., 2016, p. 193.
[98] Kieran, Matthew. "The Value of Art" in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes. 3rd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 290.
[99] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 194.
[100] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 195. According to Davies, it's plausible to think that art can be a source of pleasurable experience and so, a form of intrinsic value, and in addition, it can provide information that is useful for helping us to navigate and comprehend the wider world.

the value of a work's contribution to the development of art, an artform, a genre, or an oeuvre (Goldman 1995; Levinson 1996b).[101] However, it is still the case that there is no settled methodology for constructing a theory of value remains and so, how to think about values at all has become one of the standing, open issues of both aesthetics and ethics. All things considered, within the broad context of the aesthetic, the attempts to define art had further implications for the claims about art's value. Some philosophers have thought that analyzing what makes art valuable, namely whether there are intrinsic or extrinsic valuable features in art, is clearly connected to what art is, and namely to the way art will be defined. However, others differ by denying that there is any essential connection between art's nature and its value. In this respect, the first treat the classification of art as evaluative whereas the second as descriptive. According to Davies, "Descriptive theories allow for the possibility of bad art that is produced without any failure in the execution of the artist's intentions."[102] An example of the first view is aesthetic functionalism which proposes a connection between the analysis of art's value and the project of definition.[103] An example of the second is the institutional theory – something is an artwork if it is an artifact of a kind created by an artist to be presented to an artworld public.[104]

Overall, all the above and further related queries fall under the concept of the aesthetic and subsequently, of art as intimately linked to it. But, with these preliminaries in mind, we can thus allow the discussion of artistic value in relation to ethical value to proceed without first settling or even referring to all the issues raised. To conclude, Gaut's observation seems to offer an appropriate ending as well as an introduction to the following discussion, in the

[101] Stecker, Robert. "Value in Art" ibid., 2010, p. 318.
[102] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 196.
[103] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 195-6. Aesthetic functionalism is the view that something is art if it is intended to provide the person who contemplates it for its own sake with an aesthetic experience of significant magnitude on the basis of an appreciation of its aesthetic features. It should be noted that, although both Tolstoy's view about art and aesthetic functionalism consider art as evaluative, aesthetic functionalism is not committed to Tolstoy's view that only good art qualifies as art. Instead, it allows for the possibility that something is art despite being an aesthetic failure, because its artist intended it to be better than it turned out to be. Aesthetic functionalism proposes a connection between the analysis of art's value and the definition of its nature by claiming that "the artist's intention mentioned in the definition is supposed to be the intention to create a work with sufficient aesthetic value to warrant an aesthetic experience that is valuable because of its significant magnitude."
[104] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 196. Davies clarifies that, "of course, proponents of descriptive definitions do not deny that much art is valuable and that its value is of extreme importance. Their point is that the tasks of defining art's nature and of analyzing its value are independent."

second section of this thesis. As Gaut remarks: “With these distinctions between broader and narrower usages of each term in place, an immediate point we can note is that autonomists, such as Beardsley, have tended to focus on the aesthetic in the narrower sense and its relation to morality, and have argued against any connection between the two. In contrast, supporters of ethical criticism, such as Booth, have tended to focus on both the aesthetic and the ethical in the broader senses of the terms, and have argued for a connection between the two.”[105] We will now turn to the arguments developed in the course of this debate.

[105] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 48.

Aesthetics and Ethics
The 20th century: the recent discussion

Some of the general questions entailed by the broad issue of artistic value, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, are the following: *What is it for something to be valuable as art?* or *Why is good art important?* Moving further on to the more specific issue of the relation between art and morality, we encounter questions such as: Can art have moral value, and if so, is such value relevant to its assessment as art? By extension, we could ask if it is possible for art to be aesthetically excellent and yet morally depraved. An attempt to answer the latter questions would probably lead the discussion even further, namely, to a focus on whether immorality in the content of an artwork (more often a literary work) should sometimes count as an artistic, not just a moral defect. Stephen Davies formulates the last question in a way which brings the subject straight to the point: Should a work's immorality undermine its claims to artistic merit?[106]

Over the years, there have been several plausible, yet contending answers to the questions above. Briefly construed, there are three the prominent solutions: First, *Autonomism* (or *Aestheticism*) which basically holds that ethical assessment is irrelevant to aesthetic assessment. Second, *Moralism* (or *Ethicism*) which holds that works of art are *always* aesthetically bad in virtue of their ethical flaws. And third, *Contextualism* (or *Immoralism*) which holds that works of art are *sometimes* aesthetically good in virtue of their ethical flaws and *sometimes* aesthetically bad in virtue of them. Both Moralism and Contextualism deny Autonomism's claim of irrelevance, but differ as to how the ethical and the aesthetic are inter-related.[107] In terms of value relation, Moralism and Immoralism support value interaction, while Autonomism claims that the two types of value are independent of each other and therefore do not interact.[108]

Before we enter this discussion, it is useful to mention some examples of cases in which artistic and moral values intersect as well as interact. In the first case, a person's recognition

[106] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 214.
[107] Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics". ibid., 2013, p. 395.
[108] Mc Gregor, Rafe. "Moderate Autonomism Revisited". *Ethical Perspectives* 20/3 (September 2013): pp. 403-426 (404).

of the moral virtues and vices of the characters in a story, and of the attitude projected in the work toward these, is indicative of the person's understanding of the work. As Stephen Davies argues, "these moral judgements count toward the reliability of a person's assessment of the work's artistic value."[109] Apart from an intersection between them, artistic and moral values could interact in two ways: on the one hand, immoral actions can be associated with the creation and presentation of artworks without affecting the identity and content of these works. That is, "knowledge of contextual features can sometimes inhibit, color or skew our consideration of the artwork, even if they should not count in its artistic evaluation."[110] On the other hand, there are cases in which the immorality is central to the artwork's identity and content. According to Davies, "an artwork can be created to have this content, it can inherit it through the process of production, or it can receive it through the manner in which it is instanced."[111] With these remarks, we can now address the question of whether ethical features should sometimes bear on the artistic value of a work of art.

[109] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 213. Davies makes a similar point also in the case of emotional expression in art; As he claims, "a person's emotional reaction to a work of art can reveal his comprehension of it." For Davies, the expression of emotion in art is a major source of value, and this value comes in various forms. In addition, the imaginative and emotional engagement is considered to be a means to further rewards – for instance, "a work might educate us about the real world through the manner in which it directs our feelings and attitudes, or, the absorption in the work provides a welcome release from cares and concerns of the real world." (p. 133).

[110] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 213. Davies mentions certain examples of these cases. As he assumes, a film producer might cheat the cast and crew of their wages at the end of the shoot, or a statue might be stolen. Another case is that in which, when a forgery is detected, the judgement regarding the work is revised. Or, then, cases that can have an influence on how an artwork is approached such as, if a painter murdered her model shortly after she finished her portrait. Davies underlines that in all these examples the point is not about immorality as such since in these cases, "it is not relevant to the artistic evaluation of these works. Instead, the effect of immorality leads to a reconsideration of the work – in the light of the new information for instance, in the case of forgery."

[111] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 214. Davies explains that, an example of the first case is a fictional story featuring rape, torture, murder and cannibalism. An example of the second is a movie recording real acts of rape, murder, and the like, instead of fictional representations of such acts. While the third case is illustrated by a performer who cheats his audience, as when a classical musician mimes to a CD at what is represented as a live performance.

(Moderate) Autonomism

Autonomism appeared in a period when, as noted, the ethical criticism of art – already from the time of Plato and until the time of Hume, Kant and later, Tolstoy – was considered unexceptionable. In fact, as the literary critic Wayne Booth has noted, up to the end of the 19th century, the legitimacy of ethical criticism of art was mainly taken as a given. In his words, "Until the late 19th century, everyone took for granted that a major task of any critic is to appraise the ethical value of works of art, and they saw no reason to disguise that ethical interest under ostensibly neutral terms like 'significant form' or 'aesthetic integrity'."[112] This defense of ethical criticism in art which underlies Booth's claim, is diametrically opposed to the basic claims of autonomism. Yet, autonomists reacted to these ethically motivated views, by expressing strong disagreement to the commonly accepted ethical criticism of art. Instead, autonomism defended the autonomy of art, holding that art is intrinsically valuable, without being affected by external purposes, i.e. moral considerations. In this respect, the immorality of an artwork's content is never relevant to its artistic evaluation.[113] One of the main facts which incited the claims of autonomism was that it could not become obvious why or how the depiction of immorality could count as an artistic defect; for, according to autonomists, there were cases – for instance, a novel featuring cannibalism and torture – in which the representation or description of immorality would certainly not be considered an artistic defect.

The roots of autonomism – or sophisticated aestheticism as it is sometimes called – are already found in Oscar Wilde's works. In the preface of *The picture of Dorian Gray* he wrote: "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all."[114] In many respects, the ideas expressed in the *Preface* oriented readers towards appreciating the aesthetic quality of the novel, yet without making moral judgements on it.

[112] Booth, Wayne. *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*. ibid., 1988, p. 25. In his book, Booth explains why ethical criticism fell out of favour and demonstrates the difficulties which caused this *decline of faith*. (p. 36) Also, he addresses the inherent dangers of the excesses of ethical criticism, including censorship and proposes arguments as to why an ethical appraisal is still necessary and ways in which it might be done well.
[113] Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art*. ibid., 2016, p. 214.
[114] Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Edited by Joseph Bristow. *Oxford World's Classics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 3. In many ways, the epigrams included in Wilde's "Preface" revived on his own terms the controversy about art and morality. *Introduction*, p. xxvi.

Noël Carroll reconstructs the argument entailed by Wilde's statement, which when stated less elliptically would seem to be this:

1. If artworks can be evaluated morally, then they must be the kinds of things that can bear moral properties, namely, persons or person-like entities to whom the relevant mental properties apply.
2. Artworks are not the kinds of things that can bear moral properties; they are not persons or person-like entities to whom the relevant mental properties apply.
3. Therefore, artworks cannot be evaluated morally.[115]

Thus, Oscar Wilde was an advocate of art's independence from practical matters. Accordingly, autonomism in art requires that a work of art is not to be evaluated in terms of its moral character. For, "art and ethics are autonomous realms of value and, thus, criteria from the ethical realm should not be imported to evaluate the aesthetic realm."[116] Art aims, first and foremost, at being absorbing and in this way, autonomism is led to its famous conclusion that *art is valuable for its own sake*.[117]

[115] Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 191. With reference to Wilde's claim, Carroll responds that, "However, inasmuch as writing is involved in the construction and expression of points of view, it may be susceptible to moral evaluation. Moreover, artworks other than literary fictions also possess points of view." (p. 192) Carroll thinks of Wilde's claim as representative of a position called the ontological argument, already identified by Devereaux (2001).

[116] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". ibid., 2000, p. 351.

[117] The phrase "L'art pour l'art" was first used by Benjamin Constant, in his *Journal intime* (February 10, 1804; not published until 1895), and in a context that connected the theory with Kant. Baudelaire, for example, can be placed in some respects with the *art for art's sake* group. He wrote that the idea of utility is "the most hostile in the world to the idea of beauty" (Introduction to the *Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires*, Oeuvres Complètes, VII [1933], xiv). He defended the importance of pure art, free from moral limitations, and his flowers of evil symbolize beauty's independence of, and superiority to, all other considerations. Yet he attacked "the childish utopianism of the *art for art's sake* school, in ruling out morals" (see *L'Art Romantique* [1869], in Oeuvres complètes II [1925], 184). Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present*. ibid., 1966, p. 285-6. The central core of truth in this doctrine can be summarized in the following way: "aesthetic values depend on properties which are internal to the work of art, on account of which it is valued for its own sake. In other words, aesthetic merit, thus narrowly defined, is a type of final value but clearly distinguishable from all other final values such as knowledge for its own sake, the love of God, and doing one's duty. It is, then, a necessary condition of a work's being valued for its own sake that it be valued on account of its intrinsic properties and not on its relationship to anything external, such as nature, moral and political systems, audience response, and so on." Whewell, David. "Aestheticism" in *A Companion to Aesthetics – Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* edited by Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009, p. 129.

In 1912, Edward Bullough, a British aesthetician argued that aesthetic experience involved the adoption of *psychical distance*, as he called it, which is initially put forward as a variant of the disinterested attitude. From an aestheticist point of view, Bullough regarded under- and over-distanced works as aesthetically flawed.[118] This aesthetic theory, albeit developed in rather different ways, remained prominent until after 1950 and constituted the basis on which the autonomist conception in art was entrenched. Monroe Beardsley continued this aesthetic tradition and is in fact considered to be one of the most important proponents of Aestheticism. As he alleges, *this view has the merit of setting the issues in the starkest light*.[119] In general, Beardsley regarded reference to the circumstances of the work's genesis as irrelevant to its appreciation. In his definition, aestheticism is "the view that aesthetic objects are not subject to moral judgements, that only aesthetic categories can be, or ought to be, applied to them. Not because they are *objects*, rather than *acts*, but because, according to the view we are now considering, the side effects of aesthetic objects, if any, need not be taken into account."[120] In fact, there are two forms of Aestheticism or Autonomism: an extreme and a moderate version.[121]

An extreme version of autonomism would hold that art is a strictly autonomous realm of practice and thus, in Gaut's words, "it makes no sense to morally evaluate works of art, in the same way that it makes no sense to morally evaluate numbers."[122] In this radical viewpoint, art is considered a unique form of activity with its own purposes and criteria of evaluation. From this perspective, "Autonomism is an attractive doctrine for anyone who approaches the question of the nature of art with essentialist biases, that is, with the expectation that everything we call art will share a uniquely common characteristic, one that pertains

[118] As Bullough claims, "We achieve psychical distance when we put a phenomenon 'out of gear with' practical concerns and personal ends which enables us to perceive the phenomenally objective features it possesses" (1912: 89). Bullough's famous example is a fog at sea that, from a practical perspective, is both inconvenient in creating delays and dangerous in increasing the likelihood of a collision. Davies, Stephen, Stecker, Robert. "Twentieth-century Anglo-American aesthetics" ibid., 2009, p. 64.

[119] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1958, p. 561.

[120] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 561. In his discussion of the aesthetic and the ethical, Beardsley uses the term "moral" in a broad but quite usual sense. As he holds, "To call an action 'right' is a moral judgment in a narrow sense; Thus, to make a moral judgement of an aesthetic object is to point out some side effect upon human conduct, and to judge that side effect as good or bad: i.e., 'This novel is subversive', 'This painting is pornographic', and so on." (p. 560).

[121] This distinction is indicated by Monroe Beardsley as well as Noël Carroll.

[122] Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics". ibid., 2013, p. 395.

distinctively to all and only art", as Carroll indicates.[123] To the same extent, artworks are not the kinds of things which can possess ethical qualities, either ethical merits or flaws. In fact, artworks cannot possess any intrinsic ethical properties at all: *it makes no sense to evaluate artworks as ethically good or bad (though they may have good or bad consequences)*.[124] Hence, the ethical criticism of art is always inappropriate or irrelevant to its artistic evaluation. Art is valuable for its own sake and has its own grounds for assessment. In Carroll's words, "As far as radical autonomism is concerned, the ethical evaluation of artworks is always conceptually confused."[125]

Clive Bell was a well-known radical autonomist. He proposed a return to basic personal experience of authentic works of art, namely, experience of one characteristic type evoked by art from primitives to Post-Impressionists. In his book *Art* (1914), he took as basic a distinctive *kind of emotion*, the "aesthetic emotion," and a quality *common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke it*. In visual art – Bell's main concern – this quality must arise from certain "forms and relations of forms," "relations and combinations of lines and colours." Why these arouse aesthetic emotion we do not know: we have to postulate "unknown and mysterious laws" whereby particular forms constitute for us "significant form," as Bell famously labels it.[126] Not surprisingly, Bell believed that art is the most direct and potent means to good because it can *affect the mind more immediately*. And it was in that fact alone, that the tremendous importance of art lay. For Bell, to pronounce anything a work of art, is to make a momentous moral judgment – "It is to credit an object with being so direct and powerful a means to good that we need not trouble ourselves about any other of its possible consequences." Hence, he draws a distinction between the different sorts of value, the aesthetic and the ethical and fervently indicates that *moral judgments about the value of*

[123] Carroll, Noël. "Art, Narrative and Moral Understanding" in *Aesthetics and Ethics – Essays at the Intersection* edited by Jerrold Levinson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 134. As Carroll explains further, "this is the card that Clive Bell plays when he announces that unless we can identify such a common, uniquely defining feature for art, then when we use the concept, we gibber." For Bell's claim, see: Bell, Clive. *Art*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1913, p. 7.
[124] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 51.
[125] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". ibid., 2000, p. 360.
[126] Hepburn, Ronald. "Bell, Clive" in *A Companion to Aesthetics – Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* edited by Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009, p. 172.

particular works of art have nothing to do with their artistic value.[127] To this effect, the radical autonomist claims that works of art are never appropriate objects of moral criticism. Accordingly, the moral character of a work is irrelevant since the content of a work is also irrelevant to its value as art. Rather, what matters is the work's formal features, that is, solely its artistic qualities. As Bell argues: "Paradoxical as it may seem, the only relevant qualities in a work of art, judged as art, are artistic qualities: judged as a means to good, no other qualities are worth considering; for there are no qualities of greater moral value than artistic qualities, since there is no greater means to good than art."[128] In the same spirit Bell states, "Let the moralist make a judgment about art as a whole, let him assign it what he considers its proper place amongst means to good, but in aesthetic judgments, in judgments between members of the same class, in judgments between works of art considered as art, let him hold his tongue."[129]

Radical autonomists could mostly point to certain kinds of artworks, such as abstract painting and absolute music (that is, music without words or programme), to support their case since such works seem resistant to ethical assessment in terms of their intrinsic qualities.[130] But even if the autonomist is correct about abstract art and absolute music, this would not, of course, establish the broader claim that no artworks are susceptible to ethical analysis.[131]

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[127] Bell, Clive. *Art*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1913, p. 115.

[128] Bell, Clive. *Art*. ibid., 1913, p. 117. Bell begins his discussion on the relation of art to ethics by asking *whether art is either good in itself or a means to good* (p. 107). Influenced by Mr. G. E. Moore's ethical theory as described in detail in his *Principia Ethica* (1903), Bell argues that pleasure is not the sole good because 'goodness' is a quality, distinct from pleasure; in addition, he distinguishes between good as an end and good as a means and traces an intrinsic value to anything which has a mind since, according to Bell, *one's very conceptions provoke states of mind and thus acquire value as means* (p. 112). He then turns to art by suggesting that "it is always the end in view that gives value to action; and, ultimately, the end of all good actions must be to create or encourage or make possible good states of mind. Therefore, inciting people to good actions by means of edifying images is a respectable trade and a roundabout means to good." (p. 115) In these respects, there is no special problem, for Bell, in relating the values of art and the values of morality. In fulfilling its proper task of facilitating aesthetic experience, an intrinsically excellent state of mind, art ministers directly to one of the fundamental forms of goodness. Hepburn, Ronald. "Bell, Clive" ibid., 2009, p. 172.

[129] Bell, Clive. *Art*. ibid., 1913, p. 116.

[130] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 67. Gaut observes that one might morally criticize these two forms of art as a waste of resources or as having bad effects on people; but these are appeals to the economic preconditions or psychological, empirical consequences of works, not to their intrinsic moral qualities.

[131] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 67. Gaut brings the examples of Rembrandt's and Drost's treatments of *Bathsheba* which are properly subject to ethical scrutiny. The story of Bathsheba is related in the Bible in 2 Samuel 11, and its consequences unfurled in 2 Samuel 12. It begins thus: "And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and enquired after the woman." David discovered her to be Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and sent his messengers

Under this perspective, strong objections soon appeared since it became evident that radical autonomism was too restrictive to accommodate certain cases of art. In fact, to understand a work of art adequately, one may need to consider it from more than one aspect, that is, the aesthetic standpoint might not be the only possible standpoint from which one can approach a work of art.[132] To illustrate this point, Noël Carroll brings the example of religious art, as well as most of what is historically regarded as art which had purposes other than the promotion of aesthetic experience, even if the promotion of aesthetic experience was among its various purposes.[133] In this case, "to refuse to take account of that religious aspect, on the grounds that it is aesthetically irrelevant – something a radical autonomist would propose – would be to diminish rather than to enrich one's appreciation, and would be a kind of aesthetic puritanism", as David Whewell indicates.[134] There are in fact artworks which we consider to be artistically good despite the inappropriateness of their moral character.

To this extent, a less radical but still autonomist conception is offered by Monroe Beardsley. The claim is known as (sophisticated) aestheticism. It is consistent with such a view to recognise that the moral character of a work may affect its aesthetic character but that there is no *internal* relation between its moral character and its value as art. What matters is whether works of art artfully develop the imagery, characters, story, and theme concerned in ways we find to be beautiful.[135] In a discussion of the views regarding the moral aspect of art as well as the relation between the moral and the aesthetic, Beardsley proposes aestheticism and distinguishes two main lines of argument offered in support of this view indicating further that the arguments nevertheless, lead to partly incompatible conclusions. The first line of

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to her, who took her, and David slept with her. She conceived a child by him, and David arranged that her husband, a soldier in his army, be sent into the most dangerous part of the battle to be allowed there to die. The details of the story pile up the sense of moral outrage: David commanded Uriah to return from the battle in order to get him to sleep with his wife who was pregnant by David, so as to cover up the adultery. Uriah refused to return to the comforts of his own home while his comrades at arms were still in tents on the battlefield; instead he remained with David's servants at the king's door. It was this act of sensitivity and loyalty that sealed his fate. David got Uriah himself to carry to Joab, David's general, the letter that effectively condemned Uriah to death. The consequences of David's sin were dire: though David married Bathsheba, God was angry, and, despite David's fasting and contrition, the child born to them died. (p. 17)

[132] As previously noted, the same is also indicated by the existence of a wide diversity of theories about the nature and purpose of art – all illuminating different aspects of art.

[133] Carroll, Noël. "Architecture, Art and Moderate Moralism". *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 52 (2016): pp. 68-78 (71).

[134] Whewell, David. "Aestheticism" ibid., 2009, p. 130.

