

Introduction:

## The Place of Beauty in Contemporary Aesthetics

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The notion of beauty has endured a troublesome history over the last few decades. While for centuries beauty has been considered one of the central values of art, there have also been times when it seemed old-fashioned to even mention the term. The present volume aims to explore the nature of beauty and to shed light on its place in contemporary philosophy and art practice.

### **The Decline of Beauty**

The changing views on beauty become particularly evident when we consider how the debate has evolved in recent decades. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, beauty was widely regarded as the main value of aesthetics, just as truth was deemed the ultimate value of the epistemic domain and the good the ultimate value of the ethical sphere. In the early twentieth century, leading philosophers, in both the anglophone traditions and those of so-called continental philosophy, continued to assign a central role to beauty. Regarding the former, recall that beauty is a central concept in Clive Bell's aesthetics (see Bell 1987, original text from 1914), but it also plays an important role in the aesthetics developed by authors belonging to the *Graz School* or the phenomenological tradition. Stephan Witasek, for example, is more focused on offering a theory of beauty than a theory of art (Witasek 1904). In the phenomenological tradition, Nicolai Hartmann and Dietrich von Hildebrand employed the concept of beauty in a broad sense as synonymous with aesthetic value (Hartmann 1966: 5–8; von Hildebrand 2016: 75, published in German 1977).

In the course of the last century, however, things have changed dramatically. The notion of beauty has dwindled in significance and lost its privileged position not only in aesthetics and art theory, but also in art practice (for this diagnosis see Scruton 2011:

139ff.). Beauty has gradually become just one aesthetic value among many others. This trend first became perceptible in the practice of making and responding to art. Think of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, which he produced in 1914, or his *ready-mades* from the same period. When transforming everyday objects into artworks by submitting them to an exhibition or displaying them in a museum, Duchamp clearly did not want to unveil the hidden beauty of these objects. Rather he challenged the very conception of art and the role of the artist. Duchamp's work is exemplary of a widespread artistic practice in the twentieth century that questions the centrality of beauty and with it the very function of art. In this period, many artists shunned the ornamental function of art and suggested that the main goal of an artwork is not to please, but rather to provoke, unsettle or alienate the audience, or to prompt reflection. As a consequence, even the ugly or the disgusting could come to be regarded by artists and art lovers as equally or even more important than beauty. As a result of this practice, our perception of artworks and their function also changed. Art was no longer supposed to evoke the experience of beauty, but to invite us to reflect upon life, to present reality from new and unexpected angles, to touch us, and to move us to action. Parallel to this change of orientation, philosophical aesthetics and art theory started to eschew beauty in favor of other aspects of the arts. Representative of this change is Arthur Danto's influential thesis that beauty should not be the end of art (Danto 1981).

The reasons that have brought about these changes in attitude towards beauty are multifarious and complex. It is likely that we still lack the necessary historical distance to analyze them in a properly disinterested manner. We can, however, pinpoint some factors that are related to changes in aesthetics, in philosophy of art, and in art practice that have occurred during the last century and that have contributed to this change. In the following, we will focus on four of them.

The first is related to the evolution of art theory and aesthetics in the twentieth century. Early aesthetic theories, such as those developed by Hutcheson or Kant, offered an analysis of beauty. Noël Carroll has pointed out that this orientation influenced later theories and encouraged them to consider these analyses to be of

pivotal importance for our understanding of the nature of art (Carroll 2001: 23). In consequence, philosophers who have been crucial to the development of aesthetics in anglophone countries or of analytic aesthetics, such as Clive Bell and Monroe C. Beardsley, treated art “as if it was a subspecies of beauty”, as Carroll puts it (*ibid.*). This claim, we think, can be extended to other aesthetic traditions, like that of phenomenology, mentioned above. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was uncontroversial and widespread practice to use the concept of “beauty” as a shortcut when one wanted to speak of “aesthetic value” in general. Carroll’s analysis, thus, brings to the fore that there was a common tendency in aesthetics and art theory (at least in Western philosophy) to reduce “art” to “beauty” and to reduce “art theory” to “beauty theory”. This analysis can also explain the decline of beauty during the last century, which, we think, can be understood (at least in part) as a reaction against these forms of reductionism.

