

Aesthetic Value, Cognitive Value, and the Border Between

It is sometimes held that “the aesthetic” and “the cognitive” are separate categories.¹ Enterprises concerning the former and ones concerning the latter have different aims and values. They require distinct modes of attention and reward divergent kinds of appreciation. Thus, we must avoid running together aesthetic and cognitive matters.

I disagree. I doubt that we can carve up the conceptual space so neatly. Accordingly, in this paper, I will challenge the independence or autonomy of aesthetic and cognitive categories. But I will do so in an unorthodox fashion. Most attempts proceed by arguing that cognitive values can bear upon aesthetic ones.² I will approach from the opposite direction. I will show that a work’s aesthetic merits can affect its cognitive ones and, more provocatively, its philosophical ones.³

1. Definitions

Some definitions are in order. First, I will take aesthetic value to refer to that which makes an object worthy or unworthy of being perceived, contemplated, or otherwise appreciated for its own sake.⁴ Accordingly, I will not take it to reside simply in those aspects of an object productive of sensory pleasure or its opposite, such as beauty, gracefulness, elegance, and their contraries. I will treat it as being realized by a range of fea-

¹ See, for example, Peter Lamarque, *The Philosophy of Literature*, Foundations of the Philosophy of the Arts (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009), 253–254, Ch. 7; Peter Lamarque, “Cognitive Values in the Arts: Marking the Boundaries,” in *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Matthew Kieran (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2006), 134.

² Aesthetic cognitivists take this route. See, for example, Berys Gaut, “Art and Cognition,” in *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Matthew Kieran (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2006); Berys Gaut, *Art, Emotion and Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Gordon Graham, *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005); M. W. Rowe, “Lamarque and Olsen on Literature and Truth,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 47, no. 188 (1997): 322–341.

³ For other discussions of this claim, see Lee B. Brown, “Philosophy, Rhetoric and Style,” *The Monist* 63, no. 4 (1980): 425–44; Arthur C. Danto, “Philosophy as/and/of Literature,” *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 58, no. 1 (1984): 5–20; Charles Griswold, “Style and Philosophy: The Case of Plato’s Dialogues,” *Monist* 63, no. 4 (1980): 530–546; Steven Fuller, “When Philosophers are Forced to be Literary,” in *Literature as Philosophy/Philosophy as Literature*, ed. Donald G. Marshall (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1987), 24–39; Lawrence M. Hinman, “Philosophy and Style,” *Monist* 63, no. 4 (1980): 512–529; Bernd Magnus, “Deconstruction Site: The ‘Problem of Style’ in Nietzsche’s Philosophy,” *Philosophical Topics* 19, no. 2 (1991): 215–243; Martha C. Nussbaum, “Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature,” in *Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3–53.

⁴ Here I follow Peter Kivy, “What Makes ‘Aesthetic’ Terms Aesthetic?,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 36, no. 2 (December 1, 1975): 211; Alan H. Goldman, *Aesthetic Value* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 20.

tures, including what Noël Carroll calls expressive properties (e.g. somber, melancholic, gay, bold, stately, pompous), Gestalt properties (e.g. unified, balanced, tightly knit, chaotic), taste properties (e.g. gaudy, vulgar, kitschy, garish), and reaction properties (e.g. sublime, beautiful, comic, suspenseful).⁵

I will exclude from the purview of my investigation aesthetic value properties that are cognitive in nature, such as being profound, insightful, true, or misleading. Although they qualify as aesthetic on some accounts,⁶ including them would render my thesis trivial. Mere substitution would generate the conclusion that aesthetic value can affect cognitive value.

Second, when I turn to cognitive values, I will focus on a proper subset of them, namely those we might call philosophical values. Doing otherwise would once again diminish the interest of my thesis. The general category of cognitive value includes such things as pedagogical or instructional value.⁷ There is nothing novel or profound about trumpeting the importance of aesthetic considerations here.⁸ Texts that move us or display eloquence and wit more often hit home. We more frequently remember them, incorporate their conclusions into our web of beliefs, and integrate their ideas into our practical deliberations.