[135] Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality" in the *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* edited by Jerrold Levinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 453.

argument – which Beardsley calls *the argument from Innocuousness* – is based upon a firm optimism about the potentialities of aesthetic education. Beginning from the supposition that some aesthetic objects can occasionally cause unfortunate effects, Beardsley brings examples of movies as well as poetry such as the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám of Nisháp*úr which may convert people to fatalism as well as the French motion picture *Rififi* which showed in great detail how to safely commit a jewellery shop robbery; the movie was so instructive that it had to be withdrawn because it quadrupled the rate of local robberies. Beardsley argues that "literature is or can be made harmless and it may be just the unintelligent education in the arts so often given, with the emphasis on inspiring messages and moral uplift, that encourages people to confuse literature with nonliterary discourse and try to put it into practice, even when it is immoral." To this extent, he suggests that when we are considering aesthetic objects, we can ignore all their supposed side effects and consider only their aesthetic value. In other words, "the critic's concern is not with art for the sake of citizenship or patriotism or mysticism, or anything else, but with *Art for Art's Sake* only."[136]

The second line of argumentation is called the *argument from Aesthetic Primacy*. Beardsley finds it is in clear connection with a Psychological Definition of value and as he puts it, "this argument starts from a different premise, namely, it presupposes that there *are* side effects of aesthetic objects, and even serious and lasting and unpreventable ones, but they are still completely separable from aesthetic value – even if there is a connection, this is an inverse one: *the higher the aesthetic value, the more likely the object to be rigorous, shocking* and so on."[137] The second argument claims that there is an end in itself, an intrinsic good, and that aesthetic experience itself is that good. "If this is true, then the undesirable side effects of art cannot really matter. They are inconveniences we have to put up with for the sake of the best, but, no matter how regrettable, they can never outweigh the aesthetic value of a really good aesthetic object."[138] Beardsley explains his claim by arguing that the artist always explores and invents new perspectives, and thus, "if what he makes is good, it will be the enemy of

[136] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 562.
[137] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 562.
[138] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 563. Beardsley points to George Moore for an example of this conclusion. See George Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man*, New York: Brentano's, p. 144-45.

some established good that is not quite as good."[139] Concluding his account, Beardsley admits that in its second form, Aestheticism is a pure and single-minded view which maintains the supreme value of art over everything else.[140]

However, in one sense, both Beardsley's and Bell's claims are 'radical' by proscribing the moral evaluation of art. In recent years, a less radical and more plausible conception of the relationship between moral and aesthetic evaluation resulted in the adoption of a moderate version of autonomism. In contrast to radical autonomism, moderate autonomism acknowledges the existence of moral elements in artworks, but claims that the ultimate evaluation results from aesthetic criteria.[141] In other words, "the moderate autonomist accepts the propriety of moral evaluation while denying that it has an effect on aesthetic evaluation."[142] More specifically, this view holds that works of art can be morally evaluated and thus, moral evaluation of artworks is possible but is never to be confused with aesthetic evaluation; the ethical flaws or merits are never aesthetic flaws or merits in the works of art.

According to Anderson and Dean, this version of autonomism is moderate because, although it allows the moral discussion and evaluation of artworks, or at least some artworks, to be coherent and appropriate, it remains committed to the view that the aesthetic dimension of the artwork is autonomous with regard to other dimensions, such as the moral dimension.[143] So, in this respect moderate autonomism makes a somewhat distinct claim from aestheticism, which, despite recognising other side effects of artworks, nevertheless suggests that we should ignore them and consider solely their aesthetic, that is, artistic value. Unlike the more radical forms of autonomism, the moderate autonomist can make moral judgements of art without being inconsistent. Moral judgements of artworks are not then prohibited. In making

[139] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 563.
[140] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 563.
[141] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". *British Journal of Aesthetics* 38/2 (April 1998): pp. 150-166 (152).
[142] McGregor, Rafe. "Moderate Autonomism Revisited". ibid., 2013, p. 425. Rafe McGregor is a moderate autonomist and proposes an argument in favour which he calls 'the critical argument' to distinguish it from the 'empirical argument' of James C. Anderson and Jeffrey T. Dean, and the 'no-error argument' of James Harold. To complete his argument, McGregor employs John Gibson's distinction between normative and informative values and concludes that moderate autonomism provides the most compelling solution to the debate between morality and art, in particular, literature.
[143] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 231.

such an evaluation, however, "the judge is considering the moral value of the work not its value qua art."[144] Within this framework, moral criticism of works of art is legitimate, as is, of course, aesthetic criticism. In some instances, the legitimate aesthetic criticism of a work can surround and include aspects of the moral subject matter of a work, i.e. the moral content of a work can contribute to or detract from the aesthetic aspects of a work. But, as a moderate autonomist would claim, whatever the ethical content may be, art's influence on its audience remains totally harmless, if not ameliorative. Anderson and Dean clarify that in contrast to moralistic views (especially those of Gaut and Carroll), in moderate autonomism "it is never the moral component of the criticism as such that diminishes or strengthens the value of an artwork qua artwork. In short, both sorts of criticism are appropriate to works of art but the categories of moral and aesthetic criticism always remain conceptually distinct."[145]

In the light of moderate autonomism, artworks may in fact have properties other than aesthetic properties – i.e., properties that give rise to aesthetic experiences – but "the aesthetic dimension of the putative artwork is always categorically distinct from the other dimensions of the artwork, whether they be utilitarian, moral, religious, political, cognitive, and so forth. Operationally though, this is taken to entail that, for example, a moral defect in an artwork is never an aesthetic defect nor does a moral virtue in an artwork ever add to the aesthetic quality of the art-work, properly so-called."[146] Thus, just as in its radical form, so too in moderate autonomism, the ethical has nothing to do with the aesthetic. "When it seems that ethical flaws in works are aesthetically relevant, it is in fact not their ethical badness, but some other features of the expression of these flaws that is relevant."[147] It follows then, according to the moderate autonomist, that 'an artwork may invite an audience to entertain a defective moral perspective and this will not detract from its aesthetic value'.[148]

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[144] Mc Gregor, Rafe. "Moderate Autonomism Revisited". ibid., 2013, p. 419.

[145] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 152. Anderson and Dean argue that 'understanding moral and aesthetic criticism as distinct helps us to better comprehend the sort of perplexity one experiences when confronted by works in which these sorts of values are at odds with one another'.

[146] Carroll, Noël. "Architecture, Art and Moderate Moralism", ibid., 2016, p. 71.

[147] Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics". ibid., 2013, p. 395.

[148] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 153. It is this claim which Noël Carroll thinks it is false and argues against it. He refers to Brett Easton Ellis' novel, *American Psycho*, and as he says, since *American Psycho* failed on its own terms— "failed, that is, to elicit the kind of aesthetic response is was designed to elicit—the novel can be said to be aesthetically defective; and because this defect is attributable to a flawed moral understanding—the supposition that graphic serial murders could be funny—it would appear "that sometimes a moral flaw in a work can count against the work aesthetically. Therefore, moderate autonomism seems false." See Carroll, Noël "Moderate Moralism", p. 233.

Matthew Kieran provides further clarification to the view and articulates moderate autonomism's general claim in the following way: "a work's moral character affects its artistic value, in an indirect manner, if and only if it either mars or promotes a work's aesthetically valuable features, such as its coherence, complexity, intensity, or quality of dramatic development."[149] According to Kieran, the general line of this argument lies in a traditional tendency, stemming from Kant, "to talk of the intrinsic value of art, by which the pleasures of art should be conceived as being of a very distinct kind: aesthetic ones."[150] The appreciation of an artwork involves delighting in the way in which the form of the work is aesthetically artful, that is to say, we derive pleasure from attending to how artfully the content of a work is conveyed. So, the content of a work is relevant to a work's value as art, but only as an indirect side effect.[151] There are no internal relations amongst these aspects. That being the case, the immorality of an artwork's content is never relevant to its artistic evaluation. Hence, as Kieran explains, "the aesthetic value of an artwork, by virtue of the interrelations between its formal aspects and thematic content, inheres in its unity, complexity and intensity."[152]

To sum up the difference between the two main forms of autonomism, radical autonomists claim that the ethical assessment of artworks is irrelevant to their aesthetic assessment, because here 'ethical assessment cannot get off the ground at all'.[153] For radical autonomists, artworks are not the kind of things that can possess ethical qualities. In contrast, moderate autonomism holds that ethical assessment of artworks *is* possible, since artworks can and do possess ethical qualities. However, the moderate autonomist holds that these ethical merits or demerits are irrelevant to the works' aesthetic merit or demerit.[154]

What is thus asserted from both versions of autonomism, radical and moderate, is that art has its own value and therefore it should not be judged or criticised by other forms of value, extrinsic to art, such as morality. Art is valuable in and for its own sake while the goodness of

[149] Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010, p. 453.
[150] Kieran, Matthew, "The Value of Art", ibid., 2013, p. 291. As he says, "Just as we admire the line, colors and complexity of form in nature – its aesthetic qualities – so too in art."
[151] Kieran, Matthew, "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value", ibid., 2006, p. 131. For the same opinion, see Lamarque (1995) and Anderson and Dean (1998).
[152] Kieran, Matthew. "The Value of Art". ibid., 2013, p. 292.
[153] Gaut, Berys, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, ibid., 2007, p. 51.
[154] Gaut, Berys, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, ibid., 2007, p. 51-2.

an artwork resides exclusively in aesthetic properties. It is consistent with such a view to recognise that the moral character of a work may affect its aesthetic character, hence a didactic work may be clumsy and artless, but there is no internal relation between its moral character and its value as art. "What a work makes fictional, what its literary qualities are, and the nature of its moral character are conceptually distinct, though the last explains why certain kinds of work, such as tragedy, are taken so seriously."[155] Kieran recognises certain virtues to an account like this; first, *it seems to capture why the value of an artwork is not reducible to its message*. Two artworks may have exactly the same message and one of them, by virtue of its poetic workings, be of the highest value as art. And second, "it seems that aestheticism enables us to *explain*, by emphasising the need to distinguish a work's fictive, cognitive and aesthetic aspects, *why we can appreciate as art, works whose content we disagree with vehemently,*" as he indicates.[156]

In fact, there can be several reasons why someone would consent to moderate autonomism; one argument in favour is that there are artworks which are considered flawed, that is, they are ethically incorrect or even deeply repellent, yet they are considered good or even great artworks. So, the ethical dimension cannot be aesthetically relevant.[157] Or then, one argument which actually prepared the ground for autonomism is the one which takes notice of the fact that much art has nothing whatsoever to do with questions of morality. In this line of thought, if these artworks have value, it must be other than ethical value and thus, they need to be assessed in terms of criteria other than ethical criteria. Furthermore, whatever we identify as the value of art should be such that every artwork can be assessed in accordance with it. But since not all art concerns ethical matters, the standard cannot be ethical. Noël Carroll calls this kind of argumentation the "common denominator argument" and as he explains, the argument presupposes that there must be a single scale of evaluation that applies to all artworks.[158]

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[155] Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010, p. 453.
[156] Kieran, Matthew. "The Value of Art". ibid., 2013, p. 292.
[157] Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics". ibid., 2013, p. 396. Gaut cites Gass and Posner at this point. See further, Gass, W. "Goodness Knows Nothing of Beauty: On the Distance Between Morality and Art" in J. Fisher (ed.) *Reflecting on Art.* CA: Mayfield, Mountain View, 1993; and Posner, R. "Against Ethical Criticism" *Philosophy and Literature* 21 (1997): pp. 1–27.
[158] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 36/3 Oxford University Press (July 1996): pp. 223-238 (226). To illustrate this point, Carroll mentions the examples of pure orchestral music as well as some abstract visual designs and decorations which may count as art but, promote no ethical viewpoint and so,

Thus, the main support for autonomism has come from formalism which in philosophical aesthetics denotes a position in the nature of art.[159] Formalists such as Monroe Beardsley and Clive Bell have generally held that art is form; that there had to be an aesthetic attitude which we adopt when we assess artworks aesthetically and which is defined by reference to those features of works of art at which it is directed, i.e. the significant form of an artwork. According to formalists, "we must appreciate artworks in terms of their purely formal relationships, divorced from the claims and concepts of daily life."[160] A precise account of formalism is offered by Noël Carroll; "anything x is an artwork if and only if x possesses significant form. The possession of significant form is a necessary condition for status as an artwork: that is, something is an artwork only if it possesses significant form. And significant form is a sufficient condition for status as an artwork: if something possesses significant form, then it is an artwork."[161] Accordingly, Daniel Jacobson offers a list of the doctrines associated with formalism. Its central tenets are:

1. Bifurcation: The sharp and invidious distinction between Form, which is held to be aesthetically relevant, and Content, which is not.
2. Aesthetic Hedonism: The identification of a sui generis aesthetic emotion, a type of pleasure which is a response to pure beauty, conceived as a formal property.
3. Purification: The claim of a historical progression toward, or an evaluative bias in favor of, the purification of each artistic medium to its own unique essence.
4. Autonomism: The thesis that the "ulterior" values of art, such as its moral and cognitive value, are irrelevant to its aesthetic value.
5. Art for Art's Sake: The view that art should be produced and consumed solely for its aesthetic value, rather than for any ulterior purpose, such as ethical improvement.[162]

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are not susceptible to ethical evaluation. Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". ibid., 2000, p. 352.

[159] According to Noël Carroll, the term "formalism" can refer to many different things. In art criticism, it has been used to refer to the important writings of Clement Greenberg (1961) as well as M.C. Beardsley; in literary history, it has been associated with the influential school of Russian formalism; and in art history it has been used to refer to the writings of Alois Riegl (1992) and Heinrich Wolfflin (1950). Carroll, Noël. "Formalism" in T*he Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes. 3rd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 87.

[160] Carroll, Noël. "Formalism". ibid., 2013, p. 94.

[161] Carroll, Noël. "Formalism". ibid., 2013, p. 89.

[162] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". *Philosophical Topics* 25/1 *Aesthetics*. University of Arkansas Press (spring 1997): pp. 155-199 (157). Jacobson notes that he speaks of 'formalism' in an expansive way, without attempting to set any requirements as to how much of the program one must embrace in order to count as a formalist. As Jacobson remarks further, "it is widely acknowledged that most formalists deviate in their actual artistic and critical practices from the severity of their theoretical commitments."

In the first half of the 20th century, Clive Bell introduces a formalistic position with reference to fine art (notably painting and sculpture) in his work *Art* (1913). Bell was heavily influenced by the developments in the visual arts. As he claims, the one quality common to all works of visual art is essentially, significant form, that is, "lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms which stir our aesthetic emotions."[163] Bell thinks that the primary function of art which is also unique to it, is the exhibition of this significant form, a necessary and sufficient criterion of art status. He further rejects the traditional view of art as an imitation of nature referring to exact representation as not bad, but indifferent.[164] In Bell's theory, whether or not an artwork possesses representational content is always strictly irrelevant to its status as an artwork. As he claims, "the representative element in an artwork may or may not be harmful; always it is irrelevant. For, to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions. Art transports us from the world of man's activity to a world of aesthetic exaltation."[165] In this respect, an artwork which lacks significant form would not be an artwork at all. Moreover, for this very reason, Bell's theory has no place for bad art, since the defining feature of art is also its most important good-making feature.[166]

Contrary to Bell, Beardsley's formalistic approach proposes a distinction between "form" and "content" in each art.[167] In a brief outline of his view, an artwork is both its form and content and if any of these is changed, the artwork will not remain the same. As Beardsley observes, "if different notes or colors are substituted, or if the music is speeded up or the color areas are rearranged—that particular quality will change or disappear."[168] Beardsley calls *form-statements* "those statements that describe internal relations among the elements and

[163] Bell, Clive. *Art*. ibid., 1913, p. 8.
[164] Bell, Clive. Art. ibid., 1913, p. 23.
[165] Bell, Clive. *Art*. ibid., 1913, p. 8. A common criticism of Bell's attempt to define art is that it is circular. He says that art is significant form and this is to be understood as form that creates a certain experience in its audience, the aesthetic emotion, but 'reference to this emotion is not self-explanatory'. "The aesthetic emotion, unlike fear and anger, is not a psychological state that everyone recognises but rather, Bell tends, to explicate the relevant emotion as that which is caused by significant form." As Davies and Stecker claim, "this clearly does not help." Davies, Stephen, Stecker, Robert. "Twentieth-century Anglo-American aesthetics" ibid., 2009, p. 63.
[166] Davies, Stephen, Stecker, Robert. "Twentieth-century Anglo-American aesthetics" ibid., 2009, p. 63.
[167] Beardsley, Monroe, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, ibid., 1958, p. 298. Beardsley's formalistic aesthetic theory appeared in the second half of the 20th century and was influenced by the school of literary criticism known as *New Criticism*.
[168] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 168.

among the complexes within the object whereas *content-statements* are descriptions that are not form-statements."[169] In his account, if we adopt these definitions some of the familiar puzzles about form will disappear, or, as he says: "Can form be distinguished from content? Certainly it can, in the sense that we can talk about one without talking about the other. Are form and content connected? Certainly, they are connected since some of the relations that hold between two notes, say, depend on their qualities, and some of the qualities of a given color area in a given design depend on its relations to neighboring areas. Are form and content separable? Surely not, and it is a serious mistake to confuse distinguishability and separability."[170]

As might be expected, an objection to this latter view could easily arise considering that in most cases, our aesthetic interest is directed not just at the form of an artwork such as lines and colors, but also at how the artwork presents a certain subject matter – the ideas and attitudes it manifests toward its subject. Berys Gaut points to this fact by considering Picasso's great antiwar painting *Guernica*. He remarks that someone who reacted to it merely as a set of lines and colors in cubist style would be missing out on a central item of aesthetic interest: namely, how Picasso uses cubist fragmentation to convey something of the horror of war and fascism. From that, Gaut concludes, in opposition to autonomism that "our aesthetic interest is directed, in part, at the mode of presentation of subject matter; and the way it is presented can and often does manifest ethical attitudes."[171]

Matthew Kieran comments the same issue and puts forth the example of a representational work – Picasso's *Weeping Woman* which represents a particularly vicious form of grief. As he explains, in this case, the shaping is really important in a twofold manner: "it partly constitutes the content and the content guides the shaping." Yet, he draws attention to the fact that

[169] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 167.
[170] Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. ibid., 1958, p. 167.
[171] Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics". ibid., 2013, p. 396. For Gaut, "what matters for the ethical assessment of even a representational work is the attitude that the work manifests towards the characters and situations, which it represents, and the notion of an attitude should be construed in the broad sense of including both cognitive and affective states." He further explains that, "even for representational artworks, the object of ethical assessment is not as such a work's *content*, in one widely recognised sense of the term. It is quite possible for works to portray evil characters in a way that condemns them, as witness works ranging from Milton's treatment of Satan in Paradise Lost to any number of classic Westerns' treatment of the villains." Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, ibid., 2007, p. 68.

sophisticated aestheticists, such as Beardsley, recognise that form is not necessarily wholly independent of content but, from their viewpoint, the latter is considered a side effect of aesthetic objects which we do not need to consider when appreciating an artwork. Kieran makes a distinction between this view and the simplistic presumption as he calls it, articulated by Clive Bell, that only the formal qualities of a work count (Bell 1914).[172] As he observes, "sophisticated aestheticism holds that a work's content is relevant to its value as art *if and only if the content promotes or hinders* the attainment of aesthetic virtues, such as coherence, complexity, intensity or quality of development, by the work's aesthetic aspect."[173]

Further objections to autonomism have also been proposed and elaborated; The claim that art is for art's sake – the general slogan of autonomism – is, according to Carroll, at best misleading. As he claims, "art's sake, that is, the interest for which an artwork is made, is frequently for purposes beyond the creation of captivating forms and/or aesthetic delight."[174] More specifically, the thought that art is valuable for its own sake is believed to entail also that it is not valuable for other reasons, especially cognitive, moral, and political ones. But this conclusion is, according to Carroll, a non sequitur since there have been artworks which had such purposes. For instance, much art was religious and much art has served explicitly political goals. By contrast, he claims that, "some art may be absorbing exactly because of the way in which it engages, among other things, the moral life of its audience. That is, just because we value art for the way it commands our undivided attention does not preclude that some art commands our attention in this way just because it is interesting and engaging cognitively and/or, for our purposes, morally."[175] Carroll next picks up on the common denominator argument and argues that "whether or not there is such a scale—a vexed question if there ever was one—can be put to the side, however, because even if there is such a scale, that would fail to imply that it is the only evaluative consideration that it is appropriate to bring to bear on every artwork. For in addition to, for example, formal considerations, some artworks may be such that, given the nature of the artworks in question, it is also appropriate

[172] Kieran, Matthew. "The Value of Art". ibid., 2013, p. 292.
[173] Kieran, Matthew. "The Value of Art". ibid., 2013, p. 292.
[174] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research", ibid., 2000, p. 359. Carroll draws examples from the cave paintings in the Buddhist temples of Ellora which were intended to commemorate important events in the life of Gautama and to enable devotees to recollect their significance. In those cases, "art's sake" is religious and ethical.
[175] Carroll, Noël. "Art, Narrative and Moral Understanding" ibid., 1998, p. 136.

to discuss them in terms of other dimensions of value."[176] As he further contends, "there are many kinds of art, genres if you will, that naturally elicit moral responses, that prompt us to talk about them in terms of moral considerations, and that even warrant moral evaluation. The common-denominator argument cannot preclude this possibility logically, for even if there is some global standard of artistic value, there may be different local standards for different art genres."[177]

A more fundamental objection, according to Kieran, arises when we consider works whose value we take to be diminished due to their content, independently of their aesthetic virtues. In those cases, it becomes clear that evaluations of a work as art must sometimes make reference to concepts such as truth, an appeal that aestheticism is at pains to rule out.[178] The appearance of conceptual art and performance art gave rise to further objections. These movements are concerned, in one way or another, with conveying ideas seemingly stripped of aesthetic interest.[179] Moreover, these artworks may sometimes lack aesthetic qualities, though not always, and by extension, they may be perceptually indiscernible from non-art objects.[180] Indeed, sometimes in conceptual art, Duchamp's being an example, the experience of the work often seems to be beside the point and concerns the recognition of a given idea. Hence, someone could object that not all good art affords the putatively required aesthetic experience.[181] Accordingly, Berys Gaut points to the fact that many authors exhibit

[176] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 226.
[177] Carroll, Noël. "Art, Narrative and Moral Understanding" ibid., 1998, p. 137. As Carroll explains in his "Moderate moralism", decibel level has a role to play in heavy metal music that is irrelevant to minuets. Moreover, with some genres, moral considerations are pertinent, even though there may be other genres where they would be tantamount to category errors. Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 227.
[178] Kieran, Matthew. "The Value of Art", ibid., 2013, p. 293. Renoir's portraits are aesthetically coherent, yet our appreciation of them is diminished by their cloying sentimentality, as Kieran explains.
[179] Stecker, Robert. "Definition of Art" in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* edited by Jerrold Levinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 143.
[180] McIver Lopes, Dominic. "Perception and Art" in the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Perception* edited by Matthen, Mohan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 873. A common example is Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*, an assemblage of plywood boxes painted to look like the packaging for Brillo scouring pads. Having stumbled upon the *Brillo Boxes* at the Stable Gallery in New York, Arthur Danto (1964) came to think that the features that make an item a work of art do not supervene on its perceptible features. As Danto reasoned, the features that make an item a work of art supervene on its perceptible features only if a work of art is perceptually discernible from every item that is not a work of art, but some works of art (e.g. *Brillo Boxes*) are not perceptually discernible from items that are not works of art. Many philosophers regard this argument as decisive, but others object that *Brillo Boxes* is not a genuine art work (e.g. Beardsley, 1983). Shelley, James. "The Problem of Non-Perceptual Art". *British Journal of Aesthetics* 43 (2003): pp. 363-78.
[181] Kieran, Matthew. "The Value of Art". ibid., 2013, p. 293. However, Kieran argues that the autonomist can deny that conceptual art is a problem. It may turn out that, accidentally, certain pieces of conceptual art possess

ethical intentions in their writings; and as he says, in those cases, "it would be heroically implausible to hold that this had nothing to do with the aesthetic value of their works." Furthermore, the recent burgeoning of feminist and radical literary criticism represents a contrast to autonomism and formalism of the mid-20th century and thus, a strong renewal of the ethical tradition.[182]

Aesthetic formalism and autonomism, as its corresponding doctrine dominated art until recently. Nevertheless, a renewed interest in the moral dimension of art brought together strong objections concerning its autonomy: If autonomism is wrong, then, moral flaws in artworks may sometimes be aesthetically relevant. And thus, theories emerged accepting that artworks are mediums containing ethical meaning, capable of intervening in the artworks' evaluation procedure. Nowadays, "the live debate is between those who maintain that ethical properties are never aesthetically relevant, i.e. autonomists, and those who maintain that they sometimes are. The latter include those who describe themselves as ethicists, moderate moralists or immoralists."[183]

Broadly construed, Moralists or Ethicists argue that moral flaws in artworks constitute aesthetic flaws. That is to say, it is this critical tradition that is most closely allied to the assumption that a moral flaw in a work is as such an aesthetic one (Hume; Kieran; Gaut). The view has its roots in Plato and his famous indictment of the arts in Book X of the *Republic*.[184]

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aesthetic value, and where they do so, they are to be valued as art for that reason. But where such value is lacking, such art is at best very bad art indeed. So conceptual art, where it lacks aesthetic value, can at best be something akin to art criticism, but not itself valuable as art.

