

Grounding Moralism: Moral Flaws and Aesthetic Properties

Abstract

My goal in this article is to provide support for the claim that moral flaws can be detrimental to an artwork's aesthetic value. I argue that moral flaws can become aesthetic flaws when they defeat the operation of good-making aesthetic properties. I do not defend a new theory of aesthetic properties or aesthetic value; instead, I attempt to show that on both the response-dependence and the supervenience account of aesthetic properties, moral flaws with an artwork are relevant to what aesthetic properties obtain. I provide a description of the main features of both theories of aesthetic properties, and then explain how moral flaws can become aesthetic flaws on either account. I address several objections to moralism about art including the “moralistic fallacy.”

1 Introduction

Can moral flaws lessen an artwork's aesthetic value? Answering yes to this question requires that artworks can be morally flawed and that moral flaws with a work of art can have an aesthetic impact. For present purposes, I will assume that artworks can be morally flawed by such means as endorsing immoral perspectives, culpably encouraging responses that could harm oneself or others, or by culpably encouraging responses that are wrong to have.¹ Assuming that artworks can be ethically flawed, my goal in this article is not to create a new “ism” in the art and morality debate, but to provide support for the claim that moral flaws can be detrimental to an artwork's aesthetic value. I will refer to the position supporting this claim as “moralism about art.”²

¹ The art and morality debate is plagued by a lack of clarity around just what would constitute an aesthetically relevant ethical flaw. Limitations of scope preclude me from attempting to sort out the ways in which artworks can be ethically flawed. Instead, I will assume that it is possible for an artwork to be morally flawed, most plausibly, by encouraging certain reactions from audiences.

² The two leading forms of moralism about art are Noël Carroll's moderate moralism and Berys Gaut's ethicism. Noël Carroll, "Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research" (*Ethics*, 110 January 2000, pp. 350-387), and "Moderate Moralism" (*Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2001). To be more precise, Gaut defends a position that he calls “ethicism,” which is far stronger than Carroll's “moderate moralism.” Berys Gaut "Art and Ethics" (*The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, eds. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes. New York: Routledge, 2001).

The terrain of positions around the art/morality question is often divided into specific regions. For instance, Noël Carroll defends a position called “moderate moralism,”

Section 1. Introduction

In this paper I present a simple and straightforward argument: Moral flaws can become aesthetic flaws when they defeat the operation of good-making aesthetic properties. More formally stated, the central argument is as follows:

1. Properties that defeat the operation of good-making aesthetic properties in an artwork can lessen its aesthetic value.
2. Moral flaws can defeat the operation of aesthetic properties.
3. Hence, moral flaws can lessen the aesthetic value of an artwork.

This paper is largely a novel defense of the second premise. I argue that according to either the response-dependence or the supervenience account of

which is the claim that moral flaws can, but do not always, constitute aesthetic flaws. On the opposite side of the debate, Daniel Jacobson defends a position called “immoralism,” which asserts that moral flaws can sometimes increase the aesthetic value of a work of art. See his essay “In Praise of Immoral Art” (*Philosophical Topics*, Volume 25, no.1, Spring 1997, 155-199). Both positions are forms of “interactionism” and set themselves in opposition to “autonomism,” the view that aesthetic value and ethical value are distinct and non-interacting.

For a useful synopsis of this debate, see chapter 11 of Robert Stecker’s *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

There is some controversy around the labels one should adopt for these positions. As such, a brief note is required. Since I admire the clarity of his work, I have adopted labels used by Noël Carroll in his work on the art and morality debate.

To be clear, here are my labels:

Moderate Moralism (MM) = moral flaws can sometimes decrease aesthetic value.

Moderate Immoralism (IM) = moral flaws can sometimes increase aesthetic value.

Autonomism (A) = Not MM and not IM.

But Matthew Kieran suggests that the position in support of the thesis that moral flaws can have any impact whatsoever on any form of aesthetic value should be called “immoralism.” See Kieran’s “Forbidden Knowledge: the challenge of immoralism” (*Art and Morality*, eds. Bermudez and Gardner, 2003) and “Art, Morality, and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value” (*Philosophy Compass*, 1 / 2 2006: 129-143). Similarly, Daniel Jacobson in “Ethical Criticism and the Vices of Moderation” (*Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Kieran, 2006), states that immoralism should be considered incompatible with any position called moralism. One problem with my choice of terminology is that there is no good label left for the position that moral virtues could increase or decrease aesthetic value.

In any case, I find it far less confusing if we understand moralism and immoralism as logically compatible. One could accept one and not the other, and one could accept both. Unless I keep both labels, I am not sure how to describe the position I prefer: MM and not IM. It is far clearer for my purposes to distinguish between moralism and immoralism, rather than lump them together under the umbrella category of “immoralism.”

This article tries its best to avoid the sea of “isms,” and defends a general position called “moralism about art,” which is no stronger than moderate moralism. I am less concerned with the proper name of the claim, than it is with whether or not the claim is true.

aesthetic properties, moral flaws can be aesthetic flaws. My goal is neither to develop a new theory of aesthetic value nor to provide support for a particular theory of aesthetic properties; rather, I offer new support for an old, but nonetheless contentious, position—moralism about art—based on the two leading theories of aesthetic properties.

2 Aesthetic Value and Aesthetic Properties

Just what constitutes an artwork's aesthetic value is controversial, and I do not intend to settle the issue here; but some preliminary remarks are in order. At base, the aesthetic value of an artwork is the value of an artwork qua the artwork as it essentially is—not the monetary value of an artwork, or its educational value, but its value as an artwork. Aesthetic value is often presented as a subset of artistic value, that is, values we afford to artworks including such things as their ability to psychologically or morally instruct audiences. An artwork's aesthetic value is generally thought to be either a function of the aesthetic experience it affords, the pleasure we take from it, or the presence of aesthetic properties.³

It is difficult to clearly differentiate these three approaches and none seems up to the job of specifying the source of aesthetic value. Aesthetic experience is a slippery concept in itself: It is often described as a certain sort of pleasure that is dependent on the presence of aesthetic properties. But pleasure does not seem to be the sole determining factor of aesthetic value since we often praise artworks that are best described as painful.⁴ And the pleasures had from artworks, when they can be said to be relevant to aesthetic value, involve the detection, contemplation, and responses to aesthetic properties. Hence all of the candidate sources of aesthetic value are inter-related. Regardless of the difficulty, we do not need to develop a perfectly clear notion of aesthetic value for the purposes of taking a position in the art and morality debate. For present purposes, we can make a fairly uncontroversial assumption that aesthetic value is dependent on the presence of aesthetic properties.⁵

³ Robert Stecker makes this distinction in his article "Value in Art" in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Oxford UP, 2003), p. 313.