What is philosophical value such that attention to it possesses greater interest in this context? We can begin with the point that philosophical texts aim at truth. Their goal is to convey ideas that are true.⁹ Accordingly, their value qua philosophical texts—their philosophical value—partly consists in whether they achieve this goal. Another portion concerns how well they support the truths they proclaim. Indeed, the strength of a text's arguments is likely the most decisive measure of its philosophical merit. However, other considerations deserve mention, including the internal consistency of the text and its contributions to issues of perennial interest to the philosophical community. Although not exhaustive, this list is sufficiently informative for our purposes.

⁵ Noël Carroll, *Philosophy of Art: A Contemporary Introduction*, Routledge Contemporary Introductions to Philosophy (New York: Routledge, 1999), 190. It should be apparent from this list that, following Goldman, I do not believe aesthetic properties have to be directly perceptible. See Alan H. Goldman, "Aesthetic Qualities and Aesthetic Value," *The Journal of Philosophy* 87, no. 1 (January 1, 1990): 27.

⁶ For a discussion of this point, see Gaut, "Art and Cognition"; Lamarque, "Cognitive Values in the Arts."

⁷ See Gaut, "Art and Cognition," 115.

⁸ See Horace [Quintus Horatius Flaccus], *Ars Poetica*, trans. Henry Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library 194 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), lines 343–344; Peter Kivy, *Philosophies of Arts: An Essay in Differences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 88–89.

⁹ See Peter Lamarque, "Learning from Literature," *Dalhousie Review* 77, no. 1 (1997): 10; Lamarque, "Cognitive Values in the Arts," 134.

The foregoing account of philosophical value might appear to undercut my thesis. We might wonder how it could matter to our *philosophical* assessment of a work whether it exhibited great literary eloquence, profoundly moved us on an emotional level, or contained that high level of implicit meaning known as “semantic density.”¹⁰ Indeed, of what *philosophical* importance could it be whether the prose of a text was lifeless, serene, dynamic, vulgar, vivid, or suspenseful? Such considerations look irrelevant to the strength of a work’s arguments, its internal consistency, or the truth of its conclusions. Claiming otherwise seems to involve a category mistake.¹¹

Nevertheless, I will defend the counterintuitive line. I will argue that the aesthetic value of a text can bear upon the philosophical value of a text. That is not to say that it always does so, or that it is ever the sole determining factor, only that it sometimes does so and to some degree.

2. Clarifications

In principle, aesthetic value could bear upon cognitive value in two ways. First, some aesthetic values might be *constitutive* of cognitive value. In other words, possession of them could be commendatory or pejorative in a cognitive sense. Second, some aesthetic values might *ground* judgments about cognitive value. The fact that a work has them could provide reasons for a positive or negative assessment of its cognitive merit.

I shall proceed along the latter front. I will argue that some aesthetic values bear upon cognitive values by grounding them.

Now aesthetic values supervene on aesthetic properties. Such supervenience takes two forms.¹² First, some aesthetic properties are themselves evaluative.¹³ They are bearers of aesthetic value or that in which aesthetic value resides. Thus, to say that an object has one of these properties is in part to say that the object is to some degree aesthetically good or bad.¹⁴ For example, to describe a work as sublime, moving, or bold

¹⁰ Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1981), 128–129; Lamarque, *The Philosophy of Literature*, 48.

¹¹ See Griswold, “Style and Philosophy: The Case of Plato’s Dialogues,” 530–531; Hinman, “Philosophy and Style,” 512–514; Lamarque, “Cognitive Values in the Arts,” 134; Nussbaum, “Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature,” 8; Magnus, “Deconstruction Site,” 216–217.

¹² Goldman, *Aesthetic Value*, 20; Göran Hermerén, *The Nature of Aesthetic Qualities*, Studies in Aesthetics 1 (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1988), 76, 144–159.

¹³ I allow that evaluative properties might also be descriptive. See Goldman, *Aesthetic Value*, 25.