[182] Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics" in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* edited by Berys, Gaut and Dominic Lopes. 3rd ed., London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 397. Gaut gives the example of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. He says: "Imagine trying to ignore the ethical evaluations while aesthetically evaluating only its other features: to do this is simply impossible, since her ethical stance pervades the work's narrative structure, its descriptions of characters and situations, its style, its authorial tone and persona. One cannot set aside Eliot's ethical stance while keeping anything remotely resembling her novel before one's view."

[183] Gaut, Berys, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, ibid., 2007, p. 51. Berys Gaut claims that the views of moderate moralism and Immoralism are incomplete, leaving certain questions open regarding the value-relation. They thus ought to embrace one of the three options identified by Gaut as the only plausible contenders for the relation of art to ethics in respect of whether artistic value in intrinsic: autonomism, ethicism and contextualism. According to Gaut, an advantage of the label 'contextualism' is that it makes clear that the position in itself is neither moralist nor immoralist in flavour. (p. 54-55). In literature, it is common to refer to Immoralism with the term 'contextualism'. Daniel Jacobson accepts this term for his position.

[184] In Book X of the *Republic* Plato constantly and emphatically accuses artists, and especially poets of moral weakness. His criticism concludes in his famous banishment of mimetic poetry from his ideal city. For Plato, an ethically motivated criticism of art is a prerequisite in order to decide on the value of the work as a work of art.

An extreme version of Ethicism would hold that ethical properties in artworks are always aesthetically relevant; such a view was defended by Leon Tolstoy. Tolstoy held that the value of a work of art is determined by the moral worth of the emotions it arouses.[185] In this respect, 'good art becomes what successfully transmits morally good feelings'.[186] In general, moralists have given a variety of arguments in favour of their view. An argument from friendship holds that artistically evaluating a literary work is akin to evaluating its implied author as a friend; since a person's moral goodness counts towards his being a good friend, the moral goodness of works contributes to their artistic worth.[187] In addition, the moral beauty argument holds that if a person has a morally good character, then she possesses a kind of inner beauty; so the moral worth of the author, as manifested in a work, counts under certain circumstances as an aesthetic excellence in the work (Gaut 2007).[188] Yet the two most widely employed arguments are: the cognitive argument (Nussbaum 1990; Carroll 1998) and the merited response argument (Gaut 2007; Carroll 1998) which we will further discuss in more detail.

Moral flaws in artworks do constitute aesthetic flaws and subsequently, the moral value of an artwork directly influences its artistic value, diminishing the overall aesthetic value of the artwork to the greatest extent. In fact, as Iris Murdoch remarks, "Plato himself supplies a good deal of the material for a complete aesthetic, a defence and reasonable critique of art. The relation of art to truth and goodness must be the fundamental concern of any serious criticism of it." Murdoch, Iris. "From the Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists" ibid., 2012, p. 27.

[185] Tolstoy in *What is Art?* equates the value of art with its use as a means to some end. And this end lies in the society's moral welfare; Thus, the purpose of art is a moral purpose. The aim of the true artist is to transmit the 'religious perception of his age', that is, to transmit those feelings which constitute the meaning of life for his audience, and his success or failure in this, determines the success or failure of his art. (p. 156-7) For Tolstoy, excellence in art is understood in relation to its subject-matter (p. 170). Tolstoy, Leo. *What is Art?* translated by Aylmer Maude. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1904.

[186] Beardsmore, R.W. *Art and Morality*. *New Studies in Practical Philosophy*. London: Macmillan press, 1971, p. 6-7. More specifically, Tolstoy admits that although it is true that in a very wide sense a successful attempt to express feelings – regardless of their moral worth – may be called art, it is also true that art may fail either by transmitting, successfully or unsuccessfully, the wrong feelings or by failing to transmit the right ones.

[187] Gaut, Berys. "Morality and Art" in *A Companion to Aesthetics - Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* edited by Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper. London: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009, p. 429. The view advanced by Wayne Booth (1988) refers to the notion that works of fiction are like friends and that our relation to things like novels should be assessed ethically as we assess friendships. Booth, Wayne. *The Company We Keep – An Ethics of Fiction*. ibid., 1988.

[188] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, ibid., 2007, p. 227. The moral beauty argument holds that ethical values are themselves a kind of beauty. "Works that manifest ethically good qualities thus possess a kind of beauty. Since no one denies that beauty is an aesthetic value, it follows that, in so far as works manifest ethical goodness, they are aesthetically valuable, and conversely for the case of ethical badness, which is a kind of ugliness." (p. 83) The moral beauty view was also endorsed by Hume, who claims that taste ascertains moral matters as well as aesthetic ones, taste giving 'the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue'. Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. app. I, p. 88. Recently, Colin McGinn has endorsed and argued for this view at some length. McGinn adopts some version of moralism concerning aesthetic assessment of artworks and terms the moral beauty view, 'aesthetic theory of virtue'. McGinn, Colin. *Ethics, Evil, and Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, especially ch.5.

In a discussion of the moralistic tendencies which have become widespread in contemporary philosophy of art, Daniel Jacobson distinguishes between two forms of moralism: a *radical* and a more *moderate* form.[189] In its radical form, moralism is primarily associated with Plato and basically holds that 'aesthetic strength is morally dangerous'.[190] According to Jacobson, Platonic moralists all agree that art can harm but they differ as to whether or not it can help in particular, over whether art can serve an ethically salutary function.[191] On the other hand, a moderate form of moralism which has been more influential in recent aesthetics stems from Hume's main claims in his "*Of the Standard of Taste*."[192] With the intention to bring the moral evaluation of works of art to bear, in some systematic way, upon their aesthetic evaluation, Humean moralism holds that "whenever an artwork's moral defects are relevant to its aesthetic evaluation, they figure as blemishes, that is, as aesthetic flaws."[193] Jacobson distinguishes between Humean moralists who do not claim that all immoral art is aesthetically flawed; and those who hold this not only of immoral art, but also of art that is merely morally dangerous.[194] He further recognises as advocates of a more modest, Humean-style moralism the following philosophers of art: Noel Carroll and Berys Gaut, most notably, who espouse claims very similar to Hume's; Kendall Walton flirts with Humean moralism without quite committing to it; moreover, Richard Moran and Matthew Kieran "have also written sympathetically on these issues."[195] Jacobson further indicates similarities as well as differences between the two forms of moralism: "Both Humean and Platonic forms of

[189] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 156. Jacobson thinks of moralism in its most general guise, as 'the tendency to let moral considerations take over the entirety of evaluative space'.
[190] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 156. Platonic moralism has extended to the views of Rousseau, Tolstoy, and Bernard Shaw, as Jacobson remarks.
[191] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 156. Jacobson elsewhere calls this latter thesis *humanism* and he further indicates: "Plato and Rousseau are most pessimistic in this regard; whereas Tolstoy, despite savaging the ill effects of decadent art, embraces a form of humanism on which good art joins us together with the bonds of fellow feeling. Shaw is idiosyncratic on this score in that he alone, I think much to his credit, holds that some significant moral danger is required for the moral development of both individual and society."
[192] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 158. Jacobson considers as the classical statement of Humean moralism, Hume's claim, in "Of the Standard of Taste," that "when a work of art deviates from our moral standards, this must be allowed to disfigure the [work], and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments; and however I may excuse the poet, on account of the manners of his age, I can never relish the composition."
[193] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 158.
[194] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 156.
[195] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 158. As Jacobson claims: "Indeed, the greatest difference between Hume and his recent followers is that they are all more concerned than he was about the dangers of immoral art, and some are more hopeful about the beneficial effects of morally felicitous art."

moralism locate the appeal and significance of narrative and dramatic art primarily in its ability to move us emotionally. And both disparage immoral art by suggesting that, inasmuch as it does influence us, it can have only corrupting effects."[196] At the same time, the decisive point of the most significant difference between the two forms of moralism is that "Humean moralists hold that if a work is immoral, in the relevant sense, it will be unable to move a virtuous audience. Whereas Platonic moralists hold that the aesthetic power of immoral art is all too accessible, even to the virtuous – this is its insidious danger."[197]

Berys Gaut also offers a precise separation of the recent moralistic views in respect of the intrinsic issue of art's value. His categorization is based on two questions; the first question is concerned with whether the ethical qualities of artworks are always, sometimes or never aesthetically relevant. According to Gaut, this question gives a way of distinguishing between autonomists, who answer 'never', and the rest of the field, who answer 'sometimes'. The second question, concerns the kind of value-relation between ethical and aesthetic properties.[198] Namely, the value-relation between the ethical and the aesthetic can differ along two dimensions; the first dimension is whether the relation is monotonic (invariant) or polytonic (complex);[199] the second dimension concerns the polarity of the relation: is the relation symmetrical (positive) or inverted (negative).[200] In terms of the proposed framework, Gaut introduces the position he calls *ethicism*, a position which countenances a positive value-relation between the two value domains and moreover, it is monotonic, since it speaks of what is always the case. In Gaut's words, "as so represented, it is what might be called full-blooded ethicism: it is formulated in respect of both ethical demerits and ethical merits."[201]

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[196] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 156.

[197] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 159. To illustrate this point, Jacobson focuses on the thought that works of art aspire to provoke emotional or emotion-like responses, which figures centrally in the work of some moralists.

[198] Gaut, Berys *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 52. Regarding the first question, Gaut remarks that, these latter positions ought to be formulated only about ethical merits or demerits that are aesthetically relevant, so as to rule out aesthetically irrelevant ethical qualities.

[199] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 52. According to Gaut, an invariant relation would hold where positive ethical qualities are always associated with positive aesthetic qualities; a complex relation would hold where positive ethical qualities are only sometimes associated with positive aesthetic qualities.

[200] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 52. More precisely, is it the case that positive ethical qualities are associated with positive aesthetic ones, and negative ethical qualities with negative ones; or is it the case that positive ethical qualities are associated with negative ethical qualities and negative ethical qualities with positive aesthetic ones?

[201] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 53. In Gaut's view, weaker versions are either false or at best only partial truths. By extension, he finds that the mirror opposite of ethicism, a position that is monotonic

Ethicism

One argument put forward for the kind of view termed *ethicism*, concerns the relation between the moral character of a work and the sought for cognitive-affective responses.[202] This is the view proposed by Berys Gaut. In his overall account, "the ethical criticism of art is a proper and legitimate aesthetic activity […] while the ethical assessment of attitudes manifested by works of art is a legitimate aspect of the aesthetic evaluation of those works."[203] Gaut moves to a straightforward rejection of autonomism by arguing that the ethical evaluation of artworks is equivalent to evaluating ethically what the artist(s) did in the work, the artistic acts performed therein. He summarizes his view as follows:

> Ethicism holds that a work is always aesthetically flawed in so far as it possesses an ethical demerit that is aesthetically relevant; and a work is always aesthetically meritorious in so far as it possesses an ethical merit that is aesthetically relevant.[204]

To underline the main points of this view: ethicism is formulated using *pro tanto* principles; it holds that there is a plurality of artistic values so that an ethical flaw is only one ground for aesthetic condemnation of a work and thus, it denies that ethical merits are either necessary or sufficient for the works' being aesthetically good.[205] In contrast to the strongest version of moralism, namely, the view that the only aesthetic merits of works are ethical ones[206] and

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but countenances an invariant negative value relation is what he calls (extreme) immoralism. "Immoralism holds that a work is always aesthetically flawed in so far as it possesses an ethical merit that is aesthetically relevant; and that it is always aesthetically meritorious in so far as it possesses an ethical demerit that is aesthetically relevant." However, Gaut notes that this kind of extreme immoralism has no defenders.

[202] Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010, p. 457.

[203] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art" in *Aesthetics and Ethics – Essays at the Intersection* edited by Jerrold Levinson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 182.

[204] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 53.

[205] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 66. Gaut explains that there can be good, even great works of art that are ethically flawed. With reference to necessary conditions, examples include Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, which is marred by the anti-Semitism displayed in the portrayal of the Nibelungen; some of T.S. Eliot's poems, such as *Sweeney among the Nightingales*, which are similarly tainted by anti-Semitism; and Leni Riefenstahl's striking propaganda film, *The Triumph of the Will*, deeply flawed by its craven adulation of Hitler. With reference to sufficient conditions, Gaut considers works which, though the ethical attitudes they display are admirable, are in many ways uninspired and disappointing. An example is Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art" ibid.,1998, p.182-3.

[206] This view is defended by R.W. Beardsmore in *Art and Morality*, chapter 2. Oliver Connolly explicates that this view may be dubbed 'narrow' radical moralism; It states that moral criteria are separate from formal criteria and furthermore, that only moral criteria matter. 'Narrow' radical moralism rules out the significance of formal criteria from aesthetic evaluation. Connolly, Oliver. "Ethicism and Moderate Moralism". *British Journal of*

accordingly, that moral value is the only criterion of aesthetic value, ethicism does not hold that all moral flaws of artworks are aesthetically relevant; but rather that, when they are, moral flaws always count as aesthetic flaws. In fact, Gaut finds several reasons why one should not allow just any ethical defect to count as an aesthetic one; Indeed, as he notices: "works may have ethically bad consequences that are clearly irrelevant to their aesthetic merit and this may hold even if one focused only on the intrinsic ethical features of works, rather than their actual ethical consequences."[207] This is why ethicism should not be construed in terms of *overall* principles since this would undermine any attempt to find any aesthetic principles. For, as Gaut explains, "there seem to be no properties, such that adding them to an artwork is guaranteed invariably overall to enhance or invariably overall to diminish the aesthetic value of a work."[208] Thus, he employs an aesthetic relevance condition in order to determine when ethical merits or demerits are aesthetically relevant and subsequently, he appeals to *pro tanto* principles in order to formulate his account.[209] And in this way he concludes that artworks are aesthetically meritorious (or defective) *in so far as* they have certain aesthetically relevant ethical properties. By extension, this fact allows ethicism to recognise that great art need have no moral character and that good art may be morally flawed, for a work may be highly valuable in other respects. As Gaut remarks, ethicism does not entail the causal thesis that good art ethically improves people; "Since the ethicist principle is a *pro tanto* one, it allows for the existence of great but ethically flawed works; and even if all aesthetically good works were ethically sound, it would not follow that they

Aesthetics 40/3 (July 2000): pp. 302-16 (302-3). Contrary to radical moralism, Gaut denies that ethical merits or demerits are always aesthetically relevant and he thinks that *there are good reasons to it*.

[207] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 50. For the first case, Gaut gives the example of a novel, celebrating liberal democracy, which in a politically unstable country might help trigger a military coup, the army fearing that its publication would undermine its tottering power. For the second, Gaut suggests considering a novel onto which one appends in its final chapter a list of moral platitudes, such as 'kindness is a virtue', 'it's wrong to lie' and so on. Has the novel been made thereby aesthetically better or worse? It seems not to make any difference at all; or, if it does, it is not because of the moral content of the platitudes, but because of the disunity and superfluity that this extraneous excrescence has brought to the novel.

[208] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 60.

[209] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 60. As Gaut explains, *pro tanto* principles can be formulated in slightly different ways. The way he favours is in terms of the 'in so far as' relation. To understand this, Gaut suggests considering the case of moral principles. "An action may be morally good in so far as it is the keeping of a promise, but morally bad in so far as it failing to help someone in need—for instance, one rushes past an injured crash-victim whom one could help, in order to keep a promise to meet someone at a certain time. Whether the act is overall (all-things-considered) good or not depends in part on the weight of the promise and the degree of the need of the victim. The goodness and badness of the action rest on its different aspects: it would be good to carry on one's way in so far as to do so is fulfilling a promise, but bad in so far as it would be ignoring a claim of need." This aspect-terminology is fundamental to the nature of *pro tanto* principles. (p. 61).

improve people, any more than it follows that earnest ethical advice improves people, for they may be unmoved by even the most heartfelt exhortation."[210] Nor does it directly address the issue of censorship; as he indicates, "the fact that a work of art is aesthetically flawed is not grounds for its censorship: if it were, the art museums of the world would suffer serious depletion."[211]

Elaborating on his view, Gaut adopts a narrow sense of the 'ethical', construed in terms of a sub-set of character virtues distinguished by *the nature of the concern that they manifest towards other people*. And thus, the ethical value of a work is understood in terms of the ethical features of the attitudes that the artwork manifests.[212] In this regard, the claim of ethicism could be put like this: "Manifesting ethically admirable attitudes *counts toward* the aesthetic merit of a work, and manifesting ethically reprehensible attitudes *counts against* its aesthetic merit."[213] Gaut explains that, the notion of an attitude should be understood broadly to cover not just characteristically affective states, such as showing disgust towards or approval of the characters, but also to cover more purely cognitive states, such as presenting characters in such a way as to imply judgements about their being evil, good, inspiring and so on. This way, 'in assessing the ethical value of art, we are assessing the ethical quality of the point of view, cognitive and affective, that it takes towards certain situations'.[214] Accordingly, he attentively points out that ethical flaws should not be understood in terms of the causal powers of works to affect audiences but in terms of the intrinsic properties of works. In this respect, a work is ethically flawed just in case it manifests ethically reprehensible attitudes. "For instance, *Triumph of the Will* is ethically flawed because of the attitudes it displays of wholehearted approval of Hitler and Nazism. Its causal power to convert some audiences to Nazism is conceptually distinct from this (though of course this power partly rests on its intrinsic ethical flaws)."[215] As he argues, "what is relevant for ethicism are the attitudes *really* possessed by a work, not those it *merely* claims to possess; so the attitudes manifested may be correctly attributable only by subtle and informed critical

[210] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 184.
[211] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 184.
[212] Gaut, Berys *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 9.
[213] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 182.
[214] Gaut, Berys, *Art. Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 9.
[215] Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics". ibid., 2013, p. 395.

judgment."[216]

In the case of the 'aesthetic', a broader sense of the term is adopted. In its narrow sense, aesthetic value properties are those that ground a certain kind of sensory or contemplative pleasure or displeasure. In this sense, beauty, elegance, gracefulness, and their contraries are aesthetic value properties.[217] In contrast to this, Gaut develops an account of aesthetic properties that construes them as evaluative properties of artworks that are relevant to their value qua artworks. In this account, "what makes something art is its possession of some of a cluster of properties."[218] And he goes on to explain that, "this broader sense is required, since not all of the values of an object qua work of art are narrowly aesthetic. Besides a work's beauty, we may, for instance, aesthetically admire it for its cognitive insight, its articulated expression of joy, the fact that it is deeply moving, and so on."[219] So in this framework, what is meant by 'aesthetic value' is the value of an object qua work of art, that is, its artistic value. According to Gaut, aesthetic values are those that a work of art has qua work of art and include more than narrow aesthetic (beauty and its subspecies) and formal properties. So, 'on the artistic account of the aesthetic, the possibility of ethical qualities of artworks being aesthetic values is allowed for'.[220]

Apart from moral beauty, the ethicist position is formulated in terms of two main arguments. The first is a cognitivist argument which appeals to a claim about the cognitive value of art (Beardsmore 1971, 1973; Nussbaum 1990; Carroll 1998, 2002; Eaton 2001). The argument holds that a work's capacity to teach us (including about moral matters) is, under certain conditions, an aesthetic merit in the work.[221] Gaut distinguishes two legitimate senses of this 'aesthetic cognitivism': "the minimal one, in which it is a work's manifesting understanding

[216] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 184. Gaut explains further that "just as we can distinguish between the attitudes people really have and those they merely claim to have by looking at their behaviour, so we can distinguish between real and claimed attitudes of works by looking at the detailed manner in which events are presented."
[217] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 183.
[218] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 13.
[219] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 183. As he further indicates, "However, this broader sense of the 'aesthetic' does not mean that just any property of a work of art counts as aesthetic. Works of art have many other sorts of value properties that are not values of them qua works of art: they can have investment value, value as status symbols, and so forth."
[220] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 83.
[221] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 166.