This countertendency against reductionism becomes manifest in several of the central debates that have dominated philosophical aesthetics over the last century and that continue to do so today. Take, for example, the strong skepticism towards classical aesthetic notions such as the notion of aesthetic attitude, of disinterested pleasure or of harmony and the development of new definitions of art as institution or as an open concept. All these theoretical moves can be understood (at least in part) as reactions to the attempt to reduce the values of art to the single value of beauty and to reduce art theory and aesthetics to the “science of beauty”.

With regard to the debate concerning the notion of aesthetic attitude, let us recall the lively controversy between Jerome Stolnitz and George Dickie during the 1960s. While Stolnitz claimed that aesthetics was a matter of adopting an attitude of “disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of awareness whatever, for its own sake alone” (Stolnitz 1969: 19), Dickie argued that the same idea of aesthetic attitude was no more than a “myth” which “is no longer useful and in fact misleads aesthetic theory” (Dickie 1969a: 28). This discussion about the meaning and the function of the notion of “aesthetic attitude” resulted in a generalized skepticism concerning the role

of contemplation and aesthetic pleasure in the arts (both are key notions for explaining beauty) and contributed to a shift of attention from beauty to other aspects of our engagement with art.

The same point can be made in relation to the critique of the notion of “disinterested pleasure” that emerged at the same time. In previous centuries, it was common to distinguish between contemplation and practice, i.e., between being interested in things for what they are in themselves (intrinsic value) and being interested in things for their utility (practical value). In the twentieth century, however, the possibility of disinterested pleasure was put into question. Some even went so far as to consider it nonsensical (Dickie 1969a: 31ff.). The notion of disinterestedness is crucial to explain our interest in beauty as intrinsic value, but it cannot explain other forms of engagement with art in which beauty does not play a role (see also Carroll 2001: 39).

A similar move is manifest in materialist aesthetics, such as that developed by Theodor W. Adorno and Bertolt Brecht, which challenges the idea that the primary function of art is to please the audience. Rather than making us indulge in pleasant feelings, art should prompt moral reflection and move us to social action. What makes art important for human practice is not its beauty, but its social, practical, moral, and political dimensions, as well as its potential to change human lives and society. Illustrative of this view is Brecht’s idea that our engagement with art has to induce detachment and alienation by employing what he calls the “estrangement effect” (*V-Effekt, Verfremdungseffekt*) (Brecht 1953: 110). It is only estrangement – not pleasure, disinterestedness, or contemplation – that induces ethical reflection and action. According to this perspective, the function of art consists in presenting ordinary objects and situations in a different light, to make us reflect on them, and to invite us to act in favor of social change.<sup>1</sup> (A similar view can be found in Adorno 1970: 409). In consequence, rather than having an intrinsic value of its own, art is valuable only from the point of view of practical interest. The critiques of the notions of pleasure, contemplation, and disinterestedness raised by materialist aesthetics entail a critique of

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<sup>1</sup> Though Brecht is criticizing the theory of identification with characters in theater, he extends his claim to other arts (Brecht 1953: 139).

beauty as value of art, since beauty is typically taken to be related to all these concepts.

A second reason for the decrease in interest in beauty might be owed to the fact that in the attempt to overcome the reduction of the aesthetic to beauty, new definitions of art have been formulated from the middle of the last century on. These developments have made way for new approaches – in what follows we will focus on two of the most prominent examples, the institutional theory and the theory of art as an open concept – that have broadened the horizons of aesthetics and focused on aspects that had been largely overlooked until then.