¹⁴ Hermerén, *The Nature of Aesthetic Qualities*, 149.

is normally to appraise it positively. To call it dreary, derivative, or boring is typically to assess it negatively.¹⁵

Second, some aesthetic properties are not evaluative, but are nonetheless *relevant* to aesthetic value. More specifically, they figure into our explanations of why an object warrants a positive or negative aesthetic value judgment.¹⁶ For example, to describe the pace of a novel as fast is not necessarily to evaluate it. Yet, we might point to the fact that a novel is fast-paced to account for why we call it gripping, which typically would be an evaluative comment.

I will focus on aesthetic properties that are themselves evaluative. I do not merely wish to show that a work's aesthetic *properties* bear upon its philosophical value but that its aesthetic *value* does so.¹⁷

3. False Starts

The following observation provides a tempting point of departure. When assessing philosophical texts, we often raise considerations that fall into a category that overlaps with aesthetics, namely stylistics. We praise or criticize works because they possess or lack properties such as clarity, succinctness, awkwardness, and eloquence.¹⁸ We include "well-written," or its opposite, in referee reports and in comments on student papers. The existence of such vocabulary in our critical practices suggests that stylistic considerations (and so perhaps aesthetic ones) may fall under the purview of philosophical val-

¹⁵ Goldman, *Aesthetic Value*, 20. We must take care here for several reasons. First, the contribution of almost any particular aesthetic value to a work's overall aesthetic merit can be overridden by the presence of other aesthetic values of the opposite valence. For example, a work might possess elegance. However, if it is also derivative, we might consider it an impoverished work of art all things considered. Thus, aesthetic values are *pro tanto* in nature. Second, whether an aesthetic value property has a positive or negative valence often depends on context. For instance, gracefulness is typically a good-making property. However, it might detract from artwork intent upon exhibiting the brutality of war. See Robert Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 68. Third, whether an aesthetic property is evaluative *at all* may be context-dependent. Consider mournfulness. Kivy maintains that it has a positive valence in a lament, a negative valence in an epithalamion, but "may very well be neutral if a feature of a violin sonata" ("What Makes 'Aesthetic' Terms Aesthetic?," 201.).

¹⁶ Goldman, *Aesthetic Value*, 20–21; Hermerén, *The Nature of Aesthetic Qualities*, 76–79.

¹⁷ Merely showing that the aesthetic properties of a work bear upon its cognitive value will not establish my thesis that aesthetic value affects cognitive value. The reason is that we might have a common cause story on our hands. The aesthetic property in question might serve as the basis of both an aesthetic value and a cognitive value without the aesthetic value having any bearing on the cognitive value.

¹⁸ Brown, "Philosophy, Rhetoric and Style," 425–426; Griswold, "Style and Philosophy: The Case of Plato's Dialogues," 529.

ue. After all, some scholars cite the appearance of cognitive vocabulary in art criticism as evidence that cognitive values influence aesthetic ones.¹⁹ Why should not something of the reverse hold as well?

We must tread carefully here. The fact that an evaluative judgment concerns a philosophical work does not necessarily make it a judgment about the philosophical value of that work. The reasons for the judgment matter.²⁰ For example, if I extol William Irwin's *The Simpsons and Philosophy* because it has made a large sum of money, or if I laud Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* because of its influence on American culture, my evaluations are not philosophical in nature. In neither case am I concerned with the truth of the work's the content, the strength of its arguments, its relevance to perennial philosophical problems, etc. The same point might hold with regard to assessments based on stylistic considerations. Although frequently made of philosophical works, stylistic assessments might reveal nothing about their philosophical value. At least, we would need additional reasons before ruling out this possibility. Thus, we cannot conclude from the mere existence of stylistic vocabulary in criticisms of philosophical writing that stylistic value (and thus perhaps aesthetic value) bears upon philosophical value.