(moral or otherwise) in an aesthetically relevant way that is an aesthetic merit in the work; and the stronger one, in which it is a work's teaching (moral or otherwise) in an aesthetically relevant way that is an aesthetic merit in it."[222] The minimal version of aesthetic cognitivism is supported merely by reflection on even some basic aesthetic evaluations of artworks. 'This would show that evincing such an understanding is a matter of considerable aesthetic importance'.[223] Under the light of this minimal cognitivist version, ethicism would hold that an artwork is aesthetically good insofar as it manifests aesthetically relevant moral understanding (and conversely for aesthetic badness and moral misunderstanding or failures to understand).[224] The second, stronger version of cognitivism holds that works of art can teach us certain things (or equivalently that artists manifesting such understanding can teach us certain things through their works). This version adds to manifesting understanding, the communication of this understanding by the artist, and also the audience's cognitive gain (that is, the audience's learning something).[225] With this version of aesthetic cognitivism applied to ethicism, 'ethicism would hold that an artwork is aesthetically good in so far as it morally teaches in an aesthetically relevant way'.[226] This is the view Gaut defends and accordingly he argues that "ethical attitudes and insights *tend* to be of aesthetic relevance when they are expressed by artistic means, not just by style or by how the artist treats her subject. These artistic means include general insights, whether or not explicitly stated, being integrated into the particulars dealt with by the work such as general artistic strategies, as well as the deployment of specific features of media, genres or forms."[227] Thus in accordance

[222] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 166.
[223] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 166.
[224] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 138. Moral understanding consists not just in knowing propositions, but in possessing certain skills, such as empathy, and in knowing how to feel; it thus exhibits the wide variety of kinds of knowledge to which we have called attention; and the cognitivist defence of ethicism would show that these kinds of knowledge can be exhibited by works.
[225] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 166. An example is Nussbaum's view; she holds that only certain great works of literature, such as the novels of Henry James, can teach us very fine-grained moral truths.
[226] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 138.
[227] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 85-9. He continues: Examples of general artistic strategies are conveying general insights by means of the treatment of particular examples; getting us to feel the force of a particular claim or truth, to bring it home to us; and building up in the work a manifested personality, a *persona*, in which these attitudes prominently figure. Examples of more specific strategies to do with individual media are the deployment of painterly effects, to do with the employment of light, the handling of brushstrokes and pictorial construction, in order to convey a certain attitude towards his subject. In literature, it includes the deployment of narrative techniques, symbolism, the construction of particular fictional scenarios, and so on, to convey a certain attitude. Gaut considers Aesop's fables and he claims: "It is because Aesop *dramatises* the moral in the story that it has aesthetic relevance." And further, the same general points apply to even more complex examples such as Rembrandt's painting, *Bathsheba*. As Gaut indicates, Rembrandt's compassionate

to aesthetic cognitivism Gaut holds that works of art, and literary works in particular, can non-trivially teach us, and that they can do so not only about psychological matters, but also about morality. His claim comes in two parts:

The first part is an *epistemic* one: art can provide us with genuine knowledge. The second part is an *aesthetic* one: this epistemic capacity of art contributes to its value as art.[228] What this part adds is that the capacity of art to give knowledge is at least in some cases aesthetically relevant—and in particular is an aesthetic merit.[229] With a view to giving an account of his claim, Gaut discusses three kinds of cases of ethical learning: an instance of the kind of argument that could arise in ordinary life; an example employed by a philosopher; and an instance in a literary work. As he observes, "What they possess in common is that they show that we can learn ethically through the exercise of the imagination. […] They also, in a way, present a continuum, where we gradually move towards literary-style devices, to help make those imaginings more vivid, precise and powerful, and at the same time (not coincidentally) more cognitively instructive. Hence, by deploying the full force of affective and experiential imagination, we can be made to feel the wrongness, rightness or sheer imponderability of certain moral choices, and so we can learn through imagination."[230] Reasoning, experience, testimony and imagination can confirm such truths. For Gaut, that is just what the epistemic claim of the cognitive argument maintains. Moreover, the importance of imagination in the

attitude towards *Bathsheba* is of aesthetic relevance because he manifests it in the way he deploys painterly means to treat his subject. Nevertheless, it should be noted that although Gaut proposes the artistic mode of expression criterion as the correct one and uses it at various points, he also points out that its correctness, or indeed that of any other general criterion, is not essential to the ethicist project. Because as he says, 'one can believe in ethicism without adopting this criterion, or indeed any other, for aesthetic relevance'.

[228] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p.76. Aesthetic anti-cognitivism is the denial of aesthetic cognitivism, defended by autonomists for the most part. In contrast to cognitivism, the aesthetic anti-cognitivist doctrine holds that any ethical insights offered are irrelevant to the aesthetic value of art. Regarding the claims of aesthetic cognitivism, Gaut explains a common argument-schema for arguing for moralism from cognitivism which runs as follows: 'a work of art can convey knowledge; when a work does so, this is, under certain conditions, an aesthetic merit in the work; one kind of knowledge a work of art can convey is moral knowledge; so, when a work of art conveys moral knowledge, this is, under certain conditions, an aesthetic merit in the work'. Arguments for moralism on these kinds of lines have been advanced by several aesthetic cognitivists, or at least their explicit claims imply that they would endorse arguments of roughly this sort. For variations on this theme, see R. W. Beardsmore. *Art and Morality*, ch.5; Noël Carroll. "Art, Narrative, and Moral Understanding"; Gregory Currie. "The Moral Psychology of Fiction"; Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Imagination, and the Cultivation of Morals"; David Novitz. *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination*, esp. pp. 139–42; Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge*.

[229] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 137. The thesis is put forward as one in aesthetics rather than simply as a claim in epistemology.

[230] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 164. This epistemic claim is defended against the confirmation objection—that artworks can never confirm their claims, and so cannot impart bona fide knowledge.

case of morality is further underlined. As Gaut argues: "confirmation by imagination is particularly important since the imagination plays an important (and philosophically surprisingly neglected) role in moral deliberation and also in delivering psychological insights into oneself and others."[231]

In his further defence of the aesthetic part of the cognitivist claim Gaut gives two more arguments: he derives the first argument by breaking down the stronger, teaching version of the claim into its three components: of manifesting *understanding*, *communication* and *cognitive gain*; then reflection on aesthetic evaluation should concede the relevance of manifesting understanding.[232] The second argument is most clearly displayed in the case of literature, but it applies to other art forms as well. As Gaut explains, much of the vocabulary of literary appraisal and its application seems to show that the practice of literary evaluation is cognitivist: "we praise works for their profundity, for being psychologically penetrating, for giving an insightful perspective on the world. We decry them for being shallow, distorted, inane or full of worn clichés."[233] In fact, critical vocabulary involving describing emotions as apt, true, nuanced or manipulative and coarse such as "profound," "insightful", "wise," has a cognitive dimension to it. Hence appeal to some of the vocabulary of critical appraisal shows that our aesthetic evaluative practices are cognitivist; so, cognitive values are, when employed in these kinds of evaluations, aesthetically relevant.[234]

The cognitivist argument especially in terms of its aesthetic claim, provoked a lot of objections from the proponents of autonomist and contextualist views. Indeed, as Gaut himself recognises, "works of art can be interesting and informative as social documents, but the fact that much can be learned from them about the attitudes and circumstances of their time does not *ipso facto* make them aesthetically better: one can learn much about Victorian agricultural politics from Tess, and on the subject of 19th century whaling practices *Moby-Dick* is excruciatingly informative. Likewise, old photographs and films can have great value as documentary sources of their times, but these cognitive merits do not thereby improve these

[231] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 165.
[232] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 167.
[233] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 167.
[234] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 167.

objects qua works of art. So, the cognitivist approach must be supplemented in order to give an account of the conditions under which cognitive merits are aesthetically relevant."[235]

The second and central argument in support of ethicism is called the *merited response argument*. A fuller version of this argument is developed by Noël Carroll while one of its first versions is already offered by Hume. This argument in terms of merited responses holds that ethically merited prescribed responses are aesthetic values, and ethically unmerited prescribed responses are aesthetic demerits.[236] Indeed, it can be easily seen that works prescribe the imagining of certain events: a horror film may prescribe imagining teenagers being assaulted by a monster; The *120 Days of Sodom* or *Juliette* prescribe imagining that acts of sexual torture occur.[237] In this regard, Gaut constructs his argument by establishing a connection between the attitudes manifested by a work and the responses the work prescribes: "Ethicism concerns the intrinsic ethical defects of an artwork; these are ethical defects in the attitude that a work manifests. A work's attitude is standardly manifested in prescribing certain responses towards the events it describes. Prescribed responses are not always merited. One way in which they can be unmerited is in being unethical. If the prescribed responses are unmerited, that is a failure of the work; so, if the prescribed responses are unmerited, because unethical, that is a failure in the work. What responses the work prescribes is of aesthetic relevance. So, if the prescribed responses are unmerited because unethical, that is an aesthetic failure of the work—that is to say, is an aesthetic defect in it. So, a work's manifestation of ethically bad attitudes in its prescribed responses is an aesthetic defect in it. *Mutatis mutandis*, a parallel argument shows that a work's manifestation of ethically commendable attitudes in its prescribed responses is an aesthetic merit in it."[238] That is to say, ethicism holds that works are aesthetically flawed in so far as they exhibit aesthetically relevant ethical flaws in their manifested attitudes.[239]

According to Gaut, the notion of a response is to be understood broadly, 'covering a wide range of states directed at represented events and characters, including being pleased at

[235] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 184.
[236] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 83.
[237] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 230. Namely, the attitudes of works are manifested in the responses they prescribe to their audiences.
[238] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 233.
[239] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 229.

something, feeling an emotion towards it, being amused about it, approving of it and desiring something with respect to it—wanting it to continue or stop, wanting to know what happens next'.[240] Moreover, the novel does not just present imagined events; it also presents a point of view on them, a perspective constituted in part by actual feelings, emotions and desires that the reader is prescribed to have towards the merely imagined events.[241] For instance, Marquis de Sade manifests approval of sexual torture by inviting his readers to enjoy torture scenarios, e.g. *Juliette*; these prescribed responses are aesthetically relevant to assessing his works; enjoying spectacles of sexual torture is unmerited because unethical; so his works are aesthetically flawed insofar as they possess this ethical flaw.[242]

An influential objection to this argument holds that 'it moves illicitly from a premise about it being wrong to respond in a certain way (for instance, being amused), to holding that the response is not warranted: that the object lacks the relevant evaluative property (being funny)'.[243] This objection, raised by Daniel Jacobson (1997), calls the argument ambiguous, rendering it invalid. Jacobson considers in particular that this argument has a striking analogy to an argument for comic moralism and as he argues "the fact that it would be malicious or heartless to be amused by a particular joke doesn't imply that the joke isn't funny – even though some may be prone to declare that a joke isn't funny whenever they don't endorse laughing at it."[244] While pursuing the analogy between jokes and artworks, Jacobson offers a

[240] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 193. Gaut explains further that such states are characteristically affective, some essentially so, such as pleasure, while in the case of others, such as desires, there is no necessity that they be felt, although they generally are.
[241] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 193.
[242] Gaut, Berys. "Morality and Art". ibid., 2009, p. 430.
[243] Gaut, Berys, "Art and Ethics". ibid., 2013, p. 401.
[244] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 179. The case of dark humour has been supposed to present a difficulty for the merited response argument. Thus, offensive jokes were considered to have an analogy with immoral art and became a useful model for it. This familiar analogy is further discussed in Kendal Walton. As he argues, if it is wrong to be amused by a joke, then its comic value (if it has any) is morally *inaccessible*, by definition. And on Walton's view, the moral inaccessibility of immoral artworks constitutes an aesthetic defect in them. By analogy, the same conclusion applies to offensive jokes: their moral inaccessibility is a comic defect. Walton, Kendal L., Tanner, Michael. "Morals in Fiction". *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. Supplementary Volumes 68 (1994): pp. 27-66 (30). Furthermore, Berys Gaut addressed the relation of ethicism to humour at length and also, confronted Jacobson's objection regarding the merited response argument. Gaut argues that the case of dark humour does not undermine his version of the merited response argument. Gaut, Berys, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, 2007. Carroll comments on the issue with reference to the central problem of the merited response argument, namely, the notion of an unmerited response. As he argues: 'To suppose that cognitive-affective appropriateness in a joke must involve appropriateness in the moral sense is an equivocation. Similarly, artworks may meet the appropriate conditions for engendering a powerful aesthetic response—for example, they may be viciously humorous—and this response may be well warranted, even if morally

reformulation of the merited response argument. This consists in four premises:

(1) Immoral art expresses a pernicious ethical perspective which involves calling for attitudes and feelings it would be wrong to have even in imagination (call these unethical responses).
(2) Unethical responses are never merited.
(3) It is an aesthetic flaw for a work of art to call for an unmerited response.
(4) Therefore, immoral art is aesthetically flawed.[245]

Jacobson explains further: "its central concept of merit is crucially between an endorsement of warrant and an ethical endorsement. If merit is glossed as warrant, then premise (3) is plausible but premise (2) is false, since some unethical responses are warranted. But if merited is glossed as ethical, then though premise (2) is trivially true, premise (3) is flatly question begging, since it asserts exactly what is at issue in the dispute."[246] In other words, the argument trades crucially on unanalyzed concepts of merit and appropriateness which conflate logically distinct questions of the propriety and of the correctness of an emotional response.[247] For Jacobson's anti-theory stance, 'ethicism is being overly moralistic about the notion of merit'.[248] However, the moralist can reply to this objection that there is no invalid transition: the claim is that the joke is not funny, or is at least flawed in its humor, by virtue of its immorality; and that is something that has intuitive support, including in what we think about racist and sexist humor. Indeed, Gaut replies: "There is no equivocation: the claim used to make the transition is that whether prescribed responses are merited is aesthetically relevant, and among the criteria that are relevant to determining whether they are merited are ethical ones. This is a substantive claim, and one that has been argued for by appeal to the language of art criticism and a supporting claim that art deploys an affective mode of cognition."[249]

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regrettable. The only way to avoid this conclusion is to build moral propriety into the criteria of appropriateness for being aesthetically moved, but that of course, courts circularity'. Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. ibid., 2010, p. 259.

[245] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". bid., 1997, p. 170.

[246] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 177-8.

[247] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 172.

[248] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 135. Kieran considers common responses to *The Sopranos*, *The Godfather*, gangsta rap music or Homer's *Iliad*. As he argues, "perhaps what matters is not so much whether responses are merited or not but rather whether they are intelligible." (Kieran 2001, 2005).

[249] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 197.

Further objections have been raised with reference to the merited response argument. First, it has been argued that the argument does not support ethicism. Yet, Gaut counter-argued that this objection misconstrues the initial argument even in respect of responses that are emotions. Respectively, he claims: "It is whether the emotion is merited that is important, and ethical merits are partly constitutive of whether the emotion is merited; hence, ethical values play a direct role in determining whether the work is aesthetically defective.[250] Another objection claims that the aesthetic defects of a work cannot be reduced to a failure of prescribed responses. But, then Gaut indicates that the ethicist defence does not require that all aesthetic defects be failures of prescribed responses, for it is enough to establish its truth that some aesthetic defects are of this kind.[251] One more objection is that since works may prescribe responses that are not aesthetically relevant, then, ethicism rests on a false premise. Gaut replies that this is not so. "A painting is not just (or even) a beautiful object: it aims to convey complex thoughts and feelings about its subject, providing an individual perspective on the object represented."[252] Finally, it has been objected that ethicism rests on a contentious claim, namely, that real responses, not merely imagined ones, can be had toward fictions.[253] But as Gaut indicates, it is not in fact essential to the argument to appeal to fiction-directed real emotions. "Ethicism can be fully defended by appeal to those responses the reality of which is relatively uncontentious. For these include pleasure and displeasure, which are pervasive in our responses to fictions. […] Pleasure and displeasure felt toward fictions are the only kinds of responses the reality of which one needs to appeal to in order to defend ethicism successfully."[254]

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[250] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 197. The first objection goes in further detail as follows: to say that a prescribed response is unmerited is to say that the work is emotionally unengaging; but then the work's failure is a result of the failure to engage, and not of its ethical corruption. Indeed, if, despite its ethical corruption, the work does emotionally engage, then its ethical badness is not an aesthetic defect. Nevertheless, as Gaut replies, a work may engage an emotion even when it does not merit it, and only merited emotions are relevant to the argument.

[251] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 197. Accordingly, the second objection continues: while some works clearly prescribe responses, other works need not, or may fail in respects in which no particular response is prescribed.

[252] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 198. The notion of prescribing imagined feelings is to be found in Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), chap. 7.2.

[253] The claim that actual feelings can be prescribed is defended by Richard Moran in "The Expression of Feeling in Imagination" *Philosophical Review* 103 (1994): pp. 75-106.

[254] Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art". ibid., 1998, p. 199. The last objection further refers to the debate between *emotional realism*, namely, the thesis that fiction-directed real emotions are possible, as opposed to *emotional irrealism*, which denies the possibility of such emotions. As Gaut notes: 'The battle between realists and irrealists is over the reality of those specific kinds of responses that are emotions, and indeed chiefly over

To sum up, the claims to be defended in ethicism are, at a first pass, that moral beauty, ethical insight and ethically merited prescribed responses are aesthetic values in works, and, conversely, that moral ugliness, ethically distorted views and ethically unmerited prescribed response are aesthetic defects in works. "It is these claims that underwrite the *pro tanto* form of ethicism: it is by virtue of these properties being aesthetic merits or demerits that, for instance, a work is aesthetically valuable insofar as it is morally beautiful and aesthetically defective insofar as it is morally ugly."[255] Gaut's thesis is a claim about all art generally. According to Levinson, it might be thought that the wider scope of Gaut's claim is much more difficult to defend in relation to artforms such as abstract art and pure music. But, to the extent that non-representational works seek to elicit cognitive-affective responses from us, Gaut's argument still applies.[256] Ethicism further appears to address some of the worries that arose in relation to moderate moralism – the view articulated specifically only in relation to narrative art.

the reality of pity and fear directed at fictions'. For defences of the view that real emotions can be felt towards events known to be merely imagined see Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 60-88.

[255] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 84.

[256] Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010, p. 458. Specifically, in relation to music, the thought that the moral value of a piece may constitute part of its artistic value has been argued for by Levinson (1998).

Moderate Moralism

Moderate moralism occurred mainly as a counteraction to the claims of autonomism. Noël Carroll (1996) focuses on narrative artworks which, according to him, are expressly designed to elicit moral reactions, and proposes arguments in favour of such a view.[257] In principle,

"moderate moralism maintains that *sometimes* a moral defect in an artwork can count as an aesthetic defect and that *sometimes* a moral virtue can count as an aesthetic virtue. And this must be weighed that way in all-things-considered or overall judgments."[258]

Specifically, moderate moralism holds that the moral character of a work is sometimes relevant to its artistic value. This is so where a morally sensitive audience fails to respond as solicited to a work due to its defective moral perspective. An artwork that fails to achieve its purposes is a failure on its own terms. Hence a work's (im)moral character can thereby lessen its value as art.[259] At first glance, it is clear that the basic claim of moderate moralism controverts the analogous autonomist view which admits that the moral badness of a work can never count as an aesthetic defect; *nor can the moral virtuousness of an artwork ever count toward anything more than the moral goodness of the work*.[260] On the contrary, moderate moralism leads to the conclusion that the ethical critique is a legitimate process, to such an extent that an ethical defect may even result to complete artistic failure of the artwork. Against moderate autonomism's *never* it maintains that *sometimes* a moral defect in an artwork will count as an artistic defect, even understood in terms of the aesthetic theory of art. As Carroll contends: "My form of moralism is *moderate* insofar as it only holds that this is sometimes the case and not *always* the case."[261]

From one perspective, this view is compatible with ethicism. Indeed, both theories reject

[257] Carroll adds that moderate moralism represents a departure from an earlier position of his which he called soft-formalism. Further on this, see Noël Carroll, "Formalism and Critical Evaluation" in *The Reasons of Art* edited by Peter J. McCormick. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1985. Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". Oxford University Press. *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 36/3 (July 1996): pp. 223-238.
[258] Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. ibid., 2010, p. 258.
[259] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 134.
[260] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism" Oxford University Press. *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 8/4 (October 1998): pp. 419-424 (419).
[261] Carroll, Noël. "Architecture, Art and Moderate Moralism" ibid., 2016, p. 72.

radical moralism, the approach that assigns art at the service of moral knowledge, both positions allow that not all kinds of ethical defects of works are aesthetic defects[262] and moreover, both ethicism and moderate moralism rely on the basic thought that: 'to the extent that we deem the cognitive-affective responses solicited from us by a work to be morally prohibited, we will either fail to respond or will deem the response to be unmerited'.[263] However, there are many respects in which these moralistic approaches differ. In fact Carroll highlights the differences and more than once claims that his moderate moralism is considerably weaker than ethicism. Yet, Gaut does not fully agree with Carroll's claim and remarks: "one purported difference between ethicism and moderate moralism is really a dispute about the conditions of aesthetic relevance, rather than a difference about whether, when aesthetically relevant, ethical defects count as aesthetic defects."[264] So, in Gaut's view, ethicism is distinct but not stronger than moderate moralism with the latter contending only that some of the relevant ethical defects in artworks can also be aesthetic defects that is, they are sometimes capable of leading to complete artistic failure.[265] Against moderate

[262] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 49.