⁴ James Anderson argues that an adequate account of aesthetic experience cannot be based on pleasure, since much of it is best described as painful. See his "Aesthetic Concepts of Art," in *Theories of Art Today*, ed. Noel Carroll (Madison: UW Press, 2000). In *Aesthetic Value*, Alan Goldman also makes numerous references to the sometimes painfulness of aesthetic experience (Boulder; Westview Press, 1995), see p. 47 and pp. 61-63. The painfulness of many of our encounters with art gives rise to the paradoxes of tragedy and horror. For more on these paradoxes, see my [REMOVED FOR REVIEW].

⁵ Nick Zangwill offers a defense of this claim in his contribution to the *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* (Oxford UP, 2003) and in *The Metaphysics of Beauty* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001), as does Goldman in *Aesthetic Value*. The problem is in developing a

Section 2. Aesthetic Value and Aesthetic Properties

As with aesthetic value, explaining what constitutes an aesthetic property is problematic, largely because it is notoriously difficult to specify how aesthetic properties differ from non-aesthetic properties.⁶ For current purposes, we need not decide on the correct account of aesthetic properties, although, again, a few observations are in order to help narrow down the subject. Attributions of aesthetic properties are the principal support for our evaluations of works of art. We can identify a core set of aesthetic properties such as graceful, dainty, dumpy, touching, balanced, unified, and powerful.⁷ This core set of aesthetic properties does not include primary or secondary qualities. Further, this core set of aesthetic properties differs from primary and secondary qualities in a few important ways.⁸ There is much wider disagreement around the presence of aesthetic properties than the presence of primary and secondary qualities. Also, it has proven impossible, or very difficult, to come up with a set of sufficient conditions for any aesthetic property. In addition, unlike secondary qualities, we do not have specified organs to locate defects in the detection of aesthetic properties. One may have defects in the organs of perception that prohibit the detection of aesthetic properties as a side effect, but one can have perfectly functioning organs and still miss the presence of aesthetic properties.

The two most popular accounts of aesthetic properties are the response-dependence⁹ and the supervenience account.¹⁰ Both are compatible with the set

notion of aesthetic value and an account of aesthetic properties that are non circular.

⁶ There are several current theories of aesthetic value that we could choose from. For example, in *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001) Marcia Muelder Eaton argues that, at base, they are intrinsic properties of an object that are thought worthy of attention in a given culture. Goldman argues that we should think of aesthetic properties as properties that contribute to aesthetic value. Zangwill argues that aesthetic properties are those that we use to defend summary judgments of artworks as beautiful or ugly. He thinks that they can be divided into substantive and verdictive types, but that there is some ambiguity in hard cases such as graceful. Since it would take us too far aside, this paper does not grapple with the details of any of these definitions. It would be unwise to commit to a controversial theory of aesthetic value when all that the argument presented in this paper requires is a limited consensus.

⁷ Taking a broad view of what counts as an aesthetic property, Goldman develops a classification of eight different types of aesthetic properties (see p. 17 of *Aesthetic Value*).

⁸ Marcia Eaton, Ted Cohen, and Roger Scruton have all criticized attempts at drawing a sharp distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties. Eaton goes the farthest, arguing that any property could be an aesthetic property if it can reward attention in a particular culture. See Marcia Eaton, "The Intrinsic, Non-Supervenient Nature of Aesthetic Properties" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1994, 52: pp. 383-97) and *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001).

⁹ The response-dependence account has been developed in conjunction with sentimentalist theories of value. For the core developments of sentimentalist theories of value, see McDowell, Wiggins, and Gibbard. John McDowell, "Aesthetic Value, Objectivity, and the Fabric of the World." (In *Pleasure, Preference and Value*. Ed. Eva Schaper. New York: Cambridge UP, 1983), "Values and Secondary Qualities," (In

Section 2. Aesthetic Value and Aesthetic Properties

of assumptions listed above. The response dependence account holds that aesthetic properties are a species of response-dependent properties—properties that are dependent on the responses of creatures like us for their realization. Aesthetic properties, on this view, are powers in objects that cause some set of participants like us to have certain reactions. In contrast, the supervenience account holds that aesthetic properties supervene on the base properties of artworks or other things that have aesthetic value. On this account, properties such as gracefulness arise from underlying primary and secondary qualities such as the color, shape, and size of an object.

It is important to note that the supervenience account of aesthetic properties can supplement the response-dependence account. One could argue that the powers identified by the response-dependence account supervene on base properties. Some philosophers, such as John Bender, think that any plausible realist theory of aesthetic properties would need something like a combination of supervenience and response-dependence.¹¹

I intend to show that on either the response-dependence or the supervenience account of aesthetic properties, moral flaws in an artwork are relevant to whether or not some aesthetic properties obtain. In what follows, I provide a description of the main features of both theories of aesthetic properties

Moral Discourse and Practice. Eds. Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton), and "Projection and Truth in Ethics" (In Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton). David Wiggins, "Cognitivism, Naturalism, and Normativity: A Reply to Peter Railton," "A Neglected Position?," and "A Sensible Subjectivism" (In Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton). Allan Gibbard, "Wise Choices, Apt Feelings" (In Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton).

For useful criticisms and evaluations of sentimentalism in moral philosophy and aesthetics see: Nick Zangwill, "The Beautiful, the Dainty, and the Dumpy" (*British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 35, No. 4, October 1995); Philip Pettit, "Embracing Objectivity in Ethics" (In *Objectivity in Law and Morals*, ed. Brian Leiter, Cambridge University Press, 2001), and "Realism and Response-Dependence" (*Mind*, Vol. C, 4, October 1991); Alan Goldman, "Red and Right" (*The Journal of Philosophy*, Volume LXXXIV, No. 7, July 1987); and Terence Cuneo, "Are Moral Qualities Response-Dependent?" (*Nous*, 35:4, 2001, 569-591).