A second observation might afford better initial footing. We might defend the idea that aesthetic value can influence cognitive value by noting that we esteem some philosophical texts as highly as we do precisely because of their aesthetic merits. For instance, Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* and Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" probably would not occupy such lofty places in the canon were it not for their incomparable wit. Augustine's *Confessions* likely would attract fewer readers were it less moving. Finally, Austin's "Truth" might have received less attention had it not contained so many quotable passages.²¹

Conceding the accuracy of these conjectures, what follows? What do we learn from the fact that the philosophical community values texts partly for aesthetic rea-

¹⁹ See Rowe, "Lamarque and Olsen on Literature and Truth."

²⁰ See J. O. Urmson, "What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 31 (1957): 75-92.

²¹ The opening lines provide the most notable example: "What is truth?" said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. Pilate was in advance of his time. For 'truth' itself is an abstract noun, a camel, that is, of a logical construction, which cannot get past the eye even of a grammarian. We approach it cap and categories in hand: we ask ourselves whether Truth is a substance (the Truth, the Body of Knowledge), or a quality (something like the colour red, inhering in truths), or a relation ('correspondence'). But philosophers should take something more nearly their own size to strain at. What needs discussing rather is the use, or certain uses, of the word 'true'. In vino, possibly, 'veritas', but in a sober symposium 'verum'," ("Truth," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 24 (1950): 111.

sons? Not much. It indicates that the philosophical community cares about more than just philosophical matters. It also implies that some texts have aesthetic as well as philosophical value.²² However, neither point entails that the possession of aesthetic value affects the possession of philosophical value.

4. Philosophical Content and Aesthetic Properties

Where, then, to begin? Perhaps the proper place is with the notion that a text's aesthetic properties can implicitly express statements and claims. This idea is not novel, having been suggested by Martha Nussbaum,²³ Peter Kivy,²⁴ and others.²⁵ However, it lacks a robust defense. I will attempt one here.

First, note that works of literature typically prompt us to take up the point of view of the (presumed) narrator. For example, when reading Camus's *The Stranger*, we find ourselves looking at the world through the eyes of Mersault. The pages of Dickens's *Copperfield* draw us into the title character's perspective on life. Finally, the power of Nabokov's *Lolita* lies in its ability to make us empathize with Humbert Humbert.

The same does not hold for philosophical texts. Reading them has a different phenomenology. We do not automatically enter into the (presumed) author's world. We do not extend him or her the same leeway regarding the facts. On the contrary, we interrogate each word and sentence. We demand justifications for every assertion made.

In addition to extrinsic considerations such as genre, intrinsic ones such as style, structure, and tone facilitate this effect. Take Spinoza's *Ethics*. It proceeds in an abstract, impersonal, and dispassionate manner. These features keep us at arm's length from Spinoza, the man. They force us to concentrate on the ideas he puts forth. Moreover, the text's geometric feel encourages us to submit it to the same cold, logical analysis we would a mathematical proof.²⁶ Alternatively, consider the dialogues of Plato, Berkeley, and Hume. The characters in them challenge and question each other's views. We find

²² See also Lamarque, "Cognitive Values in the Arts," 132.

²³ Martha Nussbaum attributes the view to the ancient Greeks, but what she says also reflects her own position: "Forms of writing were not seen as vessels into which different contents could be indifferently poured; form was itself a statement, a content" ("Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature," 15).

²⁴ Kivy says, "For the way in which the artist employs the medium is, in effect, part of the content, because it expresses something in the artist's point of view about the content" (*Philosophies of Arts*, 117).

²⁵ Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 147–148; Danto, "Philosophy as/and/of Literature," 7–8; Jenefer M. Robinson, "Style and Personality in the Literary Work," *The Philosophical Review* 94, no. 2 (April 1, 1985): 227–247; Hayden V. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 1–25.

²⁶ See Nussbaum, "Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature," 30–35.

ourselves caught up in the process. Transformed into judges of an imaginary debate, we scrutinize the merits of their arguments.