[263] Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010. p. 460.

[264] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 50. Carroll mentions that ethicism is materially stronger than his view in his "Art and Ethical Criticism" (p. 377) as well as in his "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism" (p. 419). According to Gaut, ethicism is not a stronger claim and one of the reasons is that ethicism is construed in terms of *pro tanto* principles whereas moderate moralism uses all-things-considered judgements which apply to all cases and not in some respect or another. Nevertheless, the formulation Carroll offers for ethicism does not seem to recognise this: "Ethicism maintains that certain kinds of ethical failings in an artwork are always aesthetic defects and should be counted as such in an all-things-considered judgment of the work qua artwork." Carroll, Noël, "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research", ibid., 2000, p. 374.

[265] Gaut, Berys. "Morality and Art". ibid., 2009, p. 429. Gaut continues his thought and according to his reflection on the issue, moderate moralism entails a further claim, that is, not only is it the case that ethical defects in artworks can also be aesthetic defects but also, an ethical virtue has the capability to add to the aesthetic value of the artwork. In this respect, Gaut comments that while Carroll (1996) describes his position as moderate moralism, 'at some points he seems to allow that moral defects may contribute positively to the aesthetic value of a work, in which case he is a contextualist'. Matthew Kieran, approaching the issue from an immoralistic viewpoint, says in respect to moderate moralism: 'the position holds that a work's value as art can never be enhanced in virtue of its morally defective character', a claim he ascribes to Carroll (2000). Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 134. And on the one hand, Carroll seems to admit the same. He argues: "That is, moderate moralism, like ethicism, does not allow that a moral defect in an artwork might sometimes contribute to the positive aesthetic value of an artwork." Nevertheless, Carroll is not clear on that. He continues: "Speaking as a moderate moralist, I note that I've always used examples of moral defects that are aesthetic defects because my argument has been with the moderate autonomist. The thesis that a work might be aesthetically good because it is morally defective is obviously not an autonomist viewpoint, moderate or otherwise, and so it introduces a new issue that requires moderate moralism to explore heretofore unexamined options. But I'm not convinced that a moderate moralist must be antecedently committed one way or another on this issue on the basis of what the moderate moralist has said so far." Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. ibid., 2010, p. 262.

autonomism, moderate moralism claims only that sometimes a moral defect in an artwork can be an aesthetic flaw and that sometimes a moral virtue can be an aesthetic virtue. Like ethicism though, moderate moralism begins the case for moral defects being aesthetic defects by reflecting upon the ethically relevant responses prescribed by artworks.[266]

Carroll takes a closer look at the subject and starts his account by drawing distinctions between the two forms of autonomism — radical autonomism and moderate autonomism — in order to argue dialectically for moderate moralism – his own alternative position – and also, to distinguish it from radical moralism which maintains that art should only be discussed from a moral point of view. As Carroll argues: "Radical moralism is not my position, since I freely admit that some works of art may have no moral dimension, due to the kind of works they are, and because I do not claim that moral considerations trump all other considerations, such as formal ones. My position, moderate moralism, only contends that for certain genres, moral comment, along with formal comment, is natural and appropriate."[267]

With a view to challenging autonomism's claims of aesthetic evaluation based upon the common denominator argument, Carroll focuses on specific artforms or genres which, given what they are, warrant at least additional criteria of evaluation.[268] He thus takes up narrative artworks as the best case for substantiating his claims regarding moral evaluation. As he points out, "It is natural for us to discuss narrative artworks by means of ethical vocabularies because, due to the kinds of things they are, narrative artworks are designed to awaken, to stir up and to engage our moral powers of recognition and judgement. […] We may discuss the formal features of narrative artworks, but it is also apposite, given the nature of the beast, to discuss them from a moral point of view."[269] Narrative artworks offer Carroll the appropriate ground to argue in favour of the educative powers of poetry and at the same time, offer an argument against the view that most autonomists hold. Moderate moralism holds that moral evaluation may figure in our evaluations of some artworks, that is, in Carroll's words, "some artworks may be evaluated in virtue of the contribution they make to moral

[266] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". ibid., 2000, p. 377.
[267] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 229.
[268] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 227.
[269] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 229.

education. For inasmuch as narrative artworks engage our powers of moral understanding, they can be assessed in terms of whether they deepen or pervert the moral understanding."[270] Further, he gives reasons why this is true; Carroll considers that moral education is not simply a matter of acquiring new moral precepts, but it also involves coming to understand how to apply those precepts to situations. Narrative artworks can offer this possibility because, although it is true that they presuppose already morally educated readers, viewers and listeners, they can nevertheless activate these pre-existing moral emotions or doctrines, even if they may not be able to teach audiences new ones. Accordingly, he argues that "understanding is not simply a matter of having access to abstract propositions and concepts; it involves being able to apply them appropriately. This, of course, requires practice, and narrative artworks provide opportunities to develop, to deepen and to enlarge the moral understanding through practice."[271] In this regard, Carroll's argument partly rests on the notion that narrative artworks can deepen moral understanding and so, he also proposes a cognitivist claim about the value of art.[272]

This argument is further elaborated in order to justify the second claim, namely, that sometimes an ethical virtue in an artwork can also count as an aesthetic virtue. Carroll focuses on the fact that one of the fundamental effects or aims of narrative artworks is to absorb the attention of the audience. From this, the autonomists concluded that if the artwork essentially aims at our absorption in it, then it is valuable for its own sake. By contrast, for moderate moralism, if the aim of an artwork is to capture our interest, to engage our emotions, and to stimulate our imagination, then, it should be obvious that by engaging moral judgements and emotions, the moral understanding of the audience is being activated or even, deepened sometimes. In other words, "the deepening of our moral understanding and emotions may contribute dramatically to our intense absorption in a narrative artwork. And in such cases the way in which the artwork addresses and deepens our moral understanding

[270] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 229. Carroll mentions the autonomist view as follows: "what we typically are said to learn from artworks are nothing but truisms, which, in fact, everyone already knows and whose common knowledge may in fact be a condition for the intelligibility of the artworks in question."
[271] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 230.
[272] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 227. Nevertheless, Kieran claims the opposite, i.e., that moderate moralism does not seem to presuppose a cognitivist account of the value of art. Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010, p. 455.

is part and parcel of what makes the artwork successful."[273] Then, against moderate autonomism, the moderate moralist also claims that sometimes an ethical virtue in an artwork can also count as an aesthetic virtue.[274] To this extent, Carroll enumerates several factors which can contribute to making an artwork absorbing and thus, cases when an ethical virtue can be an aesthetic virtue; namely, "providing genuine, eye-opening moral insight; exercising and enlarging the audience's legitimate moral powers of perception, emotion, and reflection; challenging complacent moral doxa; provoking and/or expanding the moral understanding; calling forth educative moral judgments; encouraging the tracing out of moral implications or the unraveling of morally significant metaphors that have import for the audience's lives can all contribute to making an artwork absorbing."[275]

Within this context, Carroll offers further argument for his view putting forward his own version of the merited response argument, mentioned above in the case of ethicism. As he maintains, 'many artworks prescribe or mandate certain responses, including emotional responses, from their audiences'.[276] More specifically, Carroll considers artworks as incomplete structures which in order to be followed correctly, require to be filled in by audiences with all the unstated presuppositions from their cognitive stock as well as the appropriate emotional responses. There is thus a process of filling in a narrative artwork with an indeterminate number of presuppositions which are needed for its understanding. As he argues, "Since no novel says everything there is to say about its fictional world, audiences have the extremely important task of filling it with emotions the 'right way', where the 'right way' with regard to the emotions is in terms of the emotions the work aims to elicit." Therefore, it is important for narrative artworks to address the audiences in such a way so as to facilitate the aim of the work. Carroll takes some of these emotional responses to contain, among their warranting conditions, moral considerations – in the way that anger requires the perception of injustice – and some others to be thoroughly moral; a feeling of social indignation, for instance. And in this respect, he claims that an artwork that fails to secure

[273] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 236. Though Carroll only discusses narrative artworks, the case could be made with reference to other art forms or genres, such as portraiture.
[274] Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. ibid., 2010, p. 261. The concomitant of the moderate autonomist's claim that a work's moral flaws never count as aesthetic flaws is the claim that a work's moral merits never count as aesthetic merits. Carroll here disputes this too.
[275] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". ibid., 2000, p. 378.
[276] Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. ibid., 2010, p. 258.

emotional uptake is aesthetically defective on its own terms.[277] To support his argument, he turns to Aristotle's theory of tragedy and he considers: "if Aristotle is right, for tragedy to work as tragedy—to work on its own terms—it must elicit pity and fear from the audience. Failure to elicit pity and fear is a failure of tragedy qua tragedy, an aesthetic failure, a failure in the design of the work."[278] Accordingly, he applies a similar explanation in this case too. He strongly believes that "securing audience uptake to the responses a work prescribes is a leading feature of any artwork's agenda[279] as well as part of its design; a structural element of an artwork that invites the audience to fill it in in order to complete it."[280] Failing to secure uptake, then, is an aesthetic defect in an artwork, and, as such, 'needs to be balanced against whatever other, if any, aesthetic virtues the work possesses'.[281]

In addition, moderate moralism holds that an artwork may often fail to secure uptake where it is unable to elicit the emotional responses it requires to implement its own purposes – and this failure counts as an aesthetic failure. That may be because the artwork's portrayal of certain characters or situations fails to fit the moral-warranting criteria appropriate to the mandated emotion.[282] And, according to Carroll, one way an artwork can fail to fit these criteria is by being immoral: "Thus if the address of a work elicits the wrong moral assessments from the audience, or blocks the required ones, then the work will fail to secure emotive uptake and the work will be blemished on its own terms (that is to say, aesthetically)."[283] Moreover, in cases where audiences are not as morally sensitive as they should be, they may fail to be deterred by a moral defect in a work. If that is the case, then moderate moralists may criticise the artwork as aesthetically defective, 'if it would daunt the

[277] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". ibid., 2000, p. 377.
[278] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism". ibid.,1998, p. 420.
[279] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". ibid., 2000, p. 377.
[280] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism". ibid.,1998, p. 420.
[281] Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. ibid., 2010, p. 260.
[282] Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. ibid., 2010, p. 260. Carroll proposes to imagine a novel that calls upon audiences to deliver the moral sentiment of admiration for a sadistic colonizer who cruelly and relentlessly tortures every Indian he encounters, not only men but also, women and children. He presumes the moral rightness of his actions on the grounds that his victims are vermin and the point of view of the novel concurs. The graphic violence and the malevolence of the work are impossible to miss. The work would be criticised for its evil; it is morally defective. But it would also come as no surprise if audiences were unable to feel admiration for the colonizer. That is, *ex hypothesi*, they would not be able to respond emotionally in the prescribed manner, since he not only fails but contravenes the morally relevant criteria for admiration. Carroll refers to Kendal Walton (1994) for a defence of the view that audiences cannot just suspend their moral beliefs in such cases.
[283] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism". ibid.,1998, p. 421.

work's prescribed responses for ideally morally sensitive audiences because it is ethically defective'.[284] In this way, since one of the fundamental aesthetic effects of stories—being absorbed in them, being caught up in the story—is intimately bound up with our moral responses, both in terms of our emotions and judgements, then, sometimes an ethical defect can be an aesthetic defect according to moderate moralism and in most cases this is due to an immoral instantiation of the appropriate warranting conditions. Thus, moderate moralism maintains that, even where a work does have a morally deficient character, this is not always relevant to its value as art, but only where *it blocks our capacity* to be absorbed in the work or to react to it as sought.[285]

But still, we need to be attentive because moderate moralism does not claim that *every* moral defect in art is an aesthetic defect. Instead, Carroll points out that if a morally defective portrayal is so subtle as to escape a morally sensitive audience, then, a moderate moralist will not criticise it aesthetically.[286] Moderate moralism is not, then, committed to the proposition that *every* moral defect in an artwork is an aesthetic defect. For "the moderate moralist need only contend that among the complex of factors that account for the moral defectiveness of the artwork in question, on the one hand, and the complex of factors that explain the aesthetic defectiveness of the artwork, on the other hand, the evil perspective of the artwork will play a central, though perhaps not sufficient, explanatory role in both."[287] Concluding his account, Carroll argues that:

"it is the evilness of the address of many artworks that makes the morally sensitive reader, listener, or viewer incapable of supplying the emotive uptake the work demands on its own terms. Thus, evil, at least in some cases, can function as the material grounds for explaining the aesthetic defectiveness of an artwork, while simultaneously serving as the grounds for declaring the same artwork to be morally bad. In such circumstances, moral badness and aesthetic badness derive from the same source; a moral defect also counts as an aesthetic defect. The same evil explains both failings."[288]

[284] Carroll, Noël. "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research". ibid., 2000, p. 378. Carroll thinks of cases such as, perhaps in the midst of a war, audiences who are ordinarily morally sensitive will miss the inhumanity portrayed in the treatment of enemy soldiers in a propagandistic artwork.
[285] Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010, p. 455.
[286] Carroll, Noël. *Art in Three Dimensions*. ibid., 2010, p. 261. Carroll adds that once the morally defective portrayals are excavated, they can be ethically criticised, though.
[287] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 423.
[288] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism". ibid.,1998, p. 422.

Thus, a full account of why the work in question is aesthetically defective is that it is evil – evil in a way that blocks emotive uptake. And in this respect, Carroll states that "moral defectiveness can supply a reason why a certain work is aesthetically defective. At least in some cases. And that's moderate moralism."[289]

With these arguments, Carroll is led to the rejection of moderate autonomism, his rival position. Nevertheless, he still considers an objection that could be raised from the part of moderate autonomists. As he says, a moderate autonomist would claim that it has not been shown that something is an aesthetic defect only because it is evil; 'rather, it is an error concerning the audience's psychology – a tactical error'.[290] In this respect, the relevance of moral features is established only as an indirect side effect of the primary aesthetic importance of absorption or engagement with an artwork and so, whether an artwork solicits a defective moral perspective or not is a conceptually separate matter. But Carroll finds this response unconvincing. He agrees that the aesthetic defect concerns the psychology of audience members, namely, that they are psychologically incapable of providing the requisite uptake. But he is not persuaded that this failure is unconnected from the evil involved. "For, the reason that uptake is psychologically impossible may be because what is represented is evil" as he explains. "That is, the reason the work is aesthetically defective—in the sense of

[289] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism". ibid.,1998, p. 424. Carroll uses the following examples in favour of his claim. One example is the case of the Nazis circa 1943 who could fail to recognise morally that Hitler was not a tragic figure but this does not show that a play encouraging us to pity the dictator is not aesthetically ill-conceived. According to Carroll, "this may not be enough to show that a moral flaw is always an aesthetic flaw. But it is enough to show that it may sometimes be an aesthetic flaw, and that is sufficient to show that moderate autonomism is false." Another example of such a failure is Brett Easton Ellis' novel *American Psycho*, published in 1991; The author intended it as a satire of the rapacious eighties in the USA. He presented a serial killer as the symbol of the vaunted securities marketeer of Reagonomics. However, the serial killings depicted in the novel are so graphically brutal that readers are not able morally to get past the gore in order to savour the parody. According to Carroll, Ellis certainly made an aesthetic error. "He misjudged the effect of the murders on the audience. He failed to anticipate that the readers would not be able to secure uptake of his themes in the face of the unprecedented violence. […] But that defect was also an aesthetic defect, inasmuch as it compromised the novel on its own terms. *American Psycho*'s failure to achieve uptake as satire is attributable to Ellis' failure to grasp the moral inappropriateness of regarding his serial killer as comic." Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 232-4.

[290] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 234. Also, Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 155-6. Carroll's full account of the possible response on the part of the moderate autonomist is this: The sorts of defects can be categorized in two ways: as aesthetic defects (i.e., they present psychological problems with respect to audience uptake), or as moral problems (i.e., they project an evil point of view). Furthermore, Carroll claims: "the moderate autonomist may contend that all I have really offered are cases of the first type. And this does not imply a moral problem *qua* moral problem is an aesthetic defect in an artwork."

failing to secure psychological uptake—and the reason it is morally defective may be the same. Thus, insofar as the moderate autonomist may not be able to separate the aesthetic and moral defects of artworks across the board, moderate autonomism again seems false."[291]

Moderate autonomists were not fully convinced by Carroll's argument. Indeed, Anderson and Dean express further concerns and focus on the fact that, in the light of moderate moralism, the moral features of a work as such seem to play no direct role in its resulting artistic value. In this respect, they point to an ambiguity entailed in the argument and more specifically, in the phrase 'what is being represented'. As they explain, Carroll could mean either 'the subject matter of the work being represented' or 'the perspective being represented by the work'. The examples Carroll uses, as well as the fact that "the alternative interpretation would leave his argument with very little plausibility",[292] lead Anderson and Dean to consider that Carroll means the latter. Within this context, they examine whether the reasons for the work's being morally defective are truly the same and offer a reconstruction of Carroll's argument essentially inviting us to compare two arguments: First, they focus on the reasons Carroll offers for the work's having the relevant moral defect. The argument for the moral defectiveness of the work is construed as follows:

<u>The Moral Defect Argument:</u>

1. The perspective of the work in question is immoral.
2. Therefore, the work 'invites us to share [this morally] defective perspective' (In one case, we are invited to find an evil person sympathetic; in the other case, we are invited to find gruesome acts humorous.)
3. Any work which invites us to share a morally defective perspective is, itself, morally defective.
4. Therefore, the work in question is morally defective.[293]

[291] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 234-5.

[292] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998. p. 156. Carroll offers the examples of Hitler as well as *American Psycho*. As he explains, 'portraying Hitler as a tragic figure and the dismemberments in *American Psycho*, both suggest this reading of the phrase. In these cases, it is not so much (or merely) that what is represented is evil, but that the way in which they are represented (sympathetically and humorously), given their content (totalitarian genocide and protracted, torturous murder), is evil'.

[293] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 156. Anderson and Dean explicate that the inference from (1) to (2) is grounded in the nature of a work's having a perspective. The work's perspective is exactly what the audience is 'invited' to take up. Reasons for accepting (3) include Carroll's claim that such works tend, at least, to 'pervert the moral understanding' by means of their defective perspectives.

As Anderson and Dean argue, from the premises of this argument nothing follows concerning whether or not the work in question is aesthetically defective. The next step is a supplementary argument with a focus on the aesthetic defects. The argument for the aesthetic defectiveness of the work looks like this:

The Aesthetic Defect Argument:

1. The perspective of the work in question is immoral.
2. The immorality portrayed subverts the possibility of uptake. (In the case of the tragedy, the response of pity is precluded; in the case of satire the savoring of parody is precluded.)
3. Any work which subverts its own genre is aesthetically defective.
4. Therefore, the work in question is aesthetically defective.[294]

From the above, Anderson and Dean claim that even though the arguments are different, none of the two succeeds in offering a reason why a moral problem is an aesthetic defect in an artwork – 'the same reasons are not operative in both'.[295] Subsequently, the plausibility of Carroll's claim rests entirely on the fact that the two arguments share one common premise, namely, that the work in question possesses an immoral perspective by itself. But, this fact alone cannot show the work to be morally or aesthetically defective; 'in neither case is the immoral perspective of the work the sufficient reason for its moral or aesthetic defectiveness'. Thus, according to moderate autonomists, this premise alone is not a sufficient condition for moral or aesthetic badness. And so, the moral features of a work as such seem to play no direct role in its resulting artistic value. Anderson and Dean conclude: "the objection Carroll raises to his own rejection of moral autonomism stands."[296] In a subsequent paper, Carroll replies to Anderson and Dean offering and offers further supporting reasons for his claim.[297]

[294] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 157. The Aesthetic Defect Argument requires a premise (premise 2) about the sort of work it is, linking the perspective of the work to the failure of uptake specific to that sort of work. This is what makes the defect aesthetic in character and in Carroll's words, 'a failure of tragedy [or satire] as such'.

[295] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 157.

[296] Anderson, James C., Dean, Jeffrey T. "Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 157. According to Anderson and Dean, one could argue more simply that the fact that the work offers a morally defective perspective, by itself, entails that the work is morally defective. It is then even more difficult to see how this argument provides the same reasons as the Aesthetic Defect Argument which follows.

[297] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism". ibid., 1998, p. 422-4. Carroll insists on claiming that, with respect to the artwork in question, the evil perspective of the artwork is an ineliminable factor in explaining why, as a matter of fact, it is morally defective and in explaining why, as a matter of fact, it is aesthetically defective. Further, that there are other contributing factors does not mitigate the explanatory

Apart from moderate autonomism, ethicism expressed further objections to moderate moralism as well. In particular, Berys Gaut discusses certain concerns arisen with regard to the merited response argument. He construes Carroll's merited response argument in broad outline as follows. "First, narrative artworks have as an aesthetic aim the production of certain responses in their audiences: generally, they aim to absorb their audiences, commanding their attention and interest; and specific genres of narrative artworks may also aim at more specific responses, such as the aim of tragedy to get its audience to feel pity for the hero, and the aim of satire to amuse. Second, moral defects in a work result in morally sensitive audiences being unable to experience the aimed-at response—that is, the work will not secure psychological uptake of the aimed-at responses in this audience. The argument concludes that moral defects in works of art, when resulting in audiences being unable to secure psychological uptake of the aimed-at responses, are aesthetic defects in those works. Conversely, moral merits, when enhancing uptake of the works' aimed-at responses, such as when the moral merits of a work increase one's absorption in it, are aesthetic merits of these works."[298]

According to Gaut, Carroll's version of the merited response argument faces certain problems, most importantly, the appeal to a morally sensitive audience.[299] As he argues, "appeal to a morally sensitive audience solves the problem, but no reason is provided for why this kind of audience is the appropriate one against which to measure the value of artworks. Indeed, the relevance of an appeal to such an audience is just what the autonomist would

role that the evil of the work plays in accounting respectively for the moral and aesthetic defectiveness of the work in question. Carroll points to the way that Anderson and Dean have set up the Aesthetic Defect Argument and remarks: it obscures the way in which the evil of the work plays a central explanatory role in accounting for the aesthetic failing of the work in question. As he explains, in the way Anderson and Dean present the argument, what accounts for the work's aesthetic defectiveness is its own failure to implement the aims of the genre to which it belongs. But for Carroll it is not clear why Anderson and Dean insist on talking about genres here, since it will be an aesthetic defect of the work if it fails to secure its aims, whether or not those aims are genre specific. In this respect, he adds: "Anderson and Dean tell us that the work in question subverts the possibility of audience uptake due to its immoral perspective. But that premise requires further support and argumentation if it is to explain what has gone awry in the case in question."

