

moral extensionism is the enlargement of the types and limits of the things that could be an ethical responsibility of people. Studying Peter Singer and Tom Regan, two representatives of ethical diffusion, primarily to deepen this argument, Lee later evaluates the criticisms of them. In addition to the comparison made generally in terms of animal rights, equality, freedom of moral extensionism, she makes the same discussion mostly over the beings of nature and the beings regarded as non-living based on the comparison of Christopher Stone and Holmes Rolston III. Lee also deals with Aldo Leopold and Arne Naess, whom she examines for eco-centric (ecological holism, biocentrism or anti-anthropocentrism) ethical discussion, and their critics. Later on, she makes a transition to ecological phenomenology. In this context, she studies radicalized environment-centrism and ecofeminism. In the last part, she deals with environmental justice.

Even though the work of Lee is a course book for students and academics, it addresses a large audience. Compared to other books of environmental ethic, it is striking that it deals with original titles comparatively. Transitions between the parts comprising arguments from the criticism of moral extensionist and eco-centric arguments to radical deep green thinkers, animal rights theorists, eco-phenologists, and eco-feminists follows the perspective determined in the introduction part of the book. The work's bibliography is rich, up to date and written in clear language. In the light of these evaluations, it is a work that those who study environmental ethics cannot skip. However, there is a need for readers to already be familiar with the basic issues regarding general ethics and environmental ethics.

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## **Introduction to Philosophy: Aesthetic Theory and Practice**

Edited by Valery Vino

Montreal: The Rebus Community, 2021; paperback, 233 pages, print and free open access at <https://press.rebus.community/intro-to-phil-aesthetics/>; 978-1-989014-28-8

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### **LONA GAIKIS**

*Aesthetic Theory and Practice*, from the book series *Introduction to Philosophy* (The Rebus Community, 2022), is an Open Textbook edited by Valery Vino and Christina Hendricks (series editor), targeted at introductory level philosophy students. This collection of contributions from international scholars of philosophy, art theory and history, transverses fundamental questions on art, aesthetics, and beauty, tracing back ancient origins and main schools of modern thought. It introduces the study of aesthetics by touching upon theoretical approaches from analytic and continental philosophy.

The textbook, furthermore, offers insight into current debates that critically engage the hegemony of Western philosophy—an issue that has been on the rise in recent years—and attempts to explore under-researched aspects that concern the nature-culture divide.

Grounding the foundations of aesthetics in ancient Greek classics (Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle) and, much later, its coining as an independent sub-discipline of philosophy in Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* (1759), the book highlights the morphology of ideas concerning art and aesthetic education throughout modern philosophy. It offers an overview of essential questions, such as the distinctiveness of the artistic object, the relation of artworks and emotions, and prevalent aesthetic ideals of beauty. Reaching from twentieth century and post-war art theory (Representation, Formalism, Expression and Institutional Theory of Art; chapter 2), to recently emerging theories of Environmental Aesthetics (chapter 7) and Somaesthetics (chapter 10), debates are enriched by the dialectics of whether or not art has moral and ethical agency, as well as the possibility of regarding aesthetics as an instrument of perception for daily practice, giving the reader incentives to contemplate aesthetic experience in multiple ways. The book offers many visual examples and analogies for a whole spectrum of artistic genres, making the concepts and their development more tangible. Examples relate to historical artifacts and modern artworks, but are also relevant to current day applications in contemporary art practice and pop culture.

The textbook collection begins to unfold aesthetic theory by addressing fundamental questions that map main discourses, their histories and protagonists in art theory (chapters 1–4). Discussions are not exclusive to the evaluation of art, but highlight the greater epistemological import of aesthetic experience, and the meaning of artistic form. Concepts of beauty are expanded and contrasted, e.g., with the perception of the sublime in nature (chapter 5). Emphasizing and distinguishing modes of emotional significance, the engagement with the non-human realm, and the inclusion of every-day impressions outside cultural canons, opens various angles to novel environmental questions (chapters 6 and 7). Noticeable breaks from the discipline's root in transcendental idealism run throughout several chapters, rendering visible the effects of recent critiques of aesthetics. A range of practical applications in emerging theories support the need for aesthetic education today. Non-Western discourses on beauty and nature give insight into “other” aesthetic practices, and points of connection are drawn between Chinese art and philosophical concepts (chapter 6). Chapter 8, on “Aesthetics and Politics,” positions the roots of aesthetics in the socio- and geopolitical context of Western Europe, and reconsiders the apolitical ideal of “disinterestedness” in the aesthetic attitude. We learn in which ways Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790) was very much entangled with political and social interests that were only enabled by the accumulation of wealth via colonial exploitation. The Western cultivation of the “allegedly disinterested” aesthetic attitude

became super-elevated from the expressiveness of indigenous art practices, with far-ranging socio-economic and political consequences. This particular discussion opens the book to exciting discourses and continuing thoughts on indigenous aesthetics (chapter 9). Further chapters highlight the agency of the unruly body, and compare the “wild” in nature to the construction of worlds (chapter 10). A final chapter on “Ancient Aesthetics” deepens the impetus of aesthetics on humanity, and revives the lasting meaning of poesy for insight (chapter 11).

Ancient approaches, modern theories and emerging movements in aesthetics are presented in great detail, provoking many opportunities for critical discussion. There is a slight over-representation of Yuriko Saito’s theory of Everyday Aesthetics, which might result from the transversality of ideas running through the book. The essays build on one another, with topics and analyses gradually evolving. However, readers may approach the book from individual angles and must not feel compelled to follow the book linearly. A rhizomatic web of recurring topics and references offer a more profound understanding of interrelated discussions.

This is a solid introduction to aesthetics and theories of art, which can serve as a full course book, or as supplemental material for courses on ancient philosophy, German enlightenment, twentieth century art theory (US), or Non-Western and First Nations art traditions. It fulfills educational purposes, as chapters can serve as secondary literature to the primary source texts referred to in the book. Discussions emanate from key texts in art discourse and philosophy (Barthes, Kosuth, Greenberg, O’Doherty, Collingwood, Danto, Deleuze-Guattari; chapter 2). Concise questions and topics headline the discussions, making chapters easy to reference and integrate in curricula.

One critique, which might be reformulated as a motivation to students of aesthetics, art and philosophy to engage with their peers in the arts, is the lack of artistic accounts on aesthetics and the significance of art. Growing studies in artistic research, and the transdisciplinary mobility between the arts, cultural theory and philosophy, and the sciences promise plenty of novel perspectives and more nuances in discourses to evolve. Listening to what artists have to say about the beauty, expression and meaning of art will certainly highlight further aspects of its significance and the intriguing paradoxes within. An enigmatic practitioner and accomplice of the arts, Joseph Beuys, when asked why Mona Lisa might be smiling, answered straight out: “Mona Lisa smiles because she knows more than Leonardo.” Successful aesthetic education should provide students the sense and verve to expand knowing from the arts’ unique resource.