The institutional theory of art, such as the one proposed by Dickie (1969b), calls for us to broaden the narrow focus on works of art and the artist, respectively, and to also take into account the historical, social, and cultural dimensions of art as a human practice. According to this theory, an object achieves its status as an artwork not primarily on the basis of the artists' intentions or some of its intrinsic properties (like, for example, its being "beautiful"), but first and foremost in virtue of a community of people, the "artworld", who consider it as such. Consequently, beauty is no longer regarded an essential feature of art; whether or not an object is an artwork rather depends on the institutional context from which it emerges and in which it is embedded.

Morris Weitz's anti-essentialist position, on the other hand, holds that the concept of art cannot be characterized by a set of definitive criteria and suggests that it should be better regarded as an "open concept" (Weitz 1977: 23). Inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance concepts (Wittgenstein 1953, §§65–78), the open concept approach suggests that the concept "art" cannot be defined on the basis of a common set of properties (Weitz 1956) that could stand as necessary and jointly sufficient conditions and, thus, determine whether or not an object is to be considered an artwork. Rather, there are features that artworks can but need not necessarily manifest. According to this form of anti-essentialism, thus, beauty is but one of many factors we might expect to find in artworks, but it is not a distinguishing criterion.

Third, the critique of classical notions of aesthetics that attributed a central role to beauty and the attempts to introduce new definitions of art have invited aestheticians to focus on values and functions of art other than beauty. In both art theory and practice, the political and moral potential of art to change society and to improve human lives gained more and more attention. This focus on the social and practical functions is linked to the rejection of the idea of “*l’art pour l’art*”, which implies an elitist model of art, and to the rejection of ornamental conceptions of art according to which the main function of art is to evoke pleasant experiences on the part of the spectator.

This point is illustrated very well by a debate that goes beyond the political or moral function of art: the debate concerning the cognitive value of art, which has become one of the main concerns of philosophical aesthetics since the middle of the last century. Some philosophers, who advocate a non-cognitivist position, suggest that art cannot and should not teach us relevant knowledge about the real world. Moreover, it has been argued that insisting on the cognitive value of art would entail instrumentalizing art and undermining its aesthetic dimension. The majority of philosophers who worked in aesthetics in the late twentieth century, however, have insisted that engaging with works of art can and typically does broaden our cognitive horizons. Different versions of cognitivism have been developed. Some philosophers have argued that the cognitive gain can be explained on the basis of a transmission of truths, of warranted beliefs, or of propositional knowledge. Others have suggested that artworks can (only) present hypotheses for contemplation and themes for discussion. Still others regard works of art as expressions of a subjective perspective on our shared reality that can enrich the recipient’s point of view or as the re-presentation of experiences relevant for the human being. In sum, the cognitive value of art in general and of different forms of art in particular was one of the main issues in philosophical aesthetics of the last century from Beardsley and Hospers (Beardsley 1981; Hospers 1946) and to this day.<sup>2</sup> This resulted in a shift of attention, though: the strong focus on the

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<sup>2</sup> For a definition of aesthetic cognitivism and an overview of the debate, see Gaut 2006.

cognitive dimension of art has risked eclipsing the aesthetic dimension of art and, as a result, has pushed the notion of beauty into the background.

Finally, the decline of beauty has also been brought about by a change in the very conception of art and of artistic practice. As art has increasingly been understood as an expression of creativity and originality, its capacities to be innovative and break with tradition have assumed greater importance. Moreover, the early twentieth century witnessed the rise of artistic practices that contributed to enforce this tendency. Expressionism, Dadaism, surrealist art, conceptual art, and performance art, to mention but a few, questioned the idea of a golden rule. Harmony was abandoned in favor of deviation, often with the goal of presenting the world from a new perspective and overcoming received patterns of perceiving, thinking, and emoting. With this development, the value of beauty lost its importance.