[298] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 228.

[299] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 228. Carroll introduces this notion, having earlier discussed audiences' responses without this restriction, in order to meet a potential counter-example: a propaganda film that treats the enemy as sub-human and to which most of its wartime audience has no problem in reacting as invited. More generally, evil audiences might very easily be able to secure uptake of the responses invited by evil works (such as the Nazis watching the *Triumph of the Will*).

deny. So, the crucial appeal to a morally sensitive audience simply begs the question in favour of some version of moralism." By the same token, Jacobson argues that the morally sensitive audience Carroll refers to must be understood not simply as being highly discriminating, but also correct in their moral judgments. As he says: "the question is whether even such substantive moral sensitivity is a delicacy in the Humean sense – that is, an epistemic ideal for aesthetic judgment. Carroll clearly thinks so, but I disagree."[300]

Furthermore, Gaut points to a structural mistake in the argument. As he argues, what matters aesthetically on this argument is whether or not the audience is deterred from psychological uptake—that is, experiencing the aimed-at response. But then what is aesthetically wrong with the work is that it fails to secure psychological uptake in its audience, not that it is morally defective. Carroll counter argues that what explains the work's inability to secure uptake is its moral defect. Yet, according to Gaut, that cannot always be true, given Carroll's own account. For "Carroll holds that the most general aimed-at response in art is absorption; yet a morally sensitive audience could be absorbed in a work precisely because the work is evil. Moral disapproval is compatible with close attention to evil works (and indeed to evil people)."[301] Finally, the argument assumes that a general goal of art is absorption and that this is invariably a positive aesthetic value. But, as Gaut remarks, "it is very doubtful whether all art aims at this response, or, indeed, whether it is a central aesthetic value."[302] Obviously, Gaut does not consider whether or not a moral defect in an artwork hinders an audience's emotive 'uptake' nor does he take absorption into account in his argument. The manifestation of a morally virtuous attitude by a work is, for him, an intrinsic part of its aesthetic value.[303]

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[300] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 188. Jacobson mentions two examples; Hume's complaint about the rough heroes of Greek epic, with whom he thought it impossible to sympathize. Or Walton's claim that *Triumph of the Will* can inspire only disgust; as he claims: "I expect that some readers, who are neither formalists nor fascists, will find this report to be at odds with their experience of that film." A similar claim is found in Kendal Walton. For instance, about his primary example, *Triumph of the Will* Walton writes: "If the work's obnoxious message does not destroy its aesthetic value, it nevertheless renders it morally inaccessible. That must count as an aesthetic defect as well as a moral defect." Walton, L. Kendal, Tanner, Michael. "Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality". ibid., 1994, p. 30.

[301] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 229. Gaut explains that one may be appalled by a work on moral grounds, and for this reason be absorbed by it, having it command one's attention and interest. One could be absorbed in *Triumph of the Will* precisely because it is so morally repellent and one wants to understand how anyone could have been led to embrace the Fascist views endorsed in it.

[302] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 228-9.

[303] Connolly, Oliver. "Ethicism and Moderate Moralism". ibid., 2000, p. 307. Connolly here points to one of the differences between ethicism and moderate moralism. Yet, according to Connolly, the fact that Carroll introduces the normative element (as he calls it) of morally idealized audiences as opposed to the actual ones,

Daniel Jacobson expressed an idea which also entails criticism of moderate moralism. He focuses on the fact that Carroll recognises that 'an actual audience will not recoil from an immoral work of art if they don't appreciate its viciousness'.[304] And as he remarks, although "this is Carroll's most careful statement of his Humean moralism, it is still insufficiently rigorous."[305] The reason is that, by the same reasoning, Carroll should grant that sometimes members of an audience will in fact be deterred from responding to a work by their moral qualms, though there is no moral defect.[306] Accordingly, Jacobson explains that it might be the case that the ideally morally sensitive audience is reluctant to join a prescribed response due to the immorality of the artwork. And, if the reluctance is akin to that of a person, then it seems that this person has simply made whatever the work has to offer inaccessible to himself. And so, if what the work has to offer is inaccessible to this person, he is in no position to judge the work aesthetically, since he has not experienced it fully. Hence, Jacobson claims that while the moral inaccessibility of an artwork is some kind of defect in it, it is no blemish or aesthetic defect, properly speaking. From this perspective, he argues that Carroll's conclusion "does not say anything about immoral art itself and additionally, it causes confusion; So, it must be avoided at all costs."[307] In an overall account, Jacobson holds that the assumption that moral defects in a work of art –*when they are granted to be relevant to its aesthetic evaluation* – must be blemishes, is false. And thus "Humean moralism offers too simple a conception of the relationship between moral and aesthetic value. It is doomed by the incorrigibility of the best immoral art, even if this point cannot be appreciated by the morally sensitive audience."[308] In turn, Carroll offered further clarification on his position contrasting Jacobson's assumption. As he explains, it need not be the case that viewers or

eliminates the differences between his theory and Gaut's; Manifested virtuous attitudes would always be aesthetic virtues, not just sometimes. And moral defects would be aesthetic defects intrinsically, not instrumentally since Carroll relies on Gaut's argument at this stage, and does not offer his own for the introduction of this normative element.

[304] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 188. As he says: "Carroll does not insist that every moral defect in an artwork is a disfiguring blemish upon it; but neither is he claiming merely that some moral defects are aesthetic flaws. Rather, a moral defect will count as an aesthetic defect when it actually deters the response to which the work aspires. And it will also count as a blemish even if it is not detected – so long as it is there to be detected by morally sensitive audiences whose response to the work's agenda will be spoilt by it."

[305] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 188.

[306] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 189. As Jacobson points out, "This is the lesson to be drawn from the scandalous response to the first performances of Ibsen's social realist plays."

[307] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 188.

[308] Jacobson, Daniel. "In praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 194.

readers actually are deterred from the response which the work invites. "The work is flawed if it contains a failure in moral perspective that a morally sensitive audience could detect, such that that discovery would compromise the effect of the work on its own terms. Thus, a moral defect can count as an aesthetic defect even if it does not undermine appreciation by actual audiences so long as it has the counterfactual capacity to undermine the intended response of morally sensitive audiences."[309]

This last claim became Matthew Kieran's focus in his discussion of moderate moralism in a critical spirit.[310] Kieran observes that Carroll's argument may properly be construed in normative rather than descriptive terms.[311] If so, then in this way, moderate moralism construed in terms of morally sensitive audiences collapses into Gaut's ethicism; For it follows that all moral flaws in a work will constitute aesthetic flaws. A morally sensitive audience will always be repelled by prescriptions to assent to moral vice or dissent from moral virtue – in other words appropriate moral characterization promotes aesthetic absorption and inappropriate moral characterization hinders it.[312] Thus as Kieran notes, "the assimilation of moderate moralism to ethicism brings with it the cost of making moral considerations, wherever they bear on the responses prescribed by a work, always relevant rather than only being sometimes relevant."[313] And in this respect, moderate moralism is not really that moderate.

Moreover, he points to another significant worry for moderate moralism which arises in relation to works that may fail in their aims and yet be all the better for it. More specifically, Kieran claims that an artwork, namely a narrative, may fail to elicit the sought for affective responses in its audience in a way which improves rather than lessens the value of an artwork

[309] Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 234.
[310] Kieran construes Carroll's account as follows: "Moderate moralism holds that a moral defect may count as an aesthetic one and a moral virtue may constitute an aesthetic one where the emotional responses a work solicits to achieve its purposes are, respectively, withheld or forthcoming because of the work's moral character. An artwork that fails to achieve its purposes is a failure on its own terms." Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010, p. 455.
[311] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". *British Journal of Aesthetics* 41/1 (January 2001): pp. 26-38 (28).
[312] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 29.
[313] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 29.

as art.[314] And he thinks further of more such cases, that is, where the work's failure to achieve its aim by not eliciting the sought for responses constitutes an improvement rather than a diminishment of the work's value, in order to support his claim. All in all, Kieran believes that moderate moralism is an inherently unstable position and argues that "either the morally sensitive audience is an idealised notion to be cashed out in something like the terms of merited responses articulated above, in which case it collapses back into ethicism, or the notion is not so heavily idealised in which case it is far from clear that the relation between moral virtue and vice and artistic virtue and vice always goes the same way. If it is the latter it's far from clear why it deserves the term 'moralism' at all."[315]

To sum up until this point, both moderate moralism and ethicism explain when and why moral defects are aesthetic flaws, in terms of art's capacity to move us emotionally; However, whereas moderate moralism, at least under one construal, merely appeals to whether a work is absorbing and whether we can react as solicited, ethicism, by contrast, is concerned with whether we ought to react as solicited in terms of what we believe the right responses to be.[316] On the other hand, moderate moralism, like ethicism, recognises that great art need have no moral character whatsoever; and in addition, that good art may be morally flawed, for a work may be highly valuable in other respects. Moreover, both moderate moralism and ethicism hold that, at least in certain cases, a work may be good as art and yet aesthetically defective in so far as it commends a morally defective perspective. In other words, despite its morally defective character, a work may be, all told, a good artwork. However, as Kieran argues, "if we had grounds for holding that a work could be valuable in virtue of its immoral character, then we would have strong reason to hold that neither ethicism nor moderate

[314] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 27-8. Kieran imagines a didactic writer who aims to elicit responses of admiration for poor people as such, on the basis that poor people are necessarily honest, and disdain for rich people as such, on the basis that the materially well off are necessarily morally corrupt. As he explains, 'in writing the novel the didactic author unintentionally renders some of the central characters in a more complex fashion than it is consistent with her aims – some of the poor characters seem devious and scheming whilst some of the rich characters seem altruistically motivated and sympathetic. Now the didactic novel fails to achieve its aim of conveying the notion that elevated material status necessarily corrupts moral character because it fails to elicit the sought for responses. But it fails because the responses the work does elicit are more complex, sophisticated and less sentimental than those it sought to evoke. […] In virtue of the way the work fails on its own terms qua didactic novel it may be of greater value qua narrative art than it would have been had it succeeded in realising its didactic aim'.

[315] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 134.

[316] Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality". ibid., 2010, p. 457.

moralism could be the right accounts of the interrelations between the moral character of a work and its aesthetic value. It has been argued that immoral works can be valuable as art because there are many different plausible views on the nature and morality of a great number of things (Jacobson 1997).”[317]

[317] Kieran, Matthew. “Art and Morality”. ibid., 2010, p. 458.

Contextualism

A position that has been variously called Immoralism (Kieran 2003) or the Antitheoretical view (Jacobson 2006) agrees that moral flaws are sometimes aesthetically relevant, but holds that when they are so, sometimes a work is aesthetically flawed insofar as it is morally flawed, and sometimes it is aesthetically meritorious insofar as it is morally flawed.[318] Whether a moral flaw counts as an aesthetic flaw depends on its context in the work; so, this view is also termed Contextualism. Contextualists have argued for their position mainly by attacking the arguments for moralism.

Contextualist considerations take as their starting point the assessment of two arguments linked with ethicism and moderate moralism. These are: (1) the cognitive argument: given that the cognitive value of art is internal to artistic value, where this is directly linked to the artistic means deployed, ethicism follows. "This is because the misrepresentation of moral features, the solicitation of morally inappropriate responses or the commendation of that which should be condemned involves misunderstanding how we should perceive, react or what our attitude should be."[319] (2) The merited response argument: whether or not we should respond as solicited by a work depends upon whether that response is merited or not. "If a horror movie solicits fear whether such a response is merited or not depends on whether we judge the monster as represented to be scary. Where the response concerns moral

[318] Gaut, Berys. "Morality and Art". ibid., 2009, p. 429. According to Berys Gaut, this position supports a complex (polytonic) value-relation since it refers to what is sometimes the case. In this sense, contextualism in terms of aesthetically relevant ethical qualities is formulated as follows: "a work is sometimes aesthetically flawed in so far as it possesses an ethical flaw that is aesthetically relevant and is sometimes aesthetically meritorious in so far as it possesses an ethical flaw that is aesthetically relevant." By extension, the case for ethical merits is then formulated as follows: "a work is sometimes aesthetically meritorious in so far as it possesses aesthetically relevant ethical merits, and sometimes aesthetically defective in so far as it possesses aesthetically relevant ethical merits." Full-blooded contextualism encompasses both ethical defects and ethical merits. For Gaut, "Immoralists, such as Kieran, hold that the value-relation is sometimes positive, sometimes negative. Hence they too are contextualists." Another contextualist position is offered by Robert Stecker in "The Interaction of Ethical and Aesthetic Value". Stecker holds that, under certain restricted conditions, ethical defects of works are responsible for aesthetic defects. But as Gaut indicates, he does not consider whether ethical defects are ever responsible for aesthetic merits. In this respect, Stecker's account exhibits the same incompleteness as does Carroll's. Depending on what he would say about the latter issue, his account would be compatible with either contextualism or ethicism. In *Sight and Sensibility* Dominic McIver Lopes also defends an account of the interaction of moral (and cognitive) values with aesthetic value, but, though he calls the account "moralism" at some points, his position seems to be similarly indeterminate between contextualism and ethicism. Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, ibid., 2007, p. 54-5.

[319] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 134.

features, aspects of character and attitudes, whether a response is merited or not will in part depend on moral considerations."[320] Thus, in the contemporary debate, most discussion has focused on the content of works and the moral appropriateness or otherwise, of responses solicited. However, one of the points that these lines of argument fail to account for is how and why our responses and attitudes to works sometimes differ though the relevant moral character is the same. For instance, with respect to jokes, 'some sick ones we laugh at, others we don't, works by Graham Greene and novels by Henry James, some we feel drawn into and others we are not. At least part of the explanation concerns an evaluation of the costs and benefits of doing so'.[321]

A kind of contextualist position, called the antitheoretical position, is offered in Daniel Jacobson's 'In Praise of Immoral Art', a rich paper which was the first to challenge moralists drawing a tight connection between merited responses to art works and moral responses.[322] Namely, Jacobson holds that:

"a work's moral character can be relevant but how so just depends on the particularities of the work in question. In one case a work's immoral character may mar it and yet in another it may enhance it. Perhaps there is no essential relation between artistic and moral value."[323]

This is consistent with holding that artistic value is linked to our non-artistic needs and desires, which happen to include the need for moral truth, so it will often turn out that we value art which is morally speaking on target (John 2006). A different basis for the anti-theoretic approach is grounded in the recognition of the moral ambiguity of art and our 'unfinished' moral state (Hamilton 2003).[324] Morally problematic works, after all, often provide us with

[320] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 135.
[321] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 137. Kieran adds, "In some cases allowing my moral scruples to be overridden looks likely to bring some kind of payoff and in other cases it doesn't. […] I sometimes even find my responses varying according to, psychologically speaking, where I am in my life." As he indicates, when engaging with fictions we are all often prepared to entertain and enter into moral responses and attitudes we take to be, in real life, deeply morally problematic.
[322] Jacobson argues for a piecemeal approach to such evaluation in his "Ethical Criticism and the Vices of Moderation" in Kieran (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. Kieran, Matthew. *Revealing Art*. New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 262.
[323] Jacobson, Daniel. "Ethical Criticism and the Vices of Moderation" in *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art* edited by Matthew Kieran. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, pp. 342–55.
[324] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to

the means of questioning our own moral commitments.

In Jacobson's antitheoretical position, aesthetic value is not autonomous because a work's moral, cognitive, and aesthetic values are sometimes inextricably linked. The truth and moral worth of a work's ideas sometimes do contribute to its aesthetic value, and hence they are aesthetic reasons in its favour; but the immorality of some art – like the offensiveness of some jokes – is equally inseparable from its aesthetic value. In this instance, it will be false to say either that the work's immorality is an adventitious feature of it, or that the work would be better were it not morally flawed. In such cases, it makes no sense to claim that the aesthetically relevant moral defect in the work is a blemish upon it. "Hence both autonomism and Humean moralism founder. Neither view succeeds in adequately capturing the complexity of the relationship between the moral and the aesthetic."[325] Expressing a cognitivist spirit, Jacobson argues that the points of view manifested in works of narrative and dramatic art cannot be understood on a purely propositional model, as articulable moral messages. Rather, they should be taken as expressing ethical perspectives: "ways of seeing the world, in the light of a particular set of evaluative concepts." And he further remarks: "of course, if we differ over whether a given perspective is pernicious, we will differ over what art is immoral; but we can expect no more agreement about immoral art than there is about morality."[326]

Using examples of immoral art and especially the case of offensive jokes, Jacobson brings forth the arguments of Humean moralists – that is Berys Gaut, Noël Carroll, Matthew Kieran and more circumspectly, Kendal Walton and Richard Moran – in order to refute them without appealing to any claim about the autonomy of aesthetic value; but instead, with an ultimate aim, to praise immoral art. In particular he indicates, "I argue for the unlikely conclusion that what is properly deemed a moral defect in a work of art can contribute positively and ineliminably to its aesthetic value. When this is so, it makes no sense to call such a moral defect an aesthetic flaw in the work. Thus we must be able to praise immoral art and not simply as formalism allows: for its beauty, understood as being irrelevant to the content of a

Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 137.
[325] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 182.
[326] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 167.

work of art, and hence to the source of its immorality."[327] In these respects, he suggests that:

"not only is some art better for its immorality, but it is precisely in virtue of its potential for immorality that narrative and dramatic art can serve an important ethical function. If so, then an ethically vital form of art cannot be kept morally pristine."[328] […] "an immoral work of art does not merely depict but advocates, or is complicitous with, a morally suspect point of view."[329]

Jacobson accepts that in cases when art does not move us or moves us in the wrong way (e.g., to disgust) we customarily tend to think it is aesthetically flawed; Yet, he believes that this is not always so; "For we might be to blame for our failure to respond as the work requires, due to a failure of imagination or attention, or to some prejudice."[330] In his words, "when the work itself is the object of our response – as when we ask if the comedy is funny, or the thriller thrilling – then these are questions about the warrant of our responses. But we must avoid simply concluding that whenever the characters and events of a work of fiction do not warrant the responses which are requisite for the work to succeed, this constitutes an aesthetic flaw; for this way of speaking courts confusion."[331] To illustrate this point, Jacobson contrasts tragedy to offensive jokes and shows that fear, pity or other tragic emotions aroused by the portrayal of tragic events are directed at the fictional characters and events, rather than at the work itself. And he explains: "We (take ourselves to) pity Anna Karenina, and fear for Oedipus' inevitable fall whereas in the case of the clichéd traveling salesman joke, we do not feel anything for the salesman although such a joke makes something fictional and in addition, calls for amusement; both traits similar to tragedy." In fact, Jacobson claims that "jokes don't prescribe us to imagine having any emotional response toward their characters – we don't have to pity the foolish salesman, or lust after the farmer's daughter." But instead, such responses, which are directed at fictional objects, "are only 'quasi-emotions'; they are grounded in pretence, and our attributions of them, to ourselves and others, should not be taken literally."[332]

[327] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 162.
[328] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 162.
[329] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 167.
[330] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 183.
[331] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 184.
[332] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 184. Jacobson adopts Kendal Walton's account presented in "Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts". Simultaneously, Jacobson thinks it is important to note that for Walton, a variety of other emotional responses aroused by art,

Considering the moralists' favourite example, the *Triumph of the Will*, Leni Riefenstahl's tendentious documentary of the 1934 Nazi rally in Nuremberg,[333] he argues that even the acknowledged moral defects of this film, though aesthetically relevant, cannot be deemed blemishes on the work. And further he takes on the moralists' *best* argument: namely, that "since our responses to works of narrative and dramatic art depend upon the fictional qualities of its characters and events, the emotional and evaluative responses they warrant depend upon how it is ethical to respond to what these works turn into fiction."[334] Against this view, Jacobson claims that 'art can succeed in portraying its subject in a distorting, or even an evil light'. Such immoral art can incite even a good person to see what it depicts as it is portrayed – as shameful, funny, pitiful, glorious, et al. – despite the fact that one's critical judgment remains always vehemently directed to the contrary. Immoral art can succeed, that is, if one does not resist imagining as prescribed by our interpretive norms. Moreover, immoral art can succeed even in cases when resistance is futile because 'once exposed to the work, one cannot help but see the subject in this light'. Jacobson brings the examples of caricature, and more subtly the case with portraiture and says that: "a cunning political cartoon can make you see someone in a manner which you would repudiate as a judgment. Then it is a good caricature, albeit a bad political statement. In these cases, it would be closer to the truth to say that the relevant moral defect is an aesthetic merit of the work. At any rate, it cannot sensibly be termed an aesthetic flaw or blemish without rendering those terms empty."[335]

To this extent, two assumptions are further considered: First, 'moral defects in a work of art are uncompensated – there is either nothing valuable in them, or at most there is a superficial pleasure derived from their formal beauty'. And, second, 'these defects are gratuitous, because whatever value the works can be granted to have could be possessed without risk of infection – immoral art can be sanitized'. For Jacobson, "both these assumptions are

which are directed at the work itself or don't take objects at all (e.g., moods such as anxiety, melancholy, and joy) can be fully sincere. (199).

[333] This is held by some, autonomists, to be a paradigmatic case of how a negative ethical evaluation of the work's deplorable propagandistic message nevertheless does not detract from, or indeed has no impact on, its artistic or aesthetic merit. Todd, Cain. "Aesthetic, Ethical and Cognitive Value". *South African Journal of Philosophy* 26/2 (2007): pp. 216-227 (216).

[334] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 184.