These examples show how the *formal* properties of a philosophical text, such as its style, structure, or tone, can influence our approach to its content. However, the *aesthetic* properties of a philosophical text can perform a similar function. To see why, it helps to turn to works that do not invite dispassionate responses, such as Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*. The *Genealogy* is a moving, provocative, and even disturbing book. Most conspicuous in this regard is the passage describing the journey of Mr. Rash and Curious into the workshop where Judeo-Christian ideals are made.²⁷ The scene comes across as something out of a horror movie. The workshop is dark and foreboding. Soft muttering and whispering emanate from hidden nooks and crannies. Noxious air overcomes Mr. Rash and Curious; he struggles to contain his stomach. His unease and disgust are contagious; they wash over us.²⁸ These feelings in turn shape how we perceive the workshop's secrets.²⁹ They glue our attention to the unnerving aspects of Mr. Rash and Curious's discoveries. Thus, when he reports that Judeo-Christian values are the product of lies and deception, the message has a jarring effect.

The fact that the aesthetic properties of a text can influence us in this way underwrites their ability to imply claims. The reasoning here is roughly Gricean. When engaging with others, we tacitly assume that they will act cooperatively.³⁰ In part this means that we expect them to encourage us only in appropriate ways. We presume that they will urge us to do only what they believe suits the circumstances. Thus, when an interlocutor prompts us to pursue a specific course of action, we take it that he or she considers the course of action appropriate. In other words, the conventional³¹ (but defeasi-

²⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), sec. I.14. See Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 102–105; Christopher Janaway, "Responses to Commentators," *European Journal of Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2009): 145–148; Stephen Mulhall, "Nietzsche's Style of Address: A Response to Christopher Janaway's *Beyond Selflessness*," *European Journal of Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2009): 121–131.

²⁸ For more on emotional contagion, see Amy Coplan, "Feeling Without Thinking: Lessons from the Ancients on Emotion and Virtue-Acquisition," *Metaphilosophy* 41, no. 1-2 (January 1, 2010): 132-151.

²⁹ For discussions of how the emotions aroused by a text affect our understanding of it, see Noël Carroll, "Art, Narrative, and Emotion," in *Emotion and the Arts*, ed. Mette Hjort and Sue Laver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 199–203; Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper Than Reason: Emotion and Its Role in Literature, Music, and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 105–35, 154–194.

³⁰ H. Paul Grice, "Logic and Conversation," in *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*, ed. Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 45–48.

³¹ The implication is not a logical one. It does not deductively follow from encouragement that the encourager thinks the activity in question is appropriate. It is always possible that the person is trying to deceive us.

ble)³² implication of a person's encouragement is that what he or she pushes us to do is somehow fitting.

The existence of such implications is uncontroversial when the encouragement occurs on the semantic level. Take political advertisements. They beg, plead, cajole, and threaten to get us to vote for a particular candidate, party, or proposition. The advertisements thereby imply that doing so is right or good. It is less obvious that similar implications arise when the encouragement operates on the level of formal and aesthetic properties. However, there is no *prima facie* reason to treat these cases differently. As the examples discussed above reveal, the formal and aesthetic properties of a text can lead us to perform specific actions. They can prompt us to approach a text in a particular way or adopt a certain attitude while reading it. It seems plausible to say that they thereby imply that undertaking these actions is appropriate.

5. The Effect of Aesthetic Properties on Philosophical Value

This conclusion feeds into a larger argument about the relationship between aesthetic properties and philosophical values. To begin with, the claims implied by a text's aesthetic properties do not have to align with those that comprise the text's explicit semantic content. The former can say one thing, the latter something else. These two sets of claims can contradict each other.³³ Such a contradiction would be a philosophical defect; it would compromise the consistency of the text. Thus we can see how possessing the wrong aesthetic properties can detract from a text's philosophical value. By the same token, possessing the right aesthetic properties can support the philosophical value of a text. If the implications of a text's aesthetic properties coincided with its explicit content, the consistency of the text would be upheld.