### **Motives for a re-evaluation**

The four points mentioned can explain, at least in part, the development and transformations that the notion of beauty has undergone in the twentieth century. In the most recent debate in aesthetics, however, there are some contributions that contrast with this tendency.<sup>3</sup> The growing interest in the notion of beauty, which is reflected in an increasing number of publications on the topic, must not be taken as an attempt to fall back into the old trap of reducing art to beauty, or art theory to a theory of beauty, respectively. Rather, what we find is an attempt to enrich the current debate in aesthetics by exploring one of the concepts that historically has been considered crucial to it. Against this background, we think that one of the most urgent tasks for contemporary aesthetics is to explore the concept of beauty in all its dimensions.

Moreover, a re-evaluation of the notion of beauty allows us to take into consideration aspects that have become increasingly important in recent philosophical scholarship. To begin with, a more profound understanding of beauty might enhance our

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<sup>3</sup> For this diagnosis, see De Clercq 2013: 299; Startwell 2017.

understanding of the architecture and functioning of our mind, as the experience of beauty is linked to abilities such as perceiving, imagining, judging, feeling, and acting. The claim that a landscape, a painting, a novel, or a poem are beautiful presupposes our ability to sensuously perceive these objects, to appreciate some of their properties (color, shape, rhyme, etc.), to evaluate them from a certain perspective, to grasp what they represent, to feel the values they embody, to react emotionally to them<sup>4</sup> and perhaps to even be motivated by them to act in a certain way. Moreover, the experience of beauty is related to sensations of pleasure and comfort, to feelings of vitality and a sense of well-being.<sup>5</sup> All these aspects play a consistent role in the mental life of human beings, which suggests that a better understanding of beauty can contribute to our understanding of these aspects and their relation to other key facets of our psychology.

In addition, a focus on beauty should not come at the expense of other values of art; on the contrary, such focus might comprehend our understanding of how very different values of an artwork can be related to one another. The realization of beauty can, for example, be crucial for the social, political, practical, moral, or epistemic value of an artwork to unfold in an effective way. Thus, the capacity of an artwork to touch and move us is relevant not just from an aesthetic point of view, but also from an epistemic and moral perspective. An artwork that succeeds in focusing the spectators' aesthetic experience invites them to take its "message" or "moral" into consideration; in this way, an artwork might enrich the onlooker's grasp of the world or prompt them to reconsider habitual forms of behavior. In short, beauty might not simply be an end in itself, but might also constitute a central factor that determines whether an artwork can successfully perform other functions and achieve other goals.

A further reason for why the study of beauty is important derives from its anthropological relevance. By reflecting on beauty, we achieve a better understanding of who we are, what we value, and what care about. Despite all efforts to shift attention

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4 For instance, with rapture, joy, hope or even with love, as Alexander Nehamas has claimed (Nehamas 2007).

5 For an analysis of pleasure and judgment, see De Clercq 2013: 303.



away from beauty and to focus on other aspects of art, beauty has not lost all of its significance in our everyday lives. We live in a world concerned with beauty and beautiful things. We enjoy – and actively seek out – the beauty of material objects, of artworks, of nature, of other persons and their characters, and of ideas and feelings. It seems safe to say that the search for beauty is an anthropological constant of our human condition. Roger Scruton has drawn attention to this point when arguing that our need for beauty was essential in order to be fulfilled as human beings. Thus, the experience of beauty tells us that “we *are* at home in the world, that the world is already ordered in our perceptions as a place fit for the lives of beings like us” (Scruton 2011: 145).

The perspective we have presented allows us to appreciate that the loss of interest in beauty in the last century was a reaction to a reductionist understanding of art and aesthetics that has opened up the debate and called for greater attention to be given to other aspects and values of art, many of which had been overlooked. Yet, it also demonstrates that in contemporary aesthetics and art theory, a re-evaluation of the notion of beauty in all its dimensions is needed if we want to strive for a more comprehensive understanding and do justice to a dimension of art that has always been, and indeed continues to be, of central importance.