[335] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 187.

necessary, because a moral defect relevant to a work's aesthetic evaluation cannot be considered a blemish if it is inseparable from some significant intrinsic value of the work."[336] So if the morally sensitive audience is, by definition, incapable of responding to art as it would be wrong to, as Humean moralism holds, then the only positive response to immoral art that one can safely admit to having is pleasure at the work's formal beauty, which is not implicated in its immoral content. Whereas the only other option, for a morally sensitive spectator, is to deny that the work has any aesthetic value at all. "Of course, if *Triumph of the Will* has no aesthetic value, then it is no better as art than standard-issue Nazi kitsch." Jacobson remarks that "this aesthetic judgment is clearly preposterous, though someone whose only response to the film is disgust – which might, for all I've said, be the only morally justifiable response – cannot be expected to see that."[337] And in opposition to these assumptions, he argues:

"Like all the best immoral art, this film is incorrigible: it cannot be sanitized, as the moralists' appropriation of the notion of formal beauty promises, it can only be expurgated. Thus, what is most valuable in such art cannot, as Walton imagines of *Triumph of the Will's* beautiful images, be "embedded in an unobjectionable context." And Kieran's claim, "the work would have been better, qua art, if it had vilified just as well that which it seeks to glorify" is either meaningless or false; for whatever such a work would be, it would not be *Triumph of the Will*."[338]

Jacobson is in broad sympathy with the idea that art can significantly contribute to something like moral understanding by moving us to emotion, and requiring that we make sense of these emotions as responses to the narrative. Nevertheless, he indicates that an assumption implicit in the Humean moralists' development of these ideas needs to be called into question: that moral understanding can be deepened by acquaintance with morally felicitous perspectives only."[339] And he concludes that:

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[336] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 191.

[337] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 192. Walton concedes the possibility that the film has aesthetic value, of a sort: he allows that its images might possess "formal beauty." Kieran acknowledges, in a similar vein, "the power and numbing beauty of [the film's] aesthetic imagines." (Carroll too writes that *Pulp Fiction*, despite being morally defective and thereby aesthetically blemished, is "formally compelling."). For Jacobson, this tendency is an expression of the fundamental commitment of moralism: that the flaws of immoral art are gratuitous and uncompensated obstacles to its appreciation.

[338] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 193.

[339] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 193. Jacobson notices that the greatest difference between Hume and the Humean moralists is that his followers pay art the compliment of thinking it powerful enough to be dangerous. They also harbor the humanist ambition that narrative and dramatic art can serve an

"It is that objectivity in ethical matters is less a view from nowhere than an ability to view things imaginatively from a variety of ethical perspectives – even though some of them (such as Riefenstahl's, whether in her role as aesthete or fascist) will be systematically distorted. Of course, these metaphors of moral vision and perspective need to be developed further before anything like a theory can seriously be broached."[340]

Although Jacobson provides very useful insight regarding the moralistic arguments as well as a different approach to the relation between the moral and the aesthetic, nevertheless his antitheoretical version of contextualism holds that nothing in general can be said about when and why ethical flaws count as aesthetic merits and when as aesthetic flaws. This fact exposes him to an autonomist attack. For the autonomist can claim that the reason that no general account can be given is because there is no relation between the aesthetic and the ethical realms at all.[341] Surely, there is need of some kind of account as to how and why the relationship can go differently in distinct cases. And from this perspective, the anti-theory approach seems more like 'a restatement of the problem rather than a solution to it'. This has been observed by Kieran who notes that if we have a general account of artistic value then there's good reason to think that there will be a general account of how it links to the assessment of a work's moral character.[342]

In fact, Matthew Kieran develops an alternative contextualist position, one with the salient advantage of providing an account of when and why ethical flaws are sometimes aesthetic flaws and sometimes aesthetic merits.[343] Kieran is a cognitivist, but denies that cognitivism entails moralism. On the contrary, we can sometimes learn from a work precisely because it advocates immoral views; so, an ethical flaw will be an aesthetic merit when it promotes learning.[344] It may be that a pithy summation of it is due to Oscar Wilde who held that "lying,

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ethical function. Thus, Gaut claims that "art can teach us about what is ethically correct"; Kieran that it can aid in the cultivation of morals; and Carroll notes that part of what we intrinsically value in some narrative and dramatic art is "the opportunity it affords for deepening our moral understanding.

[340] Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997, p. 194. In the course of his essay, Jacobson underlines that he is not making a tally argument; yet he advances some normative judgments.

[341] Gaut, Berys. "Morality and Art". ibid., 2009, p. 430.

[342] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 138.

[343] Gaut, Berys. "Morality and Art". ibid., 2009, p. 430.

[344] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism" in *Art and Morality* edited by José Luis Bermúdez and Sebastian Gardner. London: Routledge, 2003, p. 72.

the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of art."[345] Broadly speaking, Kieran's primary concern focuses on the nature and status of artistic value, "the form and depth of our responses to art works, the ways in which art can be insightful or can cultivate our inner lives" as he remarks.[346] With this regard, he introduces his position, calls it *the most moderate moralism* and puts it forward as a revision of moderate moralism in defence of the ethical evaluation of narrative art.[347] Most moderate moralism is formulated as follows:

"The moral features implicit in and central to the imaginative experience afforded by a work are relevant to a narrative's value as art to the extent that they undermine or promote the intelligibility, with respect to appropriately sensitive audiences, of the characters, events and states of affairs as represented."[348]

Elaborating on his proposal, he points to five crucial points that should be noted:

1. The first point ties in with standard forms of critical evaluation of narratives as art as ridiculous, implausible, unintelligible or improbable in relation to how a character, events or states of affairs are characterised.[349]

2. The criterion of relevance, what is central to the imaginative experience afforded by a work, includes but is broader than that of affective response.

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[345] Wilde, Oscar. "The Decay of Lying – An Observation". In *Critical Theory since Plato* edited by Hazard Adams. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971, p. 686. Berys Gaut comments on this point that, "agreeing as he saw it with Plato that art is a form of lying, Oscar Wilde in "The Decay of Lying" then stood Plato on his head, and argued that the decay of art was the result of the decay of lying." Generally, Wilde is often thought of as a proponent of aestheticism, but, "with a magnificent indifference to consistency, he managed at various points to embrace all the strands of the debate. For instance, the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is famously full of aphorisms supporting autonomism; but, when one delves below the glittering prose of the novel's surface, it reads suspiciously like a simple morality tale." Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 5.

[346] Kieran, Matthew. *Revealing Art*. New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 4. In formulating his view, Kieran uses the term 'art' to mean good or great art.

[347] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". *British Journal of Aesthetics* 41/1 (January 2001): pp. 26-38 (33). Also, Kieran, Matthew. "Art and Morality" in the *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* edited by Jerrold Levinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 463.

[348] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 34.

[349] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 34. Kieran says that "when we think of works whose value is often taken to be marred in some way by their moral character, we tend to think of works like Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, in terms of its sentimentality toward the poor by representing them as necessarily honest, or Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, Ezra Pounds *Cantos* or D. W. *Griffith's Birth of a Nation*, in terms of their racism. In criticisms of these works, some of their flaws are identified in terms of the ridiculousness or unintelligibility of their moral character. This is despite the positive contributions of these problematic elements to their respective thematic developments in achieving aesthetic unity and coherence."

In respect of this second point, it is important to recognise that we can and do evaluate the prescribed images, descriptions, authorial asides and commentaries of a work, in so far as they develop or shed light on what is central to the imaginative experience afforded, even where they may not be designed to elicit any affective response whatsoever.[350]

3. Next, the quality of the imaginative experience afforded by a narrative concerns its value as art and is, in part, a function of how intelligible that experience is. Intelligibility is thus internal to the evaluation of a work as art.

In Kieran's theory, intelligibility takes a central role and is not here merely to be cashed out in terms of the coherence and consistency of the imagery, description, thoughts and affective responses sought: "If this were all that were meant then the position would merely be a variant of moderate autonomism or sophisticated aestheticism." Rather, intelligibility further concerns how plausible or psychologically probable, informative, explanatory or insightful the understanding afforded through the imaginative experience is held to be. According to Kieran, the recognition that this is so is an upshot of at least the following two considerations:

Firstly, appraisals of the imaginative realisation of a narrative as banal, implausible, trivial, shallow or profound, significant, subtle, insightful and nuanced are not wholly specifiable without appeal to considerations of explanatory informativeness. However, this does not presuppose cognitivism; "For many narratives explore issues such as free will and whether works endorse or reject the notion, such as Sartre's *Roads to Freedom* and, conversely, Kafka's *The Trial* is less important than the way the vision is developed." In order for the vision to be well developed it must be done so intelligibly.[351] As Kieran notices, "once one eliminates all considerations of intelligibility from all contexts where appraisals are involved then many of the most basic critical evaluations we make of narratives as art are rendered baseless."[352]

[350] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 35.
[351] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 35. Kieran considers Lars von Trier's *The Idiots*. "The film is coherent and consistent in its development of events and the relationships of the characters involved. However, the group's self avowed motivation for their actions is not that they 'spass' just for fun (which they recognise would be bad, thus implying that they wouldn't do it merely for that reason) but because in some way 'spassing' enables them to get in touch with their true selves (their 'inner idiot'). Now, at least to the extent that it remains mysterious why anyone would intelligibly think that 'spassing' could achieve any such thing the imaginative experience afforded by the film is radically diminished. It is a failure of the narrative as such not to render intelligible why the characters as represented might plausibly hold the beliefs and motivating desires they do."
[352] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 36.

Secondly, the sharp separation between the quality of the imaginative experience and considerations such as plausibility, explanatoriness and insight cannot be supported if we consider what it is for something to be valuable as great narrative art. Because "a narrative is something that, via the imaginative experience afforded, intelligibly connects a series of events and characters over time in terms of how they are to be understood and their significance. Good narrative art does so artfully in a reasonably intelligent and absorbing fashion – it constitutes a tale well told. Yet run of the mill thrillers, romances and literary entertainments can all be absorbing and entertaining but we would not typically consider them to be candidates for great narrative art. Great narrative art aims to deepen our appreciation of how the kinds of characters, states of affairs and events as represented to us should or could intelligibly be understood."[353] Thus "two narratives may display the same artistry and may be equally absorbing but when one does so merely to entertain and one does so in order to deepen our understanding, then we consider the latter to be a more valuable or greater work as narrative art."[354]

4. We should recognise that the way in which characters and events are represented affects how intelligible or otherwise, we will find the imaginative experience afforded by the work to be.[355]

One cannot sharply separate off whether a work deepens our understanding, in terms of the intelligibility of the characters, events and putative relations to our world, from questions concerning its artistry, the way in which it entertains us and the extent to which we may find it deeply absorbing. And that may be for several reasons. For instance, genre constraints play a significant role. For, what genre a work belongs to will itself affect when, where and why questions of intelligibility and plausibility arise. Furthermore, even within genre constraints,

[353] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 36. This explains two further points: first, why most works in certain narrative genres are not really candidates for great narrative art, ranging from detective to historical or fantasy novels such as works by Agatha Christie, Catherine Cookson or Tolkien to even self-consciously literary novels such as the work of Anthony Powell or P. G. Wodehouse. Moreover, it also explains how certain works in such genres can transcend their standard limitations. For example, some of P. D. James's detective novels or Conrad's earlier adventure stories, in their thematic development, are concerned with cultivating our understanding of how human nature might intelligibly be seen.
[354] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 36. Again, Kieran explains: For the imaginative experience afforded the reader is not merely instrumental in moving the plot forward but affords insight into how and why the characters as represented feel and act the way they do.
[355] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 36.

what the putative relations are between the narrative and the real world will affect how intelligible the work is. Finally, the sheer artistry and expressiveness of a work may enable us to entertain thoughts, attitudes and responses we might otherwise have considered unintelligible.[356] For Kieran, what is crucial is whether the perspective or features of the novel as represented are rendered intelligible in order to successfully elicit the prescribed imaginings and emotional responses.

5. The proposal retains the original attraction of moderate moralism, namely its moderateness, whilst bypassing the problems it creates.[357]

In the concluding remarks, Kieran recaps and restates the basic tenets of his position; Namely, the criterion of relevance with respect to a narrative's value as art concerns the intelligibility of the imaginative experience afforded by a work. In this respect, where a work is essentially concerned with moral features, attitudes and perspectives, moral considerations are internally related to considerations of intelligibility. Furthermore, that the moral perspective of a work may be defective, in the sense of unmerited, is not relevant, but whether it is intelligible or not, is. If it is unintelligible, or to the extent that it is, then the work fails to make sense and hence we cannot be fully engaged by it. That being so, "the moral perspective of a work may sometimes contribute to or lessen its overall value as art. Some moral features of a work will concern the intelligibility of the moral perspective and others may concern whether the perspective is merited or not. The former are aesthetically relevant whilst the

[356] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 37. Regarding the first way mentioned, Kieran explains that the intelligibility of a narrative in part rests upon a tacit background assumption that, *ceteris paribus*, the author and reader assume that the fictional world is in rich and complex ways much like the actual world. Alexander Mackendrick's Ealing comedy *The Ladykillers*, for example, is a black comedy where a series of murders is treated as a huge joke. "But it would be foolish to condemn it for treating life with contempt. For the point in no way concerns how we ought to view murder as hilarious." For the second point, Kieran invites us to consider two works of science fiction in which there are several classes of people ranging from the super human to the sub human. "In one this is to be understood as one of the ways in which this fictional world is very different from the real world. In the other, however, this is portrayed as a projection of our world and the inevitable upshot of natural selection." Or then, another example for the same point is the narrative *Intruder in the Dust* by William Faulkner. As an example of the third point, Kieran mentions J. G. Ballard's *Crash* which concerning whether it is a good novel or not depends upon "whether it not only successfully prescribes imaginings about characters who are driven by an auto-erotic fixation upon technology and violence but may get us to respond in ways concomitant with such an attitude. This is something, at least for many, which would normally seem unintelligible. But, at least to the extent that the work succeeds, this is a mark of the novel's success rather than failure – that it renders such responses intelligible through evoking them in the reader even though we may take such responses to be, in actuality, unmerited."

[357] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 38.

latter are not."[358]

To a certain extent, this view seems compatible with Carroll's moderate moralism which holds only that sometimes a moral defect in an artwork can be an aesthetic flaw and that sometimes a moral virtue can be an aesthetic virtue. Nevertheless, according to Kieran, just because the moral character of a work can be related to its aesthetic value in one way does not preclude there being other possible relations in different cases.[359] Most moderate moralism then goes even further to claim that sometimes the morally reprehensible character of a work of art can be an aesthetic virtue or in Kieran's words: "in certain cases the morally reprehensible character of a work may constitute an aesthetic virtue rather than a vice."[360] In a subsequent, thorough exposition of his view, Kieran refers to his position as cognitive Immoralism and indicates that: "It is immoralist because it holds that a work may be valuable as art in virtue of, rather than despite, its immoral character. It is cognitivist because the account of how and why this is so relies on the assumption that the value of art, at least in part, is a function of the ways in which a work may deepen our understanding and appreciation."[361] Immmoralism is thus reformulated as follows:

"the moral character of a work is relevant to its value as art to the extent it undermines or promotes the intelligibility and reward of the imaginative experience proffered by the work."[362] In other words, Immoralism claims that a work's value as art can be enhanced in virtue of its immoral character. And this is so because imaginatively experiencing morally defective cognitive-affective responses and attitudes in ways that are morally problematic can deepen one's understanding and appreciation.[363]

A cognitivist argument lies at the core of this account. More specifically, this view endorses a broadly speaking cognitivist conception of artistic value according to which an important

[358] Kieran, Matthew. "In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art". ibid., 2001, p. 38.
[359] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 57.
[360] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 57.
[361] In Kieran's view, the first claim is compatible with the moderate formulation of the way in which sometimes the moral character of a work may enhance its artistic value. Hence the use of the term Immoralism is itself perhaps overly strong, as he comments. Nonetheless he adopts this term in keeping with the relevant literature. See Gaut, Berys. "Art and Ethics". ibid., 2013; and Jacobson, Daniel. "In Praise of Immoral Art". ibid., 1997.
[362] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 57.
[363] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 72. Elsewhere, Kieran claims that cognitive immoralism marshals the kind of points raised in favour of the anti-theoretic move into a general account of the link to the cognitive aspect of artistic value. Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 138.

consideration in evaluating works of art is the extent to which they deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world. Such a conception of artistic value is often thought to directly entail ethicism, on the twin assumption, first, that an immoral work *misrepresents* the nature of morality and, second, that nothing that misrepresents something can deepen our understanding of that thing.[364] Kieran takes issue with the second of these assumptions and instead, he claims that works that solicit responses and attitudes we judge not to be merited can, in virtue of the way in which they do so, enhance our understanding.[365] Or alternatively, his cognitivist proposal lies in a further claim: "Namely that great works can train us not just in terms of the possession of further moral knowledge but in terms of our capacities for apprehending and responding to morally relevant features (Nussbaum 1990, Kieran 1996). Where a work does so, in virtue of its artistic mediation, this is a virtue in the work as art. It may also be tempting to conclude that where a work effectively seeks to coarsen or distort our moral capacities this constitutes a defect in it as art. Furthermore, it might be suggested, this is what explains our reluctance in certain cases to indulge in responses and dramatic points of view we take to be immoral. For we are not prepared to enter into ways of apprehending or responding to states of affairs that are at odds with or undermine our moral competencies."[366]

Thus, Immoralism starts by agreeing with the relevance condition underlying one argument for ethicism.[367] The value of a work depends partly on the quality of the experience the work affords and the insight or understanding it conveys to us. Many works enhance our understanding in terms of getting us to perceive the world aright or getting us to respond as we should. None the less, what is distinctive about cognitive immoralism is the claim that in

[364] José Luis Bermúdez, Tim Crane and Peter Sullivan (eds.) *Art and Morality*. London: Routledge, 2003, p. 5.
[365] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 138. Kieran explains that cognitivists may be tempted to argue that excellences of artistic expression will coincide with moral excellences in a work and that a defect in the latter will constitute a defect in the former. But the cognitivist could further that because of the ways in which this is so, through the artistic cultivation of perception, imagination and feeling, works can develop our moral character.
[366] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 136-7.
[367] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 138. Namely, where the moral character of a work is tied to its cognitive value then its moral character is relevant to its value as art. Where a work's moral character is tied up with a work's cognitive value, in many such cases the link will be as articulated by ethicism for the reasons grounded by cognitivism, as Kieran remarks. Such approaches are taken by Nussbaum and by Wayne C. Booth as well.

at least quite a few cases cognitivism also explains how and why the relationship can invert; In other words, the relationship is often as characterized by ethicism but not always so. Because, "where there is a cognitive pay off in virtue of the immoral character of a work, and this is sufficient to outweigh our reluctance to indulge in the responses sought from us, then the immoral character of the work turns out to be an artistic virtue rather than a vice."[368] A morally problematic work can thus, artistically speaking, redeem itself.[369]

To defend this claim, Kieran draws attention to the contrastive and comparative nature of our understanding of the morally good. For, "we come to discriminate, appreciate and grasp many things on the basis of experience. Not only does this extend to the moral sphere but we also require comparative experience."[370] In other words, we must have experienced, in some sense, the bad in order to understand the good. So, what is additionally required is the substantiation of what Kieran calls the *Primacy claim*, namely, that experiencing bad responses and attitudes in ways which are problematic, with respect to moral and non-moral values, affords a kind of comparative experience or perspective that could not otherwise be had.[371] The supporting argument comes in two parts:

First, "certain bad experiences can primarily or distinctively afford discriminatory capacities or

[368] Kieran supports this claim more than once in Kieran, Matthew. *Revealing Art*. New York: Routledge, 2005; Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism" edited by José Luis Bermúdez and Sebastian Gardner. *Art and Morality*. London: Routledge, 2003.

[369] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value". ibid., 2006, p. 138. For Berys Gaut, Immoralism is a position from which it follows that art is good in so far as it manifests at least this moral defect. As he notes further, within the long debate about art and ethics triggered by Plato's intervention, three broad strands can be picked out in a preliminary way. The humanist strand was to be the most influential; responding to Plato directly, it sought to defend the ethical value of poetry and of art. The second strand of the debate was aestheticism, which came to prominence during the latter half of the 19th century and the third main strand in the modern period was the idea of art as transgression; Namely, "Art, it was held, can be good precisely because it transgresses our moral assumptions, making us question received wisdom and challenge conventional attitudes." This idea of art as transgression is according to Gaut the most enduring motivation of Immoralism. Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 4-11.

[370] Kieran, Matthew. *Revealing Art*. ibid., 2005, p. 191. More specifically, "some works are both intelligible and insightful despite, or sometimes because of, the ways in which they get us to see or respond to things we would not actually deem to be right, good or true." This claim depends upon the assumption that, 'for creatures such as ourselves, experience is a primary means of learning, for example that something is the case, and understanding, grasping how and why something is the case'. And in order to fully appreciate and understand the nature of an experience we require a comparative perspective on different cases. Thus, Kieran claims that in exploring a morally defective perspective a work may deepen our appreciation and understanding in ways that would not happen otherwise.