A thought experiment illustrates the idea. Imagine an alternative version of Nietzsche's *Genealogy*. It contains all the explicit philosophical content expressed by the original work. In particular, it includes the claim found in the third essay that our emotions play an essential role in knowledge acquisition.³⁴ However, the fictional text differs from Nietzsche's actual one in terms of its formal and aesthetic properties. It is not written in a bombastic style. It is neither moving, nor shocking, nor unsettling. Rather, it proceeds in a dispassionate and impersonal manner reminiscent of Spinoza's *Ethics*.

³² The implication would be defeated if, for example, we had good reasons for thinking that the author or speaker were jesting.

³³ For other discussions of the sort of form-content contradiction described here, see Hinman, "Philosophy and Style"; Nussbaum, "Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature."

³⁴ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, sec. III.12.

Consequently, it only addresses its readers' intellects; it only arouses those aspects of their minds devoted to abstract reasoning.³⁵ By way of the Gricean argument outlined above, it follows that the style of the imaginary text implies that a dispassionate approach to its content is fitting. In other words, we need not engage our emotions to grasp what it says. Such an implication, however, is inconsistent with the explicit content of the text. It contradicts the claim that knowledge acquisition requires activation of the emotions.

The reason for this contradiction, as well as for the loss of philosophical merit it engenders, deserves emphasis. The contradiction stems from the absence of the very properties that make Nietzsche's actual text aesthetically valuable, namely its ability to move, shock, and unsettle. Thus, the decrease in *aesthetic* value that occurs when moving from the real text to the fictional one results in a decrease in *philosophical* value. Conversely, the increase in *aesthetic* value that occurs when moving in the opposite direction brings about an increase in *philosophical* value.³⁶

6. The Affect of Aesthetic Value on Philosophical Value

We can now draw some general conclusions about the relationship between aesthetic and philosophical value. I have shown that the aesthetic value properties of a text can imply philosophical claims. These implicit claims can stand in various logical relationships with the explicit content of the text. For instance, they can entail the truth or falsehood of any part of it. Consequently, their presence can uphold (in the former case) or undermine (in the latter case) the coherence of the text. In both scenarios, the text's aesthetic value affects its philosophical value.

Three cautionary notes are in order. First, the claims implied by a text's aesthetic value properties can also be logically irrelevant to its semantic content. It is possible for them to entail neither the truth nor the falsehood of anything the text explicitly says. In such cases—and they might be the majority—the aesthetic properties of the text might have no bearing on its philosophical value.

Second, the properties that positively affect a text's philosophical value need not be aesthetically meritorious. Just as there is bad art and bad literature, so too are there

³⁵ See Martha C. Nussbaum, "Fictions of the Soul," in *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 245-260.

³⁶ For other defenses of the philosophical importance of Nietzsche's literary style, see Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*; Magnus, "Deconstruction Site." For an opposing view, see Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 13-14.

negative aesthetic value properties.³⁷ Moreover, if properties with a positive valence can contribute to philosophical value, as in the case of Nietzsche's *Genealogy*, so too can those with a negative valence. There may be cases where the literary equivalent of Socrates's ugly visage contributes to the coherence of the text. Consequently, even when aesthetic value does bear upon philosophical value, the correlation will not necessarily be direct.

Third, aesthetic value has only limited impact on philosophical value. The latter consists in a plurality of things, from the truth of the claims made by a text, to the degree of support it provides for these claims, to the influence of its arguments on perennial philosophical problems, to its overall consistency. Aesthetic properties do not bear upon all of these considerations. For those it does affect, it is not the only relevant factor. Consistency, for example, is not simply a matter of the relationship between the claims implied by a text's aesthetic properties and those that comprise its explicit semantic content. The relationship that obtains strictly between the latter set of claims also matters.

Even accounting for these three caveats, the following claims still hold. In some cases, the possession of aesthetic value positively affects a text's philosophical value. Conversely, the lack of aesthetic merit sometimes engenders philosophical defects. Therefore, we must attend to aesthetic considerations when creating and evaluating philosophical works. The intuitive view that aesthetic value does not bear upon philosophical value is mistaken.

³⁷ See, for example, Stephen Davies, *The Philosophy of Art*, Foundations of the Philosophy of the Arts (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 54.