### **The main issues**

The papers contained in the present volume address a series of questions that can be summarized under the following three headings: What is beauty? What is beautiful? How does the value of beauty relate to aesthetic values? In what follows we want to give a short characterization of these questions – not in order to provide answers or to elaborate definite solutions, but rather to illustrate the complexity of the topic and to present the agenda for the study of beauty in contemporary research, as well as to delineate the logical space in which the articles of the present volume are situated.

The first of these questions, “*What is beauty?*”, directs our attention towards the very nature of beauty. The complexity of this issue is related to the fact that the concept of beauty has been employed with very different meanings in different historical,

social, and cultural settings.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, also within contemporary aesthetics, which emerges mainly out of the Western tradition, the concept of beauty is employed in an ambiguous and polysemic way.<sup>7</sup> In some uses, the term “beauty” is defined as an intrinsic value or property of objects, while at other times beauty is understood in its relation to aesthetic judgments or to the emotional reaction that these objects typically arouse in the spectator.

The former use, which goes back to Plato but remains prominent today (see, for example, Zangwill 2001: 12), is tied to an understanding of beauty as an evaluative property or quality, i.e. as a value. More specifically, beauty has been regarded as the highest of all aesthetic values. However, within the frame of this “value view of beauty”, there is no consensus as to whether beauty is a single property or the result of a combination of other properties such as harmony, configuration, attractiveness or the like.

While this conception of beauty focuses primarily on the objects that instantiate the relevant aesthetic properties, there is a different understanding of beauty, which denies that beauty is independent of the human capacity to respond to it. These views raise the questions of whether – and how – beauty is related to aesthetic judgments and emotions. In this vein, beauty has been accounted for in terms of feeling or emotion (Bell 1987 [1914]), as related to longing and love (Nehamas 2007), and it has also been explained in terms of a certain form of judgment (for a discussion on this see Kant 1951 [1790]).<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, several philosophers have pointed out that we should not expect to find a simple and unified definition of beauty, as the range of objects to which one can ascribe the relevant properties – or which justify the relevant judgments or arouse the relevant reactions in the spectator – are multifarious. Since we

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6 For an overview of the concept in different languages, see Startwell 2004.

7 A discussion of the ambiguity of the term “beauty” can be found in the following authors: Carroll 2001: 24; De Clercq 2013: 299; Levinson 2011: 191; Scruton 2011: 15f.

8 For an overview of theories of beauty, see Startwell 2017.

employ the term “beauty” to characterize different objects, beauty is – as Levinson puts it – “no one” and we should consider different types of beauty concerning natural, artistic, and physical beauty (Levinson 2011: 190).

The second question, “*What is beautiful?*”, focuses on the nature of objects to which beauty can be ascribed. While in aesthetics and art theory, we commonly ascribe beauty only to human artifacts, in everyday discourse nature, creatures, person, characters, ideas, and motions are also said to be beautiful. This raises questions as to whether the same concept of beautiful – and, in consequence, the same conception of beauty – is operative in all these uses. In what sense is the beauty of a landscape the same beauty as that of an artwork or of a person? Though we employ the same concept to describe these objects, it seems that the respective uses differ substantially depending on whether we employ it, say, for a human artifact or for a human being.

These issues invite a possible taxonomy of beauty according to the objects to which the property is attributed. In this vein, we could distinguish between sensual and intellectual beauty, between objective and subjective beauty, or between inner and outer beauty.

Moreover, this aspect of beauty also invites us to consider aspects concerning human efforts to embellish oneself and one’s direct environment. In this perspective we can come to take into account issues that have long been overlooked in aesthetics, such as the function of cosmetics and makeup and the politics and social motives behind it.

The third question concerns “*the relation between beauty and other aesthetic values*”. Beauty has long been considered to be the highest value of the aesthetic domain – to the point that the term “beautiful” has been used as a shortcut for “of aesthetic value”. If one tries to approach questions of aesthetics, art theory, and art practice in a more differentiated way, however, it can be useful to regard beauty as a different phenomenon, one that is related to aesthetic value but which cannot be assimilated to it. In this perspective, it becomes necessary to shed light on these issues concerning the relation between beauty and aesthetic value (for a more detailed discussion on this topic, see Lopes 2018: 235).