¹⁰ For more on supervenience and aesthetic properties see John E. MacKinnon "Aesthetic Supervenience: For and Against" (*British Journal of Aesthetics*, 41:1, January 2001), Robert Wicks "Supervenience and Aesthetic Judgment" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 46:4, Summer 1988, pp. 509-511), Marcia Muelder Eaton "Problems with Contextualizing Aesthetic Properties" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 61:1, Winter 2003), Nick Zangwill "Long Live Supervenience" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59:1, Winter 2001), and Nick Zangwill "Supervenience Unthwarted: Rejoinder to Wicks" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 2001, pp. 466-469).

¹¹ See John Bender "Sensitivity, Sensibility, and Aesthetic Realism" (*The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59:1, Winter 2001). Bender argues that without supervenience, response dependence would be free floating. Variations in the aesthetic properties must depend on the underlying properties of an object, else there is nothing to differentiate aesthetic properties from mere projections.

and explain how moral flaws can become aesthetic flaws on either account. After presenting my argument, I address several objections to moralism about art.

3 Moral Flaws and Supervenience

The supervenience account of aesthetic properties holds that aesthetic properties, such as dainty and dumpy, supervene on base properties—primary and secondary qualities of artworks. For example, the elegance of a vase might be said to supervene on its slenderness and sheen. The core claim of the supervenience account is that there can be no variation in aesthetic properties without a corresponding variation in the base properties of an object. Although not all modifications in base properties result in changes in aesthetic properties, some do.

Plausible accounts of aesthetic supervenience maintain that all three of the major relationships often described by “supervenience” obtain: property covariance, dependence, and non-reducibility. Aesthetic properties are said to co-vary with underlying base properties. That is, if two artworks are alike in all their base properties, then they must be alike in all of their aesthetic properties. Aesthetic properties are also thought to depend on their base properties.¹² In other words, the aesthetic properties that an object has must result from its base properties; there can be no change in aesthetic properties without some change in base properties, but some base properties can change without changing the aesthetic properties. The base properties are in some sense ontologically prior. In addition, on the supervenience account, aesthetic properties are thought to be irreducible to the base properties. The aesthetic properties of an object are properties above and beyond those of the base properties. Listing just the base properties would not provide an exhaustive description of the properties of an object.

The supervenience account might seem attractive since it suggests a way to justify the attribution of aesthetic properties to the lower-order properties that

¹² There is some debate about whether “supervenience” should be used to describe ontological dependence. The minimal supervenience thesis (“There can be no change in A properties without a change in B properties”) describes a non-symmetric and reflexive relationship. To see that it is symmetric, consider that for any set of properties S there cannot be a change S without a change in S. However, since ontological dependence implies ontological priority, it is irreflexive. A set of properties cannot be ontologically dependent on (or prior to) itself. See the detailed article on Supervenience in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* by Brian McLaughlin and Karen Bennett for more on this topic and references to the relevant literature. (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/supervenience/>) Delving into further details would exceed the scope of the current discussion.

Section 3. Moral Flaws and Supervenience

comprise the supervenient base or foundation. Hence, it suggests that we can offer justifications of our aesthetic evaluations that ultimately rest on primary and secondary qualities, such as the color, shape, and size of an artwork. However, the supervenient base must include more than just primary and secondary qualities if contextual factors such as originality are relevant to whether aesthetic properties obtain.¹³ Take a Pierre Menard¹⁴-like case: If someone produces a play that is identical to Hamlet except for the main character's name, due to its derivative nature the new play would clearly lack many of the good-making aesthetic properties present in the original. Some defenders of the supervenience account of aesthetic properties argue that the supervenient base can be widened to include not just primary and secondary qualities, but contextual factors as well.

This is the basic debate between internalism and externalism that has arisen in every other domain in which supervenience has been deployed. An internalist theory would hold that the supervening aesthetic properties are only dependent on the non-relational properties of an artwork. An externalist theory, in contrast, would hold that what aesthetic properties an object has is dependent on at least some relational properties, such as originality. Internalism about aesthetic properties is untenable, as the problem of originality shows. If the supervenience account of aesthetic properties is correct, then it will likely be an externalist version. This helps the moralist's case, but the moralist does not require externalism; moralism about art only requires an internalist theory of aesthetic property supervenience. As we shall see, further objections to the supervenience account also require making the supervenience base wide enough to include moral considerations.

One of the primary objections to the ability of the supervenience analysis of aesthetic properties to ground the attribution of aesthetic properties comes from what can be called "aesthetic defeaters."¹⁵ For any given aesthetic property an analysis of its supervenient base would have to include the absence of defeaters. A defeater is any condition that would prohibit the realization of a supervening aesthetic property from a given base. The role of a defeater can be explained counterfactually: D defeats property P if (1) P is not present when D is present and (2) if it were the case that D was not present P would have been present, if no other defeaters were present. For instance, the absence of loud clanging noises, burping sounds, and screaming sirens, from Saint-Saens

¹³ Kendall Walton, "Categories of Art" (*The Philosophical Review*, LXXIX, 1970, pp. 334-367).

¹⁴ In Borges' story "Pierre Menard," a contemporary author writes a text identical to Don Quixote. Unlike the original, we might think that Menard's version is derivative or stilted.

¹⁵ On the problem of aesthetic defeaters for the supervenience account, see John Bender "Supervenience and the Justification of Aesthetic Judgments" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 46, 1987, pp. 31-40).

Carnival of the Animals: The Aquarium is necessary for the delicate other-worldliness of the piece. Clearly, examples can be multiplied at will, and the members of the class of possible aesthetic defeaters for any given artwork is infinite. As such, the class of potential aesthetic defeaters is so large that the supervenient base for any aesthetic property becomes an infinite disjunction. If we could come up with a set of sufficient base conditions for an aesthetic property, it would have to include an ungainly *ceteris paribus* clause or an infinite disjunction of defeaters; so much for the promise of an elegant analysis of aesthetic properties.

The supervenience theorist can bite the bullet and accept this outcome, but the analysis certainly becomes less attractive. Regardless, any plausible supervenience account of aesthetic properties will have to admit the role of aesthetic defeaters and admit contextual factors that might affect such things as the originality of an artwork. As such, there are no clear, principled restrictions on the base properties that would exclude moral flaws. Even if some form of internalism were right about aesthetic properties, there is no *prima facie* reason to suppose that moral flaws could not function as aesthetic defeaters. All that moralism about art requires is an explanation of how moral flaws could become part of the supervenient base of some aesthetic property, and this is easy to demonstrate.

The Conflict of Sentiments

The possibility of aesthetic defeaters indicates that aesthetic properties are dependent on the context of the artwork itself. If various properties of an artwork could defeat other would-be aesthetic properties, then aesthetic properties are non-atomic; that is, they are dependent on context, not historical context but the context of the other properties of the artwork. Loud clashing noises can destroy elegance in a work of music; large patches of bright yellow and red can inhibit serene calmness in a painting; gray cancers can prohibit a sculpture from looking elegant; huge over-sized jackboots can make it almost impossible for a dancer to look graceful. Likewise, moral flaws can defeat attempts at sympathetic character portrayal in narrative artworks. Pity-provoking cruelty can defeat attempts at humor, and morally pernicious content can inhibit the successfulness of a joke. These are all examples of how aesthetic defeaters can interfere with the realization of aesthetic goals.¹⁶ For almost any given artwork, we can imagine some pernicious moral content that would interfere with some aesthetic property, thereby lessening the aesthetic value of the artwork. Moral flaws in the context of an artwork can defeat aesthetic properties, in the same manner as aberrant sounds, colors, shapes, and textures.

As flavors change when mixed, a quality such as “funny” might meld with

¹⁶ [REMOVED FOR REVIEW]

Section 3. Moral Flaws and Supervenience

other properties. Take Hume's example: one suspects that leather and metal do not taste like leather and metal when mixed in wine.¹⁷ We might know from experience how a new flavor is formed, but the original flavors will not stay pure. If they did, we might as well gobble some cardamom pods, onions, cinnamon, and coriander each in turn rather than enjoy the skilled combination of good Indian food. Most other sense perceptions are similar. Colors bleed, sounds change, even different sensory modalities interact. For example, rhythmic qualities seem to emerge from crowds of people walking when you apply music. Anyone who has walked around wearing headphones or driven past a crowd with the radio on will know the experience. Like the blending of flavors, the ethical aspects can sometimes merge with the humor in a joke or in an artwork, and sometimes the product can be less funny.

In a discussion of ethically objectionable humor, Ted Cohen pleads "I wish you good luck in thus maintaining your feeling of disgust – moral disgust, if that is how it feels to you – at the joke, but I insist that you not let your conviction that a joke is in bad taste, or downright immoral, blind you to whether you find it funny".¹⁸ Cohen's criticism of this kind of dishonesty suggests a reason to think that comic moralism is false. However, Cohen's remarks are perfectly compatible with a moderate moralism about art based on conflicting sentiments. With humor, one may find that some purported ethical flaws can actually increase the humor of a joke.¹⁹ In this case, the sentiments would not conflict. This may be due to the implicit contract of immorality surrounding many jokes. Nevertheless, if we look closely at humor we find many cases where moral flaws do indeed function as defeaters.

Although certain types of moral emotions do not necessarily conflict with humor, the moral emotions are various and some can interfere. Bergson argues that humor requires "something like a momentary anesthesia of the heart." He notices that in order to find something funny we must "put our affection out of court and impose silence upon our pity."²⁰ Illuminating Bergson's comment, Jonathan Haidt makes a useful distinction between the types of moral emotions that can explain why humor is affected by some of these moral emotions but not

¹⁷ David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste" in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985). Hume seems to assume that the flavors would stay pure to those with delicate taste. I disagree.

¹⁸ Ted Cohen, *Jokes: Philosophical Perspectives on Laughing Matters* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1999), p. 83.

¹⁹ This would support comic immoralism—the view that moral flaws can but do not always contribute positively to the amusement value of an attempt at humor. Again, this is perfectly compatible with moralism, since both are "sometimes" positions. Sometimes moral flaws may be defects, sometimes virtues. The argument in this paper is not dependent on the truth of immoralism. See [REMOVED FOR REVIEW] for an argument against comic immoralism.

²⁰ Henri Bergson, "Laughter" in *Comedy*, ed. Wylie Sypher (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956, 61-192) pp 62-3.

others. Haidt identifies four types of moral emotions: (1) other-condemning, (2) other-praising, (3) other-suffering, and (4) self-conscious emotions. The first type, other-condemning, encompasses emotions such as contempt, anger, and disgust. The second, other-praising, includes gratitude, elevation, awe, and being moved. Other-suffering emotions such as sympathy, compassion, empathy, and pity are those most likely to interfere with humor. The self-conscious-emotions include guilt²¹, shame, and embarrassment.²² These distinctions between the different types of moral emotions are useful for exploring the various ways in which the moral emotions may interfere with sentiment-based aesthetic goals. The paradigm cases of interference are those where other-condemning responses are provoked when other-praising responses are sought. However, the case of humor and pity is significant in that it shows that the interference is not confined to an interplay among the moral emotions, since in this case a moral emotion (pity) defeats a non-moral emotion (humor).

The diversity of responses suggests that the point at which two kinds of reactions become incompatible may vary. The conflict is not as strong as logical contradiction, but it is significant nonetheless. If aesthetic properties are not discrete, because they depend on our reactions which are not discrete, then moral considerations can affect aesthetic considerations. The conflict of sentiments, of which the paradigm cases involve moral emotions, establishes the mechanism whereby ethical flaws can count as aesthetic flaws. An example will be instructive.

The Birth of a Nation (D. W. Griffith, 1915)—often cited as a pioneering work in the development of narrative cinema—is a deeply aesthetically flawed artwork. Most of its aesthetic flaws stem from the fact that the work is horrendously morally flawed, since it is replete with despicable racist content that lent legitimacy to the then prevalent practices of racial domination. Designed to perpetuate suffering by fomenting hate, *The Birth of a Nation* is clearly morally flawed, but one may ask, "Why should we think that these moral flaws lessen its aesthetic value?" The answer is simple: The insipid racism arouses feelings of terror, disgust, and anger that are antithetical to the goal of its narrative, which is to inspire feelings of heroism and pride in the acts of the KKK and pity for the suffering of its white characters. How can one possibly feel sympathy for a white woman merely because a black man offers his hand in marriage?

The aesthetic failures of the film are not confined to the traditional emotions

²¹ Although it may seem that the self-conscious moral emotions are the least likely to be part of an art experience, we can find artworks primarily structured to arouse such responses. For example, the film *In the Company of Men* (LaBute, 1997) is designed to arouse guilt in the audience by implicating the viewers in the protagonist's evil plot, thereby eliciting feelings of complicity through humor. [REMOVED FOR REVIEW]

²² Jonathan Haidt, "The Moral Emotions," In R. J. Davidson, *Handbook of Affective Sciences* (New York: Oxford UP, 2003).

one experiences in response to drama; instead, the aesthetic defects extend more broadly, since even the humor in the work is destroyed by its moral flaws. For instance, although the film intends the black congress composed of drunkards, cutthroats, and gamblers to be both amusing and horrifying, it is simply disturbing. Hence, *The Birth of a Nation* is aesthetically less valuable because the moral flaws in its attempts at humor make them less amusing. The film provides unambiguous support for comic moralism about art.

What I am calling the conflict of sentiments is a description of the effect of defeaters on the realization of certain aesthetic properties. The conflict of sentiments describes the effect of aesthetic defeaters on attempts to achieve aesthetic goals. If the supervenience account of aesthetic properties is correct, then properties that arouse conflicting sentiments can defeat the realization of aesthetic properties. As such, moral flaws can function as aesthetic defeaters—properties that compromise the base for potential good-making aesthetic properties.

4 Moral Flaws and Response Dependence

There is something conspicuously absent from the supervenience account of aesthetic properties. The account emphasizes the relationship between aesthetic properties and other more fundamental properties, while it downplays the effect that aesthetic properties have on us—the very thing that makes them aesthetic properties in the first place. The response-dependence account of aesthetic properties puts the audience in focus by making the anthropocentric constraints on aesthetic properties more explicit. As we shall see, the truth of moralism is almost built into the response-dependence analysis.

The response-dependence account of aesthetic properties holds that aesthetic properties are powers in objects that arouse reactions in suitably positioned subjects. Aspects of an artwork, such as thin lines and a small base, dispose spectators to find it delicate. Aesthetic properties on this account are not mere projections of audience reactions onto objects, nor are they mere statements of audience preferences; rather they are dispositional properties of a sort best described as powers in objects to arouse certain reactions by activating dispositions in subjects like us.

Response-dependence accounts differ from subjectivist accounts in that the former try to establish the normativity of aesthetic judgments by locating properties in the observed object as well as the observing subject. Metaphysically, the theory holds that aesthetic properties are something like dispositional properties, or powers to activate dispositions that arouse certain reactions in a particular kind of subject. They are not powers to arouse reactions in any and every subject. If this were the case, then there could be as many aesthetic properties as there were subjects. This would make disagreements about aesthetic properties impossible, since someone would be referring to the

powers that cause him or her to have a certain reaction, and someone else would be referring to the powers that cause them to have a certain reaction. Although they might be referring to the same kind of reaction, they would be talking past each other, referring to entirely different powers of objects. This is not what the response-dependence account says we are up to when we argue about what aesthetic properties a work of art has. Instead, any plausible response-dependence account of aesthetic properties must propose a standard of correctness: most likely, a suitably positioned subject whose reactions either rigidify or set a standard for the powers that are aesthetic properties.

The metaphysical and epistemological components of the response-dependence account are not easily separated, since the metaphysical account of aesthetic properties is constrained by the epistemological account. The standard of correctness, the suitably positioned subject, must not be so far different from normal human audiences as to make aesthetic knowledge unachievable. As such, the most promising form of the response-dependence account is essentially an ideal judgment theory under anthropocentric constraints.

The theory suffers from the same flaws as any ideal judgment theory and then some. If the ideal judges were radically different from normal human observers, then we would potentially not have access to their judgments. If we have no access to the verdicts of the ideal judges, then rather than providing a fruitful account of aesthetic properties, the theory seems more like an elaborate ruse that ends up in an implausible skepticism. The intuition that we can have some knowledge of aesthetic properties is far stronger than any intuition that grounds the response-dependence analysis in the first place. Further, if the judges were radically different from ourselves, then there would be little reason to care about their verdicts, or at least little reason to think that we are talking about the same thing.²³

This form of the response-dependence theory can be described as a realist theory, since it meets the basic criteria of realism: The truth about whether some object has such and such aesthetic property is not dependent on anyone's knowledge of or evidence of the property's presence. If everyone in the world woke up tomorrow morning with radically different sensibilities, and a different cognitive architecture that altered their aesthetic judgments significantly, this would not affect what aesthetic properties any object actually has. The

²³ A serious problem for aesthetic realism lies in the details. If variations in sensitivities in hearing, sight, and even emotional responsiveness, exist that are comparable to the variations in our chemical senses, then an adequate characterization of the ideal judges is impossible. If the verdicts of the ideal judges are to have any normative force, then it must be possible for me to develop the traits that make their judgments normative. If one cannot have reactions like an ideal judge, then if ought implies can, no one can say that one should reach similar verdicts as someone with different sensitivities. See Bender's "Sensitivity, Sensibility, and Aesthetic Realism" for an elaboration of this argument.

response-dependence theorist might argue that the aesthetic properties any given object has are rigidified by ideal judges, who must be as we are now, not as we would be after some miraculous morning that radically shifted our sensibilities. We would use our old aesthetic terms, but they would no longer refer to the same powers. However, there is a common counter intuition that aesthetic properties would have changed along with human nature, since the old dispositions would be completely uninteresting to us. Either way, the theory captures the feeling that aesthetic properties are intimately related to the actual human cognitive and affective makeup, without making the truth of any aesthetic judgment dependent on the evidence available to any particular person.²⁴

In the previous section, I defended moralism about art based on what I am calling the conflict of sentiments. In the writing on aesthetic value there is a pervasive and erroneous assumption that we might call the "discreteness thesis"—the idea that aesthetic properties can be detected in isolation, as if they were discrete. The conflict of sentiments shows that the discreteness thesis is false: Certain emotional responses upon which aesthetic properties depend are practically incompatible and can conflict. For example, one cannot easily feel contempt and admiration for the same person at the same time. The same goes for characters in narrative fictions. Hence, we again find support for moralism about art: In so far as such emotional responses contribute to aesthetic value, conflicting responses can lessen the aesthetic value of an artwork.

The Moralistic Fallacy

Daniel Jacobson and Justin D'Arms implicitly²⁵ accuse all forms of moralism about art of committing the *moralistic fallacy* – erroneously thinking

²⁴ Perhaps the biggest problem with constructing a realist theory of aesthetic properties on the response-dependence account is that any standard of correctness will seem arbitrary. John Bender argues that variations in sensitivity of human perceivers cause problems for any attempt to fix a norm. If we merely select an average or some extreme as the ideal standard, the standard loses any normative authority. It is not clear that Bender has shown that variation in sensitivity to secondary qualities such as taste are analogous to aesthetic sensitivity. See Bender's "Sensitivity, Sensibility, and Aesthetic Realism".

²⁵ It is extremely important to note that my purpose in this article is to assess the truth of the moralistic fallacy, not to determine what Daniel Jacobson or Justin D'Arms may or may not think at the current moment. For my purposes, it is entirely uninteresting whether or not D&J have changed their minds or have realized the full implications of their view. In fact, the truth of the moralistic fallacy is incompatible with Jacobson's later defense of immoralism. See Daniel Jacobson "In Praise of Immoral Art" (Philosophical Topics, vol. 25, no. 1, spring 1997) and "Ethical Criticism and the Vices of Moderation" (*Current Debates in Aesthetics*, ed. Matthew Kieran).

that moral and prudential reasons for not having a particular sentiment²⁶ are relevant to whether or not the sentiment is fitting of the object.²⁷ When Jacobson and D'Arms speak of the moralistic fallacy they do not simply mean a general fallacy involving the derivation of an "is" from an "ought"; instead, they have in mind the specific tendency of theorists of the emotions and response-dependence theorists of evaluation to confuse moral reasons for not having a response with whether that response is fitting. Jacobson and D'Arms argue that "moral considerations about the propriety of having an emotional response are irrelevant to whether the associated evaluative property obtains."²⁸ They explain that "to commit the moralistic fallacy is to infer, from the claim that it would be wrong or vicious to feel an emotion, that it is therefore unfitting."²⁹

Jacobson and D'Arms argue that the kinds of advice we give concerning the governance of the emotions reflects the distinction between fittingness and moral or prudential reasons not to feel a particular sentiment. The proverb "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" serves to warn us that we may misjudge an item's worth. This advice is relevant to whether a reaction fits. The proverb "don't cry over spilt milk" refers to a prudential reason for not feeling regret or frustration at a missed opportunity or squandered resource; however, it does not mean that the regret or disappointment is not fitting to its object. Jacobson and D'Arms argue that it does not make sense to say that spilled milk is not greener. Another way to put it would be to say that we can cry but the grass is just as green. The two types of advice indicate a distinction made in practice between whether a response fits and whether the response is morally right or best prudentially.

Jacobson and D'Arms support this claim with a few examples. They ask us to imagine a graduate student who is ashamed of his ineloquence and is subsequently reluctant to talk in seminar. Since skills of effective expression are not improved without practice, the student's shame will be detrimental in the long run. He realizes this and decides to quell his shame and speak anyway. Though it may not be prudential for the student to feel shame, this does not

²⁶ Here, for the sake of argument, I follow Daniel Jacobson in referring to sentiments as occurrent, object-directed mental states of which the emotions are paradigm cases. Kevin Mulligan refers to sentiments differently, as "those deeply rooted dispositions the manifestations of which are emotions and other types of states" (163). Whether a phenomenal, dispositional, or some other theory of sentiments is correct is unimportant for my argument.

²⁷ Jacobson and D'Arms' work on the moralistic fallacy, and the related conflation problem for sentimentalist theories of value, can be found in "Expressivism, Morality, and the Emotions." (*Ethics*, Volume 104, Issue 4, July, 1994, 739-763), "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotions" (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. LXI, No. 1, July 2000), and "Sentiment and Value" (*Ethics*, Volume 110, Issue 4, July, 2000, 722-748). My focus will be on the moralistic fallacy as developed in "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotions".

²⁸ Jacobson and D'Arms, "Moralistic Fallacy," 69.

²⁹ Ibid.

make his ineloquence any less shameful. Jacobson and D'Arms argue that "the fact that shame is an unpleasant feeling, for instance, or that it would be counterproductive to feel on some occasion, are perfectly good reasons not to be ashamed which are, nevertheless, irrelevant to whether what one has done is shameful."³⁰ Assuming that our intuitions about shame are generalizable to all response-dependent properties, they conclude that prudential and moral considerations are not relevant to assessing the fittingness of a response, and to bring them into consideration is to commit the moralistic fallacy. If Jacobson and D'Arms have identified a form of reasoning common between moral and prudential considerations that is operative on the same domain, namely response-dependent properties, then one failure is enough to show that the form of reasoning is invalid. The shame example appears strong enough to sweep aside all arguments for moralism in one fell swoop.³¹

A curious but important feature of Jacobson's and D'Arms' formulation of the moralistic fallacy is that they establish two routes through which the fallacy may occur – taking into account both (1) moral and (2) prudential reasons for not having a response. Their principal examples involve only prudential considerations; they do little to establish the moral route. This is problematic, since if moral and prudential considerations are of very different sorts, the type of reasoning may be problematic on one domain but not on the other.

Indeed prudential and moral considerations are very different. Predication of response-dependent properties involves a claim about the fittingness of a certain response to an object. Moral evaluation, on this account, involves affective reactions, whereas prudential considerations do not.³² There is no prudential affect: Simply put, one never says that one feels strong prudence. By incorporating prudential considerations into the moralistic fallacy, Jacobson and D'Arms implicitly suggest similarity between the two kinds of considerations. Given the radical difference between the two, we can see that the arguments against taking prudential reasons to count against the fittingness of a reaction potentially say nothing certain about whether moral considerations are relevant. Because of the lack of affect, whether or not prudential considerations are relevant to the fittingness of any given response-dependent property is immaterial to the art and morality debate.

In a footnote in "The Moralistic Fallacy" Jacobson and D'Arms dismiss a potential line of objection:

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Others have employed the concept in the art and morality debate. For instance, Matthew Kieran appeals to the Moralistic Fallacy in "Forbidden Knowledge: the challenge of immoralism" (*Art and Morality*, eds. Bermudez and Gardner, 2003, pp. 61). I provide the first sustained defense of moralism against the implications of the moralistic fallacy.

³² Response-dependent accounts of moral value are committed to emotional, and perhaps motivational, internalism about moral judgment.

Section 4. Moral Flaws and Response Dependence

Matters are further complicated when several incompatible emotions would be fittingly directed at (perhaps different aspects of) the same object. [. . .] But this topic is too complex and delicate for us to get into here. While we grant that it is a heuristic simplification to treat emotions in isolation, we don't think that this casts doubts on our arguments.³³

To the contrary, this heuristic simplification creates significant problems for the scope of their conclusions. Even if aesthetic evaluation is best thought of as an argument,³⁴ we have no reason to think, as Jacobson and D'Arms suggest in this footnote, that it is a form of argumentation that can deal with one property at a time, out of context. When the moralist explains that ethical flaws have hindered some aesthetic goal, the argument is not that it would be immoral to have a particular response, therefore the response is not fitting. Instead, the position of the moralist is that if some affective state was produced by ethical flaws that defeats the operation of a good-making aesthetic property, then the moral flaw is a causal reason for an aesthetic defect. We can easily see that an ethical flaw could produce reactions that interfere with a host of reactions that include many aesthetic goals.

The Conflict of Sentiments, again

According to the response-dependence account of aesthetic properties, in order to maintain that moral flaws are irrelevant to the presence of aesthetic properties, one has two alternatives. (1) In order to exclude moral sentiments from the others, one would have to accept an ontological or metaphysical discreteness thesis. (2) If one rejects the metaphysical discreteness thesis and holds that moral considerations are irrelevant to aesthetic evaluation, one would have to assume that artworks are best judged by partial people—a fall back to another form of discreteness, judgment, or epistemological discreteness. Epistemological discreteness is a non starter: No one would propose that someone who is incapable of detecting sourness should work as a food critic, nor would one suggest that psychopaths (or even the autistic) are the best judges of dramatic fiction. Metaphysical discreteness is equally unacceptable. Since response-dependent properties are ontologically dependent on responses from creatures like us, and our responses are not discrete, ontological discreteness must be rejected. This shows that the so called “moralistic fallacy” is not a problem for moralism. Jacobson and D'Arms incorrectly assume that response-dependent properties are metaphysically discrete.

³³ Jacobson and D'Arms, "Moralistic Fallacy," p. 77, n. 23.

³⁴ I think that the analogy between aesthetic evaluation and argumentation is misleading and that the classification of the aesthetic cases as instances of the “wrong reasons” problem is inappropriate. A defense is out of scope.

One may admit that moral emotions can interfere with other reactions intended by an artwork, but argue that the best critics will need to bracket their moral responses in order to fully appreciate some aesthetic goals such as humor. It is not that a good critic must be a psychopath, only that they be able to look beyond their moral emotions. In reply, one must again note that this objection assumes the ontological discreteness of aesthetic properties. Unless we assume that aesthetic properties can and should be judged independently, we have no reason to think that critics should try to bracket their moral responses. Suggesting that critics should ignore or somehow repress their moral responses to artworks is similar to asking that critics ignore any disgust reactions they might have to a blood splattered *Bird in Space* so they can admire its elegance, or to ignore any agitation that might result from the honking horns in my revision of *The Aquarium* so they can better appreciate its grace. We have no reason to think that critics would be able to reliably repress these kinds of reactions. More importantly, there is no reason to think that critics *should* attempt to ignore features of artworks that interfere with major aesthetic goals. There are many artworks that would be better if we could just selectively ignore their flaws, but that is simply not how one goes about evaluating art. One may try to understand a work by bracketing one's own "moral prejudices," but this is not an evaluative stance. Nor is it one that we can reliably adopt. As Hume acknowledges, even the limited goal of trying to understand how a work might have been received by its intended audience can be a difficult task because of our inability to effectively adopt its prejudices.³⁵

The crucial point to emphasize is that we seldom encounter response-dependent properties in isolation. This is especially true of artworks, where we never encounter one property in isolation from the rest. As flavors change when mixed, qualities such as funny might meld with other properties. Again, take Hume's example: One suspects that leather and metal do not taste like leather and metal when mixed in wine, but like leather-metal-wine. One may be able to determine the sources of the resulting flavor, but the resulting flavor is not just a collection of its various parts. We might know from experience how a new flavor is formed, but the original flavors will not stay pure. Much like flavors, if aesthetic properties are not discrete, because the reactions they depend on in order for us to attribute them are not discrete, then moral flaws can defeat aesthetic properties, and thereby constitute aesthetic flaws.

A Question of Impact

Opponents of moralism about art may argue that the conflict of sentiments fails

³⁵ Hume discusses what we might call moral imaginative resistance at the end of his essay "Of the Standard of Taste." Since even the most minor historical claims meet with scholastic controversy, it pays to note that nothing in my argument relies on this particular interpretation of Hume.

to establish that moral flaws in an artwork are aesthetic flaws. In "Moderate Autonomism," Anderson and Dean argue that Noel Carroll, a proponent of moralism about art, fails to establish that the "reason" why an artwork is morally flawed can be the same as the reason it is aesthetically flawed.³⁶ Carroll presents what he calls the "Uptake Argument" for moralism about art.³⁷ He argues that since audience uptake is required for certain aesthetic goals, and since moral flaws in an artwork can interfere with audience uptake, moral flaws can be aesthetic flaws. Carroll presents a colonialist fictional example where the author is just confused about what counts as admirable behavior. Portraying the native torturing behavior of a tyrannical explorer as a form of competency in exerting control and securing riches for his expedition is likely an ethical flaw that can very easily become an aesthetic flaw. In response to such examples, Anderson and Dean argue that Carroll has failed to explain why we should think that any but inept characterization is at work.