[371] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 64.

perspectives which are required for a full grasp and appreciation of certain good experiences."[372]

This is a version of the thought many of us often have, namely, that one may not be able to fully appreciate the nature of good things or their achievement unless one has in some sense experienced the bad. As Kieran indicates, "if one has never experienced betrayal by a friend or lover, never seen a bad play or heard a great novel badly dramatized, then there will be certain features of friendship, love and great art that one probably will not fully understand and appreciate."[373] For that reason, "a proper estimation and appreciation of the worth of a friend or a work of art depends not merely on recognising that they keep to their word or afford us pleasure but upon the realisation of the multifarious ways in which they can easily go wrong or fail. A lack of experience, both of the kind in question and relevantly contrasting kinds, is thus likely to preclude full understanding and proper appreciation."[374]

Second, "the claim holds not merely for bad experiences as such but for experiences which are morally problematic (including those which are truly immoral)."[375]

The next step is to focus on a specific genre of bad experiences, that is, those experiences which are morally defective to show how these can also be a primary means of coming to have a full understanding and appreciation of good ones. First, an ambiguity entailed in 'bad experiences' is indicated; namely, (a) being subject to experiences which are themselves bad in some respect and (b) experiencing things in a way which is bad in some respect.[376] Regardless this ambiguity, the argument applies to both these respects since experiencing something morally bad does not exhaust the ways in which experiencing something in ways

[372] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 64.
[373] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 65. For instance, a lack of the relevant kinds of bad experiences may result to a lack of certain discriminatory capacities because they have not been exercised, and thus, someone may fail to appreciate in a deep sense the nature or quality of the achievements of true friendship or great art.
[374] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 65.
[375] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 65.
[376] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 66. Kieran brings the example of voyeurism which is morally bad because it consists in some persons delighting at the humiliation of another through personal revelations. As he explains, "I can be the subject of this kind of bad experience because I am the object of voyeuristic delight. It is bad for me in many respects, since I am the object of humiliation, but it is not the case that I am implicated in it in any way which is morally bad. Alternatively, I might experience such a state of affairs as one of the voyeurs. Although it is not bad for me in many ways, I experience amusement and delight, I am implicated in the experience in a way which is morally bad." Kieran notes that one can be implicated in an experience of a state of affairs which is not in and of itself morally problematic in a morally bad way. For example, I may voyeuristically spy on someone undressing in the privacy of their own home, as he says.

that are morally problematic enables us to come to know certain things.[377] To illustrate this point, Kieran thinks of different cases of bullying as instances of morally problematic experiences to which someone may be subjected to or witness, and thus derive pleasure from so acting. As he explains, "understanding depends upon having had, and being able to relate bullying to relevantly similar kinds of experiences. In this respect, it does not follow that only by bullying someone myself will I come to understand how and why the activity may be found pleasurable. But it does follow that I am more likely to do so if I have had some kind of experience where I derived pleasure from something which is bad in ways relevantly close enough to bullying in order to do so."[378] So it follows that "a primary means of coming to a full understanding and appreciation of the nature of morally problematic experiences does not just encompass being subject to or witnessing morally problematic states of affairs but also includes actually experiencing certain states of affairs in ways that are morally problematic i.e. immoral."[379]

Having showed that: i) the experience of bad things as well as ii) the experience of things in ways which are bad are a primary means of reaching a full understanding and appreciation of good things Kieran offers further support to his argument employing the *imagination claim*, as it is dubbed. Imaginative experience is construed in terms of the entertaining of represented states of affairs and it is proposed that it can indirectly and informatively enable

[377] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 66.

[378] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 66. Kieran explains: "if I am subjected to bullying as a child or see it occur I will obviously know that the infliction of pain and humiliation can give rise to pleasure in others. In this respect, I will find bullying intelligible since it follows from something's giving pleasure that there is a motivation for doing it. So in virtue of being subjected to or witnessing a certain morally bad experience, I may learn something I might not have otherwise done. I come to be able to discriminate between merely physical and psychological bullying or between bullying which works by social humiliation, by the assertion of individual dominance and by the destruction of self-worth in ways I would not otherwise have done. But I may well fail to understand how and why it may be found pleasurable. There are other indirect ways of experiences relevantly close enough to bullying, such as a competitive relationship with someone's younger brother: "during a play fight I may suddenly find myself drawn to use just that extra bit of force required to hurt him slightly or hold him down just that extra bit too long to humiliate him."

[379] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 67. Kieran thinks that this claim gives us some reason to be suspect of moral saints, at least as they are naively understood to be those who are never tempted because their natural desires already converge with what is right and good. As he notes: "If someone has never been tempted they will lack certain experiences that are a primary means to a proper understanding and appreciation of the human condition. Hence their moral proclamations and proscriptions are more likely to be naively utopian. Where there is a failure to grasp the difficulties involved for mere mortals in striving to be good, the pressures we are subject to, and an inability to appreciate how resisting temptation constitutes an achievement then any resulting ethic cannot but be inhumane and unforgiving. It is surely cruel to demand what most of us cannot meaningfully hope to achieve."

us to have bad experiences or experience things in bad ways independently of the existence of the states of affairs as represented.[380] Kieran's *imagination claim* has two distinct elements:

- imaginative experience can be an indirect and informative means of learning by experience; and
- it is possible to suspend our actual moral judgements or allow ourselves to take up moral judgements and attitudes in imagination that we would not actually endorse.[381]

To explain the first premise, Kieran concentrates on one kind of case where a work may deepen our understanding and appreciation of (a) how certain responses and attitudes of approval can be taken up to a state of affairs we would normally be repulsed by and disapproving of and (b) how the desire for social approval and strength of character can be interlinked in ways which may result in someone being motivated to deeply harm another. As he says: "I needn't bully anyone, be subject to it or witness actual bullying in order to understand much about it if I can read a work like Graham Greene's *The Destructors*."[382] For having read the story of *The Destructors*, and assuming we respond as solicited, we can come to recognise how and why the destruction of things deeply precious to another can be joyful, an exercise of power and an assertion of strength. Furthermore, we learn not just how and why this can be the case with respect to other people but, importantly, how and why this can be the case with respect to ourselves; precisely because we have come to respond in ways we actually deem to be immoral.[383] Therefore, good artworks can deepen our understanding and appreciation of certain kinds of experiences, states of affairs, cognitive-affective attitudes and characters in many ways.

[380] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 67. Kieran agrees that we have a general *prima facie* epistemic duty to seek out evidence (whether it be that afforded by experience or critical reflection) which can confirm, undermine or deepen our understanding. However, he remarks that it does not follow that one has a *prima facie* epistemic duty to do so with respect to actual states of affairs.
[381] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 68.
[382] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 68. Greene's short story concerns a gang of boys in post-World War II London and the competitive rivalries between two central characters. The resolution of their individual rivalries and the gang's collective identity is achieved in the final act by the wanton overnight destruction of the house of a widower who has been unusually kind to them. Kieran explains that "It is a vicious and nasty piece of work precisely because through our identification with the central characters, their struggles to attain group acceptance and our admiration at their achievements, we come to respond with delight at their devastating achievement."
[383] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 68.

To support the second premise of the imaginative claim Kieran considers a counter argument offered by Kendal Walton, who discusses the problem of imaginative resistance to works which seem morally repugnant to us, in virtue of getting us to respond in ways we judge to be immoral.[384] Walton focuses on an asymmetry already indicated by David Hume in his "Standard of Taste" between the moral and the non-moral content of works of fiction. As Walton indicates, "adopting even in imagination a moral view that I reject in reality, allowing myself to think and feel in imagination as though my convictions were different from what they actually are, might change my moral orientation; it might in this sense 'pervert the sentiments of my heart', even if it doesn't change my convictions. The more confident I am of my convictions, the more strenuously I will resist anything that might pry my moral orientation away from them."[385] From this perspective, he claims that there cannot be any morality fiction, or rather we cannot engage with fiction which is at radical moral odds with us, because given that moral properties supervene on 'natural' ones we cannot grasp what it would be for something we believe to be morally bad to be morally good. Hence we cannot meaningfully entertain in any full sense that for instance, slavery is not evil. For, in Walton's words,

"we may judge a work to be morally defective if it advocates moral principles we find repugnant, or if it invites or has a tendency to induce us to imagine accepting them. (This moral failing might constitute or contribute to an aesthetic one.) If a novel endorses slavery or encourages even imaginative acceptance of it we will loathe it with something of the loathing we have for the institution of slavery. The more we abhor moral principles which a work promotes, the more objectionable we find it."[386]

In contrast to this view, Kieran remarks: "I do not see why the representation of supervenience relations being other than we believe them to be, assuming this is the right way to talk, precludes understanding in this way."[387] For if we consider a non-moral case, one explanation may be to hold that moral claims are categorical (they hold in all possible worlds)

[384] Walton, L. Kendal, Tanner, Michael. "Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality". *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 68 (1994): pp. 27-66.
[385] Walton, L. Kendal, Tanner, Michael. "Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality". ibid., 1994, p. 34. For Walton, there is a closer connection between moral and aesthetic value than some would allow. No amount of squinting or compartmentalizing could make appreciation of the aesthetic value morally acceptable. If the work's obnoxious message does not destroy its aesthetic value, it nevertheless renders it morally inaccessible. That must count as an aesthetic as well as a moral defect. (p. 30).
[386] Walton, L. Kendal, Tanner, Michael. "Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality". ibid., 1994, p. 46.
[387] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 70.

whereas this is not the case for non-moral relations. But even if this is the case, many works which solicit responses, cognitive-affective attitudes and claims we deem to be morally problematic do not conflict with what we take to be categorical morality. Hence "even granting the claim, it does not show we cannot meaningfully engage with works we take to be morally defective." Secondly, "it's quite clear that we can and do engage with works which do conflict with what we take the categorical demands of morality to be, depending upon how close the state of affairs as represented either is, or is made to seem, psychologically possible."[388] Kieran considers Swift's intellectually and morally surreal *Gulliver's Travels*, as a paradigm case in which the underlying thrust of the book is to make humanity in general seem ridiculous, craven, petty, idolatrous of reason, lacking in curiosity and corporeally disgusting. Yet many of us respond to it because we are presented with a highly imaginative exploration of an attitude that is at times psychologically close to us, and thus can be invoked by the artistry of the work. Thus "the value of engaging with many works derives from the particularly powerful ways in which they can get us to imaginatively explore different possible attitudes. In some of these cases the works involve characterizations, responses and attitudes we judge to be morally defective and yet nonetheless they are rendered close to us in ways we find to be intelligible."[389]

As a closing remark, Kieran considers the apparent asymmetry between moral and scientific

[388] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 70. For this case, Kieran considers someone who once was a Roman Catholic but is now a confirmed atheist reading Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. Given her secular conversion she firmly believes that morality categorically cannot depend upon the commands issued by God. Nonetheless, in reading *Brideshead Revisited* she responds with sympathy, admiration, awe and ultimately affirmation to the culmination of the novel. Here we have someone responding in a way which is at odds with what they take to be conceptually possible. What matters is not what is taken to be conceptual possibility but what, psychologically speaking, someone is able to entertain. Kieran notes that "No doubt in some cases this will be because the world as represented is already psychologically very close to who someone is or was. Yet sometimes this is possible because of the artistry of the work and the ways in which what is rendered can be made to seem psychologically vivid and close to the reader. And the latter is the mark of a work being good as art."

[389] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 71. Later, Kieran offers examples of painting; He focuses on works showing distorted figures, vivid colours, themes of isolation, horror and angst such as Edvard Munch's *The Scream* and Francis Bacon's *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944) Tate, London 2003. In these paintings, there are depictions of creatures, ugly, deformed, who suffer deeply in their self-conscious condition, and yet are radically removed from something we would recognisably call human. "Bacon's work shows a world of embodied pain we are to observe, feel and accept. In this work, we are sometimes prepared to suspend our actual moral judgements because of the potentially insightful rewards engaging with a morally problematic work might bring. Where a work yields up such rewards, it is valuable in part due to its morally defective aspect." Kieran, Matthew. *Revealing Art*. ibid., 2005, p. 191.

cases with reference to the phenomenon of imaginative resistance and does recognise a difference, that is, in the moral case the resistance and resentment go deeper. "For I have not merely been asked to imagine and respond in ways I take to be cognitively problematic but also in ways I take to be morally defective. Hence whether there will be a pay-off in terms of understanding or appreciation matters more. In the cognitive case I will judge the unrewarding work to be silly, pointless and a mere waste of time. In the moral case I will, in addition, deem myself to have been seduced and gratuitously tricked into allowing myself to respond in ways I morally should not."[390]

And in this light Kieran altogether argues that "the arguments against the role of moral evaluation in art, which strengthen the presumption in favor of aestheticism, can only undermine a crudely instrumentalist conception of art's relation to morality; that is, where an artwork is conceived of as morally significant to the extent that it evokes morally sound responses and understandings." However, contra aestheticism, an account of art which recognises an inherent link between what is represented artistically and moral understanding may yet prove more adequate to our judgment and evaluation of art. "Any account of art which recognises the pleasures inherent in the peculiar and vivid imaginings prescribed by artworks must allow for a distinctive relation to moral understanding. It is through what we imagine and the promotion of imaginative understanding in engaging with artworks that art may justifiably lay claim to the cultivation of our moral sensibilities."[391]

All things considered, Matthew Kieran has given a more general argument for when and why the relation might vary by employing a cognitivist theory of aesthetic value. Moreover, although considered moralistic, his position seems to defend the primacy of aesthetic evaluation. It has been argued however that Immoralism has a limited scope which is immediately evident: it is not a theory of the relationship between morality and art, but a refutation of ethicism, where a moral defect is always an aesthetic defect.[392] But the main objection to cognitive Immoralism is in terms of the inversion of the value relation proposed

[390] Kieran, Matthew. "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism". ibid., 2003, p. 71.
[391] Kieran, Matthew. "Art, Imagination, and the Cultivation of Morals". *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54/4 (1996): pp. 337-351 (337).
[392] Mc Gregor, Rafe. "Moderate Autonomism Revisited". ibid., 2013, p. 426. Rafe McGregor argues in favour of moderate autonomism.

by this view. Namely, according to Berys Gaut, Immoralism does not specify under what circumstances the value-relation is positive and under what circumstances it is negative.[393] What is more, we should also keep in mind that the autonomists have a ready explanation for the reason why the value-relation appears to vary; that is, because it never holds at all: there is always a merely adventitious correlation between aesthetic and ethical values of artworks, since the latter are never aesthetically relevant. "The autonomist may then claim that if two properties have no relation to each other at all, it is hardly surprising if they are sometimes to be found together and sometimes not. And this simple and powerful explanation threatens to undermine the tenability of contextualism, if the latter simply notes variation without any further explanation, adopting an 'antitheoretical' approach."[394] For the ethicist Gaut "the contextualist has unfinished business in further developing his theory."[395]

[393] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 55. Gaut thinks that Carroll (who on one development of his theory is a contextualist) remains neutral on this possibility and so does not explore it. Jacobson confines himself to arguing for those cases where the value-relation is negative and announces an 'antitheoretical' approach to the matter. Only Kieran gives an argument to this purpose but still, he owes an explanation of why the relation should invert. As Gaut remarks, "it remains incumbent on Contextualists to offer some kind of adequate explanation for why the value-relation should invert in this fashion; otherwise it remains a mystery."

[394] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. ibid., 2007, p. 55-7. Gaut proposes a way in which the immoralist position could be completed. He considers what he calls the basic character of the value-relation. The value-relation will have a positive character if the fundamental relation is positive: cases of value-relation inversion are to be explained in terms of the fundamental positive direction of the relation. In this regard, Contextualism might hold that there is a fundamental character to the value-relation, grounded in some general account of the relation between the two. Deviations from this relation would be explained by specific features of a work or property that, when combined with the general account, would explain the value-inversion. As he explains, for instance, one might hold that the fundamental relation is positive, but argue that, with certain aesthetic features, such as humour, the value-relation inverts: a play might be funny partly because it has such a cruel attitude towards its characters and people in general. Conversely, one might hold that the fundamental character of the value-relation is negative, and that instances where it reverses and are positive are to be explained in terms of this fundamental character. For instance, it might be held that all good art is transgressive, pushing forward and sweeping aside the normal boundaries of what is acceptable, and that such boundaries include moral ones, so that art is directed against morality. Those cases where works are good in so far as they have ethically positive features are, then, to be explained in terms of peculiar circumstances of the properties or works concerned.

[395] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, ibid., 2007, p. 57-8. Because of the objections Gaut raises regarding the incompleteness of both moderate moralism and immoralism, he suggests that "we should realise that there are in fact two questions, not merely the one, to ask about the theories of the intrinsic issue. First, are ethical qualities of artworks never aesthetically relevant, as the autonomist claims, or sometimes aesthetically relevant, as the ethicist and contextualist claim? Second, if they are sometimes aesthetically relevant, is the value-relation invariant and positive (as the ethicist claims) or is it complex, exhibiting negative and positive relations in different cases (as the contextualist claims)?".

Concluding Remarks

The previous analysis clearly illustrates that the issue of the association of aesthetic and ethical values has been mostly discussed and taken different forms over the years in the realm of philosophical aesthetics. Some key points may be recapitulated: i) Philosophers have focused on the relationship between moral value and aesthetic value in terms of what is included under the compass of 'aesthetic value', the relationship between aesthetic and artistic value and most importantly, the precise nature of the interaction between ethical and aesthetic values. ii) Although the discussion has focused on narrative art, most aestheticians note that their position holds for all art – or at least all works that it is possible to evaluate morally (which may exclude works of conceptual art and pure or absolute music). iii) Broadly construed, it seems that there can be four possibilities of the way artworks are involved in the aesthetic – ethical discussion. That is:

(i) works of art that are both, aesthetically and ethically meritorious
(ii) works of art that are both, aesthetically and ethically defective
(iii) works of art that are aesthetically meritorious but ethically defective
(iv) works of art that are aesthetically defective but ethically meritorious

For (i) and (ii), the philosophical consensus seems to be complete: good or great art is distinguished from mediocre or downright bad art in terms of certain criteria provided by the conception of art each time adopted; in this sense, artworks are praised because they display the appropriate artistic and aesthetic qualities and conversely, artworks are condemned because they lack these qualities. Furthermore, artworks can be sometimes moral and sometimes immoral; in the latter case, morally repulsive artworks may even be judged as obscene and thereby, to be unanimously condemned as art if we assume that the arts, after all, should educate and refine the mind rather than coarsen and degrade it.

None the less, there is philosophical disagreement regarding cases (iii) and (iv). Namely, it is in these cases that the issue of the relevance of ethical insights to art and its value plays an important role since not everyone agrees as to what the appropriate evaluation should be. In other words, there is no unanimity as to how we should assess and respond to artworks falling in these categories. Questions then arise about whether the moral features of artworks are relevant to their artistic or aesthetic value, and if so, whether the moral merits of artworks

always count toward their artistic value. Within this context, the aesthetic relevance of moral defects in the evaluation of art is thus the most debated. Subsequently, the contemporary dispute is concerned with the relationship between moral defects and merits on the one hand, and aesthetic defects and merits on the other.

Part II of the present thesis offered a delineation of the recent arguments together with the main objections of this debate and thus presented an enduring problematic which has been of recurrent interest in philosophical aesthetics. As laid out in part II, since antiquity, different versions of moralism have been historically predominant and notable contributions have been made by Plato, Hume, Tolstoy and in recent years, Martha Nussbaum. In the 19th century, autonomism appears as the very opposite of moralism, holding that different types of value – aesthetic, moral, cognitive, and others – are independent of each other in art. In the 20th century, Noël Carroll (1996) initiated the discussion again with 'Moderate Moralism', arguing that a moral defect in a work of art is sometimes an aesthetic defect. In "The Ethical Criticism of Art", Berys Gaut (1998) proposed a stronger version of moralism called 'ethicism' in which a moral defect is always a pro tanto aesthetic defect in a work. Anderson and Dean (1998) advanced 'Moderate Autonomism', the view that a moral defect is never an aesthetic defect, and criticized moralists for conflating two conceptually distinct categories of criticism. Matthew Kieran (2003) offered a third alternative in his "Forbidden Knowledge: The Challenge of Immoralism," where he argues that a moral defect is sometimes a merit in a work of art qua art due to the cognitive value of that defect.[396] Except for Autonomism in its radical version, these positions all agree that art's moral content can be the legitimate subject of critical evaluation, but differ over whether the ethical defects or merits of art can also be aesthetic defects or merits respectively. Overall, these views can be summarized as follows:

(i) Radical autonomism: a work of art cannot be morally defective.

(ii) Moderate autonomism: a moral defect is never an aesthetic defect in an artwork.

(iii) Moderate moralism: a moral defect is sometimes an aesthetic defect in an artwork

(iv) Ethicism: a moral defect is always a *pro tanto* aesthetic defect in a work of art.

(v) Immoralism: a moral defect is sometimes an aesthetic merit in a work of art.

[396] Mc Gregor, Rafe. "Moderate Autonomism Revisited". ibid., 2013, p. 404. Robert Stecker, in his analysis of the discussion employs the term 'value interaction debate' to refer to the late 20th century instantiation of this historical question.

Of course, one could also choose to defend weaker versions of a position, for instance encompassing only ethical defects, or only ethical merits. According to Berys Gaut, the possibility of such a mixed theory is worth noting, and it is a merit of the analytic framework that it highlights this possibility.[397]

All in all, our ethical and aesthetic appraisals often seem either to conflict directly with each other, or simply neither to impinge upon nor overlap with each other in any way at all. "Whilst engaging with works such as *Pulp Fiction*, *Lolita*, or de Sade's *Juliette*, we may feel to some extent repelled by the moral views represented and, more importantly, by the disturbing moral evaluations that the works seem to prescribe. Yet at the same time, we nevertheless revel in the artistic skill and aesthetic pleasure with which the lavish and abhorrent violence, paedophilic desires, or intense sexual torture, are portrayed respectively. And we might feel troubled by these mixed feelings of (aesthetic) delight and (moral) disgust."[398]

In this context, we might think that the moral values expressed in a work of art are not the same as the moral values of real life; but that in reality, they are aesthetic categories with a shade of 'moral'. Once placed within the artwork, they fulfill the purpose that the artwork imposes. So there seems to be no apparent need to apply our moral attitude, whichever this is, in the evaluation and assessment of an artwork. More strongly, we might even think that artworks are aesthetically enriched by being able to portray abhorrent and obscure moral perspectives in such a way that they become absorbing and perhaps even, in some cases and to some extent, compelling. And it may well be the case that, in the light of these remarks, all previous arguments and objections could be reconsidered anew.

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[397] Gaut, Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, ibid., 2007, p. 53-4. Gaut adds accordingly: "Indeed, if one has the intuition that works are always aesthetically defective in so far as they have an aesthetically relevant ethical defect, but that the situation for ethical merits is much more complex, then one would advocate (weak) ethicism for ethical flaws and (weak) contextualism for ethical merits." Additionally, Carroll remarks that "the fact that artworks can and should be evaluated artistically does not preclude further assessments of them in terms of additional criteria. While it is certainly correct to point out that it is inappropriate to invoke moral considerations in evaluating all art, it is also true that there are works of art which are expressly designed to elicit moral reactions. In such cases, moral discourse with reference to the artworks in question may not be strained and out of place but normatively correct or appropriate, given the nature of the artworks in relation to the language game in which such talk occurs. For, some artworks may be such that it is also appropriate to discuss them in terms of other dimensions of value." Carroll, Noël. "Moderate Moralism". ibid., 1996, p. 226.

[398] Todd, Cain. "Aesthetic, Ethical and Cognitive Value". ibid., 2007, p. 217.

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