Moreover, if beauty is an aesthetic value, we have to clarify its place within the domain of the aesthetic (as a central, peripheral, or merely one value among others). We also need to shed light on how beauty relates to other aesthetic values, though, such as the sublime, the ugly, the shocking, the disgusting, etc. If, on the other hand, beauty is not an aesthetic value, then we need to understand how it relates to aesthetic value in general.

Finally, it is necessary to understand how beauty relates to non-aesthetic values. In particular, we need to explore the relation between beauty and epistemic values such as truth, knowledge, or understanding on the one side, and beauty and the domain of ethical values on the other.<sup>9</sup>

### **The contributions to this volume**

In the contributions to the present volume, leading scholars in the field develop their own perspectives on the issues raised above. The collection opens with Sonia Sedivy's paper "Beauty and Aesthetic Properties: Taking Inspiration from Kant", in which she focuses on the relationship between beauty and aesthetic properties. By distinguishing between the notion of beauty and the notion of aesthetic value, Sedivy explores the notion of aesthetic properties elaborating on Kant's insights about beauty according to which aesthetic properties are analogous to beauty, but beauty remains a distinct notion.

In "Beauty and Rules: Kant and Wittgenstein on the Cognitive Relevance of Aesthetics", Hanne Appelqvist argues for the significance of rules in aesthetics. Drawing on Kant and Wittgenstein, she focuses on beauty-judgments. Both philosophers acknowledge a subjective response as indispensable condition for a judgment of beauty, connect the concept of beauty with the notion of a rule, and understand the judgment of beauty as an example of a rule that provides a model of the kind of judgment that may be treated as normative in spite of lacking a conceptual justification. The availability of subjectively based yet normative judgments of this kind is essential for making sense of cognition in general.

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview of debates on both aspects, see Gaut 2006 and 2013.

Elisabeth Schellekens' paper "Challenging the Notion of Intelligible Beauty" examines three challenges to the idea that there can be such a thing as non-sensible or intelligible beauty: the perceptual challenge, the conflation challenge, and the reductivism challenge. According to Schellekens, these challenges are important because they unveil aspects of intelligibility ascribed to some instances of beauty that require further elucidation. She considers a notion of intelligible beauty and discusses how it relates to perceptual sense-experience and to aesthetic value.

In the paper entitled "Non-Sensory Beauty and Meaning Qualia", Maria Elisabeth Reicher defends the view that beauty and aesthetic properties in general are dispositional properties that supervene upon lower-level properties. The paper defends a dispositional theory of beauty and argues that there are forms of non-sensory beauty. Moreover, Reicher suggests that there are meaning qualia that are distinct from and not reducible to sensory quality. According to this perspective, meaning qualia are the supervenience base of non-sensory beauty of narrative and representative works of art.

Maria José Alcaraz León argues, in her paper "Beauty and the Agential Dimension of the Judgment of Taste", that aesthetic judgment has mostly been understood in parallel to perceptual judgments, which has resulted in a focus on epistemic aspects. She shows this understanding of the aesthetic to be incomplete, especially when it comes to explaining phenomena related to the exercise of aesthetic judgment, such as aesthetic alienation, inconsistencies of taste, or the distinctive character of bad taste. The paper advocates a broader understanding of aesthetic judgment, which takes the agential aspects into consideration.

The view that beauty can be understood as a kind of emotion is examined by Catrin Misselhorn in her paper entitled "Beauty and Bell's Aesthetic Emotion". She claims that this kind of emotion differs from other emotions by being distinctively aesthetic. Misselhorn draws on Clive Bell's position, according to which there are specific aesthetic emotions, and refines it with insights gleaned from contemporary theory of emotion, according to which emotions involve consciousness and intentionality.