To make their case against Carroll, they argue that if we reconstruct two arguments, one that explains why the artwork is morally flawed and another that supports the claim that an artwork is aesthetically flawed, we will find that neither contains the same set of premises. The argument in support of the aesthetic flaw will have at least one more premise—a premise linking a moral flaw to some other defect, which is in turn used to explain the aesthetic flaw. Hence, Anderson and Dean argue the reasons are not the same. Their basic objection is that whatever the moral flaws may be in an artwork, we have no reason to believe that they have any aesthetic impact.

The problem with the argument in "Moderate Autonomism" is that it denies the aesthetic impact of moral flaws based on a specious criterion of impact. They argue that for a moral flaw in a work of art to have an aesthetic impact the reason why the artwork is morally flawed must be the "same reason" why the artwork is aesthetically flawed. By "reason," they seem to mean something such as the same premise in an argument justifying the judgment. They claim that the criterion is Carroll's own, but they misunderstand what Carroll most likely meant by "reason." One suspects that the criterion is only acceptable if by "reason" we mean explanatory or causal reasons.

No matter Carroll's intention, we have no reason to accept Anderson and Dean's criterion. Anderson and Dean fail to realize that this is simply not a standard the proponent of moralism about art needs to meet. If the question we are attempting to answer is whether or not moral flaws with a work of art can be

³⁶ James Anderson and Jeffrey Dean "Moderate Autonomism" (*British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 38, no. 2, April 1998).

³⁷ Carroll's *Uptake Argument* follows a similar pattern to my argument. We both argue for the same conclusion—moralism about art—based on problems created for an artwork by moral emotions aroused from moral flaws in an artwork. But my argument explains how this occurs: Conflicting sentiments defeat the operation of good-making aesthetic properties. As such, my argument is something of a low-level uptake argument.

detrimental to its aesthetic value, then all we need to show is a causal or explanatory chain linking the moral flaw and the aesthetic flaw. The proponent of moralism about art merely needs to show that *the fact that* an artwork is morally flawed is part of the causal story for some aesthetic flaw.

The moralist must show that an aesthetic defect results from *the fact that* an artwork is morally flawed. It is not merely enough to show that the artwork is coincidentally morally flawed. For instance, if the president was killed by a silver bullet shot through his heart, since he is not a werewolf, the fact that the bullet was made of silver would not be relevant to his death. The moralist needs to show that the fact that an artwork is morally flawed is different from the fact that the bullet is silver. The conflict of sentiments shows that although the silver in a bullet makes no difference when one is not hunting lycanthropes, moral flaws can have a significant impact on the aesthetic value of an artwork.

The conflict of sentiments makes apparent just how the fact that an artwork is morally flawed can be prominent among the factors that are causally responsible for aesthetic flaws. Any suitably positioned judge of artworks must be similar to us, that is, capable of making moral evaluations. There is reason to believe that this ability is necessary not only for appreciation of many narrative artworks, but also for comprehension. For example, without the ability to infer that an ordinary person would feel wronged in certain situations, all but the most tediously explained revenge plots would be utterly incomprehensible. If this is the case, then moral judgments are expected from competent evaluators. The fact that an artwork is morally flawed can promote moral emotions that conflict with other responses, and as a result make a difference to an artwork's aesthetic value. This is especially clear if we consider moral emotions to be a form of, or arising from, primitive moral judgments—which are perhaps not considered judgments, but judgments nonetheless. Undeniably, moral emotions can conflict with other responses that are necessary for some aesthetic properties to obtain. By way of responses that typically result from moral judgments, moral flaws can defeat some aesthetic properties. Since, in such standard cases, causation is transitive,³⁸ the fact that an artwork is morally flawed can be the (causal) reason why it is aesthetically flawed.

³⁸ There are some putative counterexamples to the claim that causation is transitive. See Michael McDermott's "Redundant Causation" (*British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 40, 1995, pp.523-544) and Ned Hall's "Two Concepts of Causation" in *Causation and Counterfactuals*, eds Collins, Hall, and Paul (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2001). However, none of the counterexamples gives us reason to think that typical cases of causation are not transitive.

5 Conclusion

In this article I do not attempt to define a new position in the art and morality debate, and I do not take a stand on the truth of “immoralism,” understood as the position that ethical flaws can sometimes contribute to the aesthetic value of a work of art. Instead, I undertake the modest goal of providing novel support for moralism about art based on the two leading accounts of the nature of aesthetic properties. More specifically, I argue that what I am calling the “conflict of sentiments” is a special case of aesthetic defeaters in action. *Aesthetic defeaters* can be defined as elements that, if present, would defeat the operation of some good-making aesthetic property. I argue that the conflict of sentiments provides a basis for moralism about art on a response-dependence account of aesthetic properties. In addition, I try to show how aesthetic defeaters could provide a basis for moralism about art on a supervenience account of aesthetic properties.

In a recent paper, George Dickie³⁹ defends the autonomist position that moral flaws are irrelevant to determinations of aesthetic value. He argues that if we confine our attention to the aesthetic properties in the narrow, Sibley⁴⁰ sense—non-conditioned governed properties that require taste to detect—then moral flaws are irrelevant to aesthetic evaluation. In this paper I provide several reasons for thinking that Dickie is wrong. Even if we restrict “the aesthetic” to Sibley’s group, the only way moral flaws could be irrelevant to aesthetic value—irrelevant to the presence of the core set of aesthetic properties—would be if we could judge aesthetic properties in isolation, out of context; however, this is clearly not the case. Aesthetic properties are highly context dependent: They can be defeated by the presence of other aesthetic properties, secondary qualities, contextual properties, and moral flaws.⁴¹

³⁹ George Dickie, “The Triumph in *Triumph of the Will*” (*British Journal of Aesthetics* Volume 45, Number 2, April 2005, pp. 151-156).

⁴⁰ Frank Sibley, “Aesthetic Concepts” (*The Philosophical Review*, LXVII, 1959, pp. 421-450). Sibley argues for a view of aesthetic properties as non-positively condition governed properties that require taste to detect. By non-positively condition governed, he means that aesthetic properties defy our ability to know whether or not they hold based simply on the non-aesthetic properties of a work. Instead, the predication of aesthetic properties requires that a suitable judge, one with “taste”, experience the object under consideration. The epistemic difference between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties suggests a metaphysical difference. As such, Sibley can plausibly be said to offer a response-dependence account of aesthetic properties.

⁴¹ I thank [REMOVED FOR REVIEW].