In the chapter “An Aesthetics of Insight”, John Gibson takes as his point of departure Danto’s idea that through a special act of identification “an artwork becomes a metaphor for life, and life is transfigured”. Gibson’s aim is to examine how literary works of art might function as primary vehicles of figurative identification and of the kind of achievement that Danto calls “a transfiguration of life”, which Gibson casts as an expansion of our possibilities for ascribing sense to the world beyond the work of art. He explains the cognitive value of art not in terms of warranted belief and propositional knowledge, but as a distinctive variety of metaphorical understanding.

In “Art, Beauty, and Criticism”, Noël Carroll examines the role of beauty in art and criticism. After introducing Batteux’s idea that art has to be understood as the imitation of beauty in nature, Carroll challenges the conception that beauty is the aim of art by showing that there are many historical examples – and not only from the last 150 years – that eschew beauty in order to communicate a variety of ideas. Drawing on Danto’s work and amending his theory, Carroll turns to examine the role of beauty in Criticism.

In his contribution “The Value of Art: On Meaning, Expression, and Aesthetic Experience in Difficult Modern Art”, Richard Eldridge discusses the significance of beauty and aesthetic pleasure in contemporary art. Art, he suggests, seems to have turned against the pursuit of beauty and criticism; thought, provocation, and meaning seem to matter more than aesthetic pleasure. Discussing Danto’s theory of art as embodied meaning and considering a range of examples from the avant-garde, Eldridge shows that beauty and aesthetic pleasure are still central values in the practices of creating and responding to art.

The role of beauty in conceptual art is discussed by Davide Dal Sasso in his chapter “The Beauty of Doing: Remarks on the Appreciation of Conceptual Art”. He suggests that the beauty of conceptual art has to be considered as the beauty of what artists do. In order to develop his argument, Dal Sasso introduces and discusses Denis Diderot’s relational concept of beauty and the idea of concrete expression and applies both to the field of conceptual art.

Otto Neumaier explores the place of beauty within aesthetics in his “The Case Against Beauty”. Though he does not deny that beauty is a central category of aesthetics, he argues against the idea that beauty is the subject matter of aesthetics, i.e., the idea that beauty is what defines aesthetics. In his view, this idea would undermine the foundation of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline.

In “Aesthetic Experience and the Experience of Poetry”, Peter Lamarque analyzes the nature and function of aesthetic experience as a response to poetry. The place of beauty in the appraisal of poems is explored by analyzing different connotations of the idea of a beautiful poem. A kind of beauty is associated with perceptual formal qualities (assonance, rhyme, meter, etc.); another kind of beauty can be found in the subject of the poem (including its imagery, its emotional resonance); finally, there is a further kind of poetic appreciation which is centered in the consonance of means to ends, of how the poem works.

Allen Carlson examines questions concerning “The Beauty of Landscape”. Drawing on some insights put forward by George Santayana in *The Sense of Beauty*, he approaches the beauty of a landscape as a question related to its composition. Carlson considers traditional and modern theories of aesthetic appreciation of natural and cultural environments and how these accounts provide different perspectives on landscape composition and on the nature of the beauty of landscapes.

Lisa Schmalzried’s paper “The Virtue Analysis of Inner Beauty: Inner Beauty as Moral, Eudaimonistic, or Relational Virtueness” is devoted to inner beauty. After formulating two criteria for assessing and comparing analyses of inner beauty, she introduces the idea of virtue-analysis. She goes on to discuss the moral virtue-analysis according to which inner beauty only depends on morally desirable character traits, the eudaimonistic virtue-analysis which explains inner beauty in terms of Aristotelian virtuousness and, finally, the relational virtue-analysis according to which inner beauty is explained as relational virtuousness.

In his chapter “Cosmetics and Make Up”, Stephen Davies explores the history and the beautifying function of cosmetics. This exploration takes into consideration the sexual politics

implied and expressed in such practices. The paper focuses mainly on the different ways that have existed since ancient times of decorating the face and the head. It examines how in the world of cosmetics and make up, self-adornment and physical beauty come